



PAOLA RICAURTE

- **Hometown:** Miami, Florida
- **What is your major?** Political Science with a Minor in International Relations and Certificates in National Security Studies and Latin American and Caribbean Studies.
- **Where did you/are you interning?** The Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).
- **What is your title?** Research Intern
- **How did you get your internship?** I applied through their website after seeing a posting on LinkedIn.
- **What are you doing there?** I assist with background research and other administrative tasks on a variety of projects going on at the program. I research and prepare briefs on topics regarding Latin America and the Caribbean and development, security, great power rivalry, and other related topics.
- **What projects did you work on?** One of my favorite projects I worked on researched the particular social, economic, and security challenges women in the Northern Triangle face that lead to migration. It was interesting to hear different voices from government agencies to civil society organizations working to aid and empower migrant women. I also put together a weekly news digest on Mexico following different political reforms and other important events happening in Mexico.

- **How does your internship connect back to your coursework?** My coursework gave me regional knowledge that allowed me to gain a better understanding and analysis of current events. Other writing and research skills gained from my experience at FIU also came in handy.
- **What is the coolest thing about your internship or that has happened during your internship?** I enjoyed meeting different people across the field working in different sectors, all to support initiatives in Latin America. I met ambassadors, USAID representatives, and people from civil society organizations and the private sector. For one project exploring female entrepreneurship as an avenue for development in the Northern Triangle, I was able to hear about the different challenges female entrepreneurs face in the region directly from female entrepreneurs and different networking organizations supporting them.
- **What have you enjoyed most about your experience?** I liked the variety of subjects I was able to work with. While we had primary subjects we were working on, I was also able to dive into other topics, like security cooperation with Colombia, issues relating to the Summit of the Americas, questions regarding the future of the Inter-American Development Bank, and others.
- **What have you learned about yourself?** I learned how well my personal interests can tie into my professional pursuits. As a Latina, I've always had a personal interest in learning more about the Americas, and I've found an avenue to continue this professionally.
- **What advice do you have for those beginning the internship process?** Apply to positions that reflect your interests and enjoy the experience! At times, the work can be overwhelming, and we are so focused on the work, you forget that it is a learning process. But if you really enjoy the topic, you can take a step back to breathe and indulge in the experience.
- **How has the position increased your professional confidence?** This internship has deepened my knowledge on wide range of subjects. With every task and project, I was able to feel more confident in my ability to accomplish the next one.
- **How has the internship expanded your professional network?** Not only was I able to work with the professionals within the Americas program, but I was able to meet other people working in the different programs at CSIS. People were very open to connect and happy to elaborate on their expertise.