

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

# LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP – PLSC 443

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Washington State Legislature  
Legislative Policy Internship  
2020 Session

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**WHEN:** Winter Quarter 2020. The internship begins the first day of the legislative session in early January and runs through the end of Winter Quarter.

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

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

<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>
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The Washington State Legislature has sponsored the Legislative Intern Program for college students since 1971. Legislative 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, to committees, or to an "intern pool". Interns are generally assigned first to the House or Senate and then to a specific position. Opportunities to shadow an elected official or administrator are provided.

Interns directly experience the legislative process through their work assignment. They are expected to perform a variety of tasks: legislative research, bill tracking, attend committee hearings, prepare and mail newsletters, correspond with constituents, and general office work. Interns will take part in budget exercises, a mock hearing and mock floor debate. More information about the program is available from the State Legislature website: [www.leg.wa.gov/internships](http://www.leg.wa.gov/internships).

### **Stipend**

Interns have typically received some compensation to help offset costs associated with the internship. In 2019 a stipend was awarded to internship participants; that support is expected to continue in 2020.

### **Housing**

Interns are responsible for making their own housing arrangements in Olympia. However, Intern Coordinators will provide participants with the Legislature's housing list and interns can also join the roommate list if they are interested in connecting with other interns for possible shared housing.

**Dress**

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

<b>STUDENT QUALIFICATIONS</b>
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- Undergraduate students majoring in any discipline are eligible to apply
- At least junior standing (89 credits completed) at the end of the quarter preceding the internship. You are not eligible if you graduate before Winter Quarter
- No minimum grade point average required to apply

<b>APPLICATION and INTERVIEW PROCESS</b>
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**Application Due Date**

On-line application forms for the Legislative Internship Program are available beginning in May. The **priority deadline for the 2020 program is October 4, 2019**; applications can be submitted through October 11, 2019. To apply, review the application requirements and procedures and use the on-line application form located on the State Legislature's website: [www.leg.wa.gov/internships](http://www.leg.wa.gov/internships).

**Political Science Department Review**

The State online application and its supporting documents are forwarded to the Political Science Department after they are received by the State Intern Coordinators. A copy of your application and its supporting documents will remain on file in the Political Science Department office.

**State Intern Coordinators Review**

The Washington State Legislature Applications are reviewed by the State Intern Coordinators and they will notify applicants that are selected to be interviewed.

**Interviews**

Around the first half of 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. The interviews with the Intern Coordinators will be on the WWU campus either in person or using Skype.

**Notification**

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

## 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. Remaining credits will be counted toward general upper division credits at Western, or they may be applied to another major if the student makes the appropriate arrangement with the Chair of that department.

Only Western undergraduate students selected and appointed as Legislative Interns are allowed to enroll for credit.

### **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 internship coordinator.**

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 are generally about 15 pages in length plus appendices.

### **Instructor Visits**

When visiting Olympia during the course of the session, the Internship Coordinator 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 internship 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 when 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.**

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR 2020 INTERNSHIP

The WWU faculty sponsor for the 2020 session will be Professor Todd Donovan, Political Science Department.

### APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS/CHECKLIST

- **Letters of Recommendation (2):** Request letters of recommendation from one academic and one personal or professional reference. Send your references the link to the [Internship Reference Form](http://www.leg.wa.gov/Internships/Pages/InternReference.aspx) to upload their letters of recommendation ([www.leg.wa.gov/Internships/Pages/InternReference.aspx](http://www.leg.wa.gov/Internships/Pages/InternReference.aspx)).
- **Unofficial transcript:** Obtain an electronic copy of your unofficial transcript from your current university to verify your academic status. There is no minimum GPA cutoff.
- **Resume and Cover Letter:** Prepare a résumé and cover letter describing your work, volunteer, and academic experience, and demonstrating why you meet the qualifications for the internship. Your cover letter should be formatted like a business letter and addressed to Paula Rehwaldt and Colleen Rust.
- **One-Page Personal Essay:** Choose ONE of the recommended prompts and write a one-page personal essay responding to it. (*Do not use your essay to take a stand on a political issue or summarize your résumé.*)

What is a book, film, or work of art that has influenced you?

Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, share your story.

The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn?

- **Online Application:** Complete the [online application](http://leg.wa.gov/Internships/Pages/InternshipApplication.aspx) available at <http://leg.wa.gov/Internships/Pages/InternshipApplication.aspx> and upload your transcript and written materials. Your cover letter, résumé, and essay should be saved as a single document to upload. Submit!

**All application materials must be received by October 11, 2019 to ensure consideration. Applications completed by October 4, 2019 will receive priority consideration for interview selection.**

More information about the Legislative Internship Program application and instructions is available at: <http://leg.wa.gov/Internships/Pages/InternshipApplication.aspx>