

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

PLSC 443
LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP

Washington State Legislature
Legislative Internship Program – Policy Internship
2010 Session

WHEN: Winter Quarter 2010. The internship begins the first day of the legislative session in January and ends the last day of Winter Quarter.

WHERE: The State Legislature meeting at the capitol in Olympia.

STATE WEBSITE: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/internships>

STUDENT QUALIFICATIONS

- Undergraduate students majoring in any discipline are eligible to apply.
- At least junior standing (89 credits completed) as of the end of Fall Quarter 2009. You are not eligible if you graduate before Winter Quarter 2010.
- Minimum grade point average of 2.75. Students with less than 2.75 GPA may apply based on other experience and qualifications.
- Completion of two classes in political science or equivalent demonstrated political knowledge.
- Computer proficiency in Microsoft Office programs and E-mail and internet use.

APPLICATION and INTERVIEW PROCESS

Application Due Date

A completed application is due in the Political Science Office, AH 415, by noon October 23rd, 2009.

Do not send application materials to Olympia, with the possible exception of letters of recommendation (see page 4). **Submit all materials in one packet to the Political Science office.** See page 4 for required items.

Review Process

The application review is two-fold. Applications are first reviewed by the Political Science department, then by the State Intern Coordinators.

Political Science Department Review

A Political Science faculty committee reviews all application materials and contacts applicants if there are concerns or suggestions for strengthening the application. For applicants who pass the department review, the State application and its supporting documents are forwarded **by the Political Science Department** to the State Intern Coordinators. The department application and its supporting documents remain on file in the department office.

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State Intern Coordinators Review

The Intern Coordinators review only the documents required for the Washington State Legislature Application (see page 4).

Interviews

Around the first week in November, applicants are interviewed by the House and Senate Legislative Intern Coordinators who make the final selection. The interview consists of a personal interview and a writing exercise.

Notification

Applicants are notified of their status by the end of November by the Intern Coordinators.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Since 1971 the Washington State Legislature has sponsored the legislative intern program for Washington State college students. Interns spend Winter Quarter in Olympia while the legislature is in session and work under the supervision of the House and Senate Intern Coordinators.

Interns may be assigned to individual legislators in the House or the Senate, to committees, or to an "intern pool" to work for more than one legislator. Ordinarily an intern will be assigned first to the House or the Senate and then to a specific position. Interns usually spend the entire quarter in either the House or the Senate.

Interns directly experience the legislative process through their work assignment. They are expected to perform a variety of tasks: research and writing reports on specific issues; tracking legislation; attending committee hearings; assisting with preparing and mailing newsletters; responding to constituent inquiries by phone or mail; and general office work.

More information is available on the Washington State Legislature's website www.leg.wa.gov/internships.

Stipend

In the past a stipend of \$1200 a month, subject to income tax withholding, social security, etc., has been provided to each intern. This stipend is not intended as salary, but constitutes a supplement to cover costs above those normally associated with on-campus living.

Housing

Interns are responsible for housing arrangements. Olympia Intern Coordinators will assist in finding housing.

Dress

The House and Senate Intern Coordinators set dress standards for interns which must be followed. Interns are expected to dress professionally.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Course Registration

Interns receive override permission from the Political Science Department to register for *PLSC 443 Legislative Internship* (5-15 credits). No more than 10 credits of internship may be counted toward the political science major without permission from the chair. Credit may be earned in other majors if the student makes the appropriate arrangement with the chair of the major department.

Only Western undergraduate students selected by the Political Science Department on the recommendation of the Legislative Intern Selection Committee, and appointed as Legislative Interns by the Legislature are allowed to enroll.

A Term Paper or its Equivalent

Usual practice has been the selection of a significant bill early in the session with a detailed follow-up exploring its origins, sources of support and opposition, its course through the legislative process, including hearings, committee action, floor action and final result. These papers must follow the format appropriate for a formal term paper with emphasis on good organization and adequate footnoting. Other topics not related to specific bills may also be proposed. All topics require approval by the instructor.

Instead of a term paper, interns may submit the results of research they have completed during the course of their internship. To qualify, such research reports must constitute a finished product presented as a well-organized package appropriately documented and footnoted.

Term papers and research reports range about 15 pages in length plus appendices.

Instructor Visits

When visiting Olympia during the course of the session, the instructor meets with the interns regarding their papers. These meetings are part of the course requirement for PLSC 443.

Assessment

A five-page assessment/personal reflection of the intern experience is required. The intern's observations, reflections, and suggestions for future programs are to be included in this report.

Legislative Evaluation

Each intern is evaluated by their legislative supervisor in Olympia. This evaluation is considered by the instructor assigning grades for PLSC 443.

Paper Due Date

Both the major paper and the "summary and evaluations" are due in the Political Science Office, Arntzen Hall 415 on **the final class day of Winter Quarter.**

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APPLICATION CHECK LIST

To be considered for a legislative internship position, you must submit the following materials in one packet by noon October 23rd, 2009 to the Political Science Department office, AH 415. **DO NOT MAIL APPLICATION MATERIALS TO OLYMPIA**, with the possible exception of letters of recommendation (see below).

Supplemental Application

- ❑ *Supplemental Application Form.*
- ❑ *A current WWU transcript – unofficial from the web is sufficient.*
- ❑ *Other unofficial college transcripts or Transfer Equivalency Report, if applicable.*
- ❑ *A term paper or other writing sample.*

Washington State Legislature Application

- ❑ *Washington State Legislature Policy Internship Application.* The faculty sponsor will be announced in Fall Quarter 2009.
- ❑ *Cover letter.* If you need ideas, Career Services, OM 280, has information available about writing cover letters - ask for the *Green Packet (Job Search Success Packet)*. Be sure to personalize your letter (as opposed to using a “canned” sample). The reviewers will be evaluating your letter-writing skills, including proofreading abilities.
- ❑ *Current resume.* Some of the material from your resume will be entered on the Legislature's formal application. On your resume you can be more specific about your job experiences, volunteer work, school activities, particular skills, etc.
- ❑ *Written essay.* See specific directions in the application. **Topic:** *Explain your interest in state government and how a state legislative internship fits with your educational and career goals.*
- ❑ *2 letters of recommendation*
 - ❑ One reference letter from a faculty member addressing your skills and abilities.
 - ❑ One reference letter from a personal acquaintance who can address your character.

Letters of recommendation should be addressed to "Intern Coordinators". Letters may be emailed by the recommender to barrera.samantha@leg.wa.gov and best.judi@leg.wa.gov or sent hard copy, in which case they must be sealed in an envelope with the recommender's signature across the flap. If letters will be emailed or if the recommender will send it directly, please indicate on your application that letters are being sent separately. Letters may be sent directly to:

House of Representatives Intern Coordinator
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

You may also enclose letters of recommendation in your application packet. Recommenders should seal the letter in an envelope, sign across the seal, and give to you for including with your application. Write your name and "Legislative Intern Recommendation" on the outside of the envelope.