

The Bigger Picture Eric Barnes

Leadership and Advocacy Summit (LAS) is a gathering of committed practicing Physician Assistants and PA students in our nation's capital to advocate for the PA profession. This event allows citizens from each state to converse with the offices of their elected government officials in both Senate and House of Representatives. After being prepped about specific legislation pertaining to the profession, teams consisting of professionals and students navigate the tunnels of the House and Senate and walked the halls where famed and powerful politicians traverse.

Beyond the day on the hill, the event was full of informative panels discussing the importance of advocacy, active legislation engagement, and other methods to promote the continued success of the profession. Sprinkled throughout each day were allotted times to allow students to network with not just fellow students but experienced practicing PAs and potential mentors.

This event was valuable as a student because it allowed a vision of the bigger picture. In school it is easy to focus on self, classmates, classes, rotations, or any task in the upcoming week. Being able to interact with regional leadership in OAPA and national leadership in AAPA showed the complexity and power that exists for the profession on the bigger stage. Being able to interact with students from other states fostered a sense of community and comradery that will last for years to come. This event does an amazing job of conveying that after being accepted into the PA Program at CWRU, I became a part of something bigger than myself. I not only joined a legacy of past PAs but I also gained a responsibility to continue to enhance the scope of the profession for the future. I urge every student to consider attending this event so that they can be inspired and rejuvenated with the passion that put them on the path to seek the PA profession in the first place.