

## **The Department of Political Science Internship Program**

**Why should you have an internship experience prior to graduation?** The benefits can be substantial (sometimes lifechanging) and will provide opportunities for learning, personal growth and career enhancements that are not available through normal on-campus course work.

**Intellectual Development.** A good internship can be a real-life laboratory in which you observe and test the concepts about government that are taught in the classroom. Imagine how clear the issues of criminal rights and the judicial process will come into focus while working in the Corporation Counsel for the District of Columbia (city prosecutor's office) assisting prosecutors as they prepare their cases for trial. Imagine as well how much more likely to understand the subtle difficulties legislators face balancing the demands of constituent interests with national issues after having worked in a congressional office. Students returning from the internships consistently express how much more they understand and can see the value in their college courses because of their internship experiences.

**Career Sampling.** Which career path to follow can be a perplexing question for many students. Even if you know what direction you are headed after graduation, an internship is a low-cost way to explore your career interests. The experience can give you daily opportunities to interact with professionals who are working in your career area. You gain substantive work experience while observing the day-to-day reality of that career. The internship can be as valuable in helping you discover what you don't want to do as in learning what interests you.

**Improved Employment Prospects.** The job market can be tough and you need every advantage possible when competing against the thousands of recent graduates seeking first-time employment. It is clearly established that a substantive internship on your resume will give you an advantage over those who have had no such experience. Employers like applicants with a proven track record who have worked in the professional world. Not only the experience but the letters of recommendation from your intern supervisor and the contacts from networking can give you a real jump on the competition.

**Enhanced Skills.** One reason employers like graduates with internship experience is that they have had a chance to test their skills in the world of work. Your campus courses will have helped you learn how to write well, think analytically, research and solve problems. However, there is no place like an internship to help you sharpen these skills and apply them in a meaningful way.

**More Competitive for Graduate School.** If you are like many students whose plans after the bachelor's degree include graduate school, a substantive internship can improve your chances of getting into a good program. Although not a substitute for good grades and entrance exam score, admissions officers for most professional (i.e. law and business) schools and Ph.D. programs consistently state that a solid, professional work experience for a student during the undergraduate years will help improve his or her chances of admission.

**A Great Time.** Internships are also stimulating and fun. They provide a change of pace from the normal classroom routine and give you a chance to develop and improve your interpersonal skills. Work projects completed as part of the internship are often used to help the organization accomplish its mission. It gives you a sense of accomplishment to know that you have made a contribution to that process.

**For more information, visit [www.fhssinternships.byu.edu](http://www.fhssinternships.byu.edu)**