On a spring evening, over 200 professionals and students gathered in the Capitol Hill Visitor Center to listen to Congresswoman Wally Herger. This event marked the beginning of Beyond BYU 2012, a two day networking and mentoring event. This year over 80 BYU students ventured to Washington DC to learn about the details of working in this nation’s Capital. After Congressman Herger’s address, students got to mix and mingle with professionals from different fields. Students met with legislative analysts, non-profit administrators, bureaucrats, media directors, and many others. The next morning students traveled to various worksites across the city. Students went to Capitol Hill, the FBI, the Pentagon, think tanks, and other sites. Below are some of the students thoughts about the event:

- Ultimately, my experience at the Beyond BYU networking conference prepared me to understand exactly what types of jobs are in the D.C. area and who is recruiting for them. I am especially grateful for the opportunity I had to be set up with a mentor who has already provided me with constructive feedback about my resume. With this experience behind me, I am ready to work hard at my internship this summer and put concerted effort into searching for a full-time job.
- I had an amazing experience at Beyond BYU and am so grateful that I was able to be a part of it. This was my first time visiting Washington, D.C. and I fell in love with the city. I would love to live there someday.
- We went to the National Reconnaissance Office and visited with Director/Elder Carlson. This was one of the highlights of the trip, I learned so much listening to Director Carlson and his aides then I could have ever imagined. I was able to learn about the different satellites and how they help with defense reconnaissance across the world. The experience was unforgettable. Washington, D.C., was an awesome trip and this experience was amazing; I couldn’t have asked for anything better.
- The evening was perfect for providing easy access to both private sector and public sector job opportunities and was enhanced by the general understanding of what we, as students, were interested in discussing.
- It went beyond the experience of meeting recruiters or professionals at BYU career fairs. It provided the opportunity to observe the environment and type of work that these professionals do. It exposed the glamorous parts of these careers as well as the less exciting but necessary parts.
- Beyond BYU gave me the opportunity to talk with people who have had multiple jobs working in this sector. Through them, I was able to learn about different job descriptions. For example, I now know what a CIA analyst does versus actual policy makers. I know how vastly diverse the State Department is. On top of knowing the descriptions, I also can get a feel for what skills are needed for each of these jobs.
- I stayed the entire night in the auditorium and spoke to many people in the intelligence and defense business. That is my ideal career path and every one of them helped in answering some of my questions and giving me an idea of what I can do to get there. We were actually one of the last people to leave the building. They were kicking us out.
BYU students had the opportunity to gather at the Hinckley Alumni Center and listen to distinguished guests discuss civic engagement of young people. The panel titled, “The Next Greatest Generation,” focused on the current engagement of young people in the political process. Students had the opportunity to listen to Professor Kelly Patterson, Judge Lynn Davis, David Leavitt, founder of the Leavitt Institute, and David B. Barlow, United States Attorney for the District of Utah.

The discussion began with Professor Patterson explaining that the current rate of political participation by youth is lower than that of previous generation. From this the panelists began to discuss the importance of an engaged electorate. They all agreed that good government is a result of civil political engagement. U.S. Attorney David Barlow discussed the unlimited opportunities for engagement and that if one is creative and entrepreneurial one can find a good fit and make a difference. David Leavitt focused his discussions on civility and integrity. When civility breaks down so does society. It’s imperative that while engaging in political and civic discourse that one is empathetic to opposing viewpoints and maintains his or her values.

The panelists discussed the sometimes toxic nature of politics and they agreed that it begins with each individual and that social activism requires vision, courage, and sacrifice.