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2017 ULI Fall Meeting  
ULI/Randall Lewis Health Mentorship Program  

Urban Land Institute’s core strength is its ability to bring people together to exchange ideas and share experiences that members can then use to improve their own communities. Attending the 2017 Fall Meeting as a ULI/Randall Lewis Health Mentee provided me with an opportunity to build relationships with my mentor, fellow program participants, and real estate professionals across the country.

Participating in the Building Healthy Places Interest Forum expanded my understanding of how health is impacted by the built environment. The forum brought together real estate professionals and leaders in health and wellness to share experiences from the field and to provide updates on development projects that promote the health of people and communities. Broadly, we discussed design and land use patterns that strengthen communities and specific steps that can be taken to achieve this goal. At a more granular level, I learned how building features such as noise and acoustics or indoor ventilation affect our productivity. By now most people recognize the importance of green design and promoting healthy lifestyles, but the reality is we are faced with finite resources and must prioritize competing goals. That is why I specifically appreciated the attempt to quantify the benefits of healthy buildings and communities, as this is crucial to making the business case for these kinds of investments.

The highlight of the conference was being able to participate in the product council meeting. Attending the Small-Scale Development Council with my mentor, Christopher Kurz, gave me access to a diverse group of professionals with knowledge, experience, and passion for development. During our tour of One Santa Fe, a transformational mixed-use TOD project in Los Angeles’ Arts District, the developer and leasing staff provided a detailed overview of the program and their lessons learned. At a later session we discussed how algorithms and artificial intelligence are already being used by venture-backed technology firms to disrupt the industry and what further changes we could expect. I spent the day hearing first-hand how ULI members tackled the challenges of urban design, entitlements, construction, and meeting investor expectations with a level of detail and transparency that I have not experienced at other conferences.

The Fall Meeting was an opportunity to expand both my knowledge and network in the real estate field. The Building Healthy Places Interest Forum helped me to solidify the link between health and the built environment, two areas that are often thought of separately. There are specific features that I will look to incorporate in future development projects, and many of the conversations and presentations from the conference will impact the way that I think about my work and my community.