

I WAS A THINK COLLEGE POLICY ADVOCATE!

Arthur Moreira

My name is Arthur Moreira and I am a student from the College of Alameda (COA) in the College to Career program (C2C) in California. During my first year I took classes such as: Independent Living Skills, Self-Advocacy Skills, Preparing for Employment, and Financial Literacy Workshop.

I would like to describe my experience with the Think College Policy Advocates (TCPA) in Washington DC in June 2022, and to explain what I absorbed from attending. If I could use a word to briefly describe my time in Washington DC with TCPA, the members of Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and the opportunities given to me, I would say “outstanding!” The time we spent in Washington DC, the people we met, the work we did, the plans we made, what was shared by myself and others, the opportunity to meet the Congressional office staff (for the representatives of California)-- all of it was outstanding!

In Washington DC, the other advocates and I learned about many topics that helped us to understand how to be better self-advocates. For example, we learned about Section 504, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Supported decision making (SDM), Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID). These things were essential for me to know, especially if I was going to help TCPA and AUCD and bring information and updates to the Congress. The goal for this was to help disabled people in the areas of health, mental health, higher education, employment, minimum wage, accommodations, and their rights. There was also discussion about [college] programs that are designed to help them (why they are important, any need for upgrades, classes, financial aid and so forth) but most important why we need more programs like C2C in my state and other states and districts. All the information and important topics that were discussed were essential if I was going to represent myself, my college, my colleagues from C2C, and the state of California when I met with



Arthur in front of the Capitol during the Think College Policy Advocates event in Washington, DC in June 2022.

my Congressional Representatives. I learned how to speak more in depth about the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. All of the information we heard and every person from each state that I met became vital. I wanted to do whatever I could to cooperate, help, give ideas, and contribute the history of disabled people in the United States with change, progress, respect so we can have our voices heard.

What happened in Washington DC to me for now was a start of an opportunity to practice my advocacy. What I have learned about advocacy in my college program was incredible, but putting it into practice at the TCPA training was even better! The advocacy in this event was critically significant because I believe that everyone should have the right to higher education. During that time, we shared a common goal and we all had hope of a

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brighter future. I wanted to express myself clearly to realize and put into practice my advocacy skills. I said during the training day: "It takes more than motivation, it takes realization." When I said "realization" I meant that while it is important to learn about advocacy in school, we also need to work to actually practice those skills, to speak up for ourselves and achieve our goals.

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My experience in this event was fascinating and outstanding. I hope that I can continue to grow as an advocate and as a student. I do hope that this article can be useful and of great help for those in need and motivation and that it can inspire people to realize their own advocacy goals. My path to gather more knowledge, contribute more to people, to this nation and the world is still in progress. I am working to achieve greatness, fulfillment, peace, virtue, more experience and to leave a good mark on history.



ABOUT THINK COLLEGE POLICY ADVOCATES

Think College National Coordinating Center and the Association for University Centers on Disability (AUCD) have partnered to offer an authentic opportunity for teams comprised of college students with intellectual disability and college staff to learn about disability policy and advocacy. Pairs made up of a student and program staff member apply to be selected to participate in Think College Policy Advocates (TCPA) Training to learn the basics of advocacy, get updates on the latest issues, and contact their representatives in Congress to advocate in person in Washington, D.C.

[Learn more about Think College Policy Advocates](#)

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