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To have had the opportunity to attend the American Indian Science and Engineering Society National Conference was such an incredible and life-impacting experience. I made lifelong friends and mentors and acquired new knowledge for my education and career.

On the first day of the conference, Thursday, we attended the 3M luncheon. During the luncheon, they had us do a group activity with the people at our table. This in itself was an amazing opportunity to meet and interact with STEM professors and professionals from around the country. The objective of the activity was to build a model, out of multiple 3M products, that had to do with either water conservation, renewable energy, or sustainable energy. With the innovative ideas and guidance from our fellow teammates, we were able to build a model containing not just one, but all 3 elements. When we completed the project, we presented our model in front of the entire grand ballroom luncheon, with over 400 attendees, as one of the few high school groups there. The significance of this is the fact that the majority of the participants were college students from prominent colleges and universities around the country, as well as STEM professionals. Mira, Cora and I were the youngest to participate in the competition. The support that we received from our teammates gave us the confidence to present to the all these people.

On Friday, we attended the largest college and career fair I have ever attended with 1331 exhibitors at the Cox Convention Center. Native American organizations, such as the American Indian College Fund, Ivy League universities, such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton and hundreds of other universities from around the country were represented. A large number of employers from government agencies were also present, with their efforts focused on recruitment of Native American interns and employees. Throughout the event, I gained information regarding scholarship and internship opportunities, more knowledge about future universities and career paths, as well as an excellent opportunity to sharpen my networking skills. After stopping by every booth, we walked out with our bags heaping full of information to use for future reference in our education and career exploration.

Not only was this an incredible learning experience but it opened my eyes to all the various educational and career opportunities that are available to me and other Native American youth around the country. The knowledge I've obtained will assist me now and in years to come. I would like to say "Wanishi" to the Elder and Veterans committees of the Delaware Tribe of Indians, the Allegheny School of Science and Technology, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, BancFirst and all the other donors who helped make this opportunity possible.