

APPROACHING WASHINGTON

**A Guide to Obtaining Internships in
Washington, D.C.**

**Produced by
The Internship Resources Committee
Stanford in Government**

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INTRODUCTION

What follows is an adaptation of a handbook issued by Stanford University to its students interested in internships in Washington D.C. It is used with their permission.

Stanford in Government (SIG) is a student-run organization dedicated to helping Stanford students become more involved in public service and increasing political awareness on campus. The Internship Resources Committee of SIG assists students in their internship search by providing information and advice. *Approaching Washington* is a "how-to" guide for obtaining internships in Washington, DC: how to find them, how to apply, and how to use SIG's resources throughout the process.

Listings of many organizations and agencies that offer summer internships can be found on our website: www.stanford.edu/group/SIG. SIG has compiled information on numerous internships which have been prescreened by our staff members. Instead of hundreds of internships varying greatly in quality, the SIG website features quality internships that Stanford undergraduates would be interested in. Another good place to look for internships is the Washington Intern Foundation (www.interns.org) and Jobtrak (www.jobtrak.com).

Once you have narrowed down your list of the organizations you would like to apply to, use Chapter 3 of this booklet entitled "The Application" for guidance on writing resumes and cover letters. There is an example of each at the end of the booklet. You might also want to attend a "Resume Writing Workshop" sponsored by the Career Development Center (CDC) for expert advice on composing a resume. For specific details, see their website (www.stanford.edu/dept/CDC).

In addition to internship information, SIG also offers resources for finding housing in DC and organizes a summer program for Stanford students. This summer we will sponsor many activities, including cultural events, happy hours, softball games, and community service activities. More information about the summer will appear in *Approaching Washington II*, published by SIG in the beginning of next quarter.

A word about the application process: it is possible to have a challenging and rewarding internship experience only if you take the responsibility to make it so. Follow the schedule offered as a guide so that you can secure one of the best internships, which tend to go first. Be persistent. Washington is a place where hard work and perseverance are rewarded- start now with the application process and follow through once you have acquired your position.

Finally, enjoy the process! It may be frustrating at times, but you will be rewarded once you arrive in Washington and learn what a truly exciting and wonderful place it is during the summer. Feel free to contact any of us with questions. GOOD LUCK!

MASTER SCHEDULE

September If you are interested in one of many highly selective internships in the federal government (particularly in the Department of Justice, the CIA and the State Department), obtain applications and information now. These internships are notorious for having very early deadlines!

December Research internship opportunities using websites, books, and Career Services resources. Whenever you come across an internship you particularly like, make sure to confirm all the information by calling the organization providing the internship. Books and websites often have old or inaccurate information.

January Narrow down list of potential internships to six or seven. Apply for individual internships. Note that good research can enable you to bypass standard channels and go directly to scholars working in areas that interest you. Obtain recommendations with plenty of time to spare. Submit a draft of your resume and 2 writing samples to Career Services for review.

March - April If planning on an internship in DC, find housing using Pepperdine's resources, websites and personal contacts. Continue with follow-up calls on applications. Make sure you get sign-offs on your internship paperwork.

August Submit your internship completion forms to your faculty adviser and Career Services to ensure you receive full credit. Write a 2 – 3 page summary of your experience with any comments that might be helpful for future interns and leave them in the Career Services files.

CHAPTER 1: INTERN QUALIFICATIONS

Internship opportunities in government and public service organizations exist for all students, from freshmen to Ph.D. candidates. Although some offices seek only juniors and seniors, most will consider any college student. **Even if you do not quite meet the listed standards, there is no harm in applying.** Requirements are generally meant to deter those who lack the maturity or experience to work in a fast-paced environment like Washington, DC; academic excellence and proven leadership ability will always merit a second look. Even if you are not accepted for a position (perhaps because you are a freshman), applying in subsequent years will show an employer that you are serious about interning in that office.

Do not hesitate to apply because of below-average grades. Offices seldom require a minimum GPA and often do not even request a transcript. If a transcript is required, you can use your cover letter to steer the focus away from your grades by emphasizing other strengths and abilities. **If you *do* have an impressive academic record, include a copy of your transcript with your application, regardless of whether or not it is requested.**

You don't have to be a political science, economics, or public policy major to get an internship. Few employers in DC require applicants with specific majors, although some may ask that you demonstrate an interest in their field through classes and/or extracurricular activities. Because certain interns do specialized work, some organizations (such as congressional committees or scientific agencies) may require specific expertise, ranging from knowledge of particular computer software to laboratory experience. However, most offices are seeking intelligent, motivated students who are willing to learn. Make sure to mention in your cover letter any experience or skills that relate to the internship for which you are applying.

Writing ability is extremely important for almost all internships. You most likely will be preparing reports, drafting letters, and producing your own work. Thus, you will often be asked to submit a writing sample in the application - not to test your eloquence, but rather to make sure you are able to communicate effectively.

Previous experience always improves the chances of gaining an internship. During the school year, look for opportunities that might enhance your application. Check for internship opportunities in local governments and agencies. You may also want to consider internships in Sacramento or your local or state government.

DC offices with internships look for hard-working, intelligent students who will be a pleasant addition to the work atmosphere. Most offices suffer from reduced staff and added work loads during the summer; consequently, interns are a valuable resource during these months. While fewer internships are available during the rest of the year, opportunities do exist throughout the year.

The competition that you will face for these positions may startle you. Congressional offices and committees are among the most competitive, accepting about one-twelfth of all applicants. Some private agencies, such as Common Cause and the Arms Control Association, offer internships that are also highly competitive. Your best bet is to apply to a variety of internships on Capitol Hill and in public interest and lobbying offices. We advise applying to at least 15 employers that interest you to ensure you get a job you want. Also remember that applying for internships at times other than the summer means facing much less competition. In fact, some students are given an offer to work during the spring or fall instead of summer.

Finally, a brief note about networking and connections. If you have them, do not be afraid to use this advantage. It cannot hurt to ask a relative or a friend to write a letter to their old college roommate who is now a Senator's administrative assistant or the chairperson of a lobbying group. Also, do not be afraid to approach faculty in your area of interest. They often know about good places to work, and they may have connections in those places. Conversely, do not be concerned if you do not have any connections in Washington. No office hires solely on the basis of connections, and there is no substitute for a solid, well-written application. This is true both on and off the Hill. If you can, though, try to make your recommendations as personal as possible. Connections work very well in DC, but most importantly, the best recommendations come from people who know you well.

CHAPTER 2: CHOOSING AN INTERNSHIP

The first step in the application process involves deciding what kind of internship you would like to pursue. Are you more interested in the legislative, judicial, or executive branch of government? Perhaps you would prefer working for a small private agency, a lobbying group, or a trade organization. Maybe there is a specific field you would like to explore, but perhaps you are not familiar with what committees or organizations are involved in that field. Or maybe you have not the slightest clue where to begin. In any case, some research will be necessary. That is why we provide reference materials to students considering an internship in Washington, DC.

One of the first steps you can take in searching for an internship is to look on the school's website, which contains listings of many internship opportunities. Each year, the university contacts hundreds of employers in Washington and adds their profiles to this website, so it contains the most recent information available. There are also many other online tools and resources for finding internships; Jobtrak (www.jobtrak.com) and Yahoo! (http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/Career_and_Vocational/Career_Planning/Internships) have a listing of some websites you may find useful. Be warned, however, that the quality of these sites can vary greatly, and you should avoid any sites that charge fees for information. Always confirm that you do indeed have the latest and most accurate details about the internship by calling the organization providing the internship to confirm deadlines and mailing addresses. Sometimes, a position may not even exist anymore or new and more appealing ones may have been created.

You should also visit the Career Services office where there are several reference books with additional information about numerous internships available to college students. You can also subscribe to the DC-interest mailing list to receive periodic information on internships and housing (email majordomo@lists.stanford.edu and write "subscribe dc-interest").

After exploring the possibilities, you should begin to focus your efforts. On the Hill alone there are 435 Representatives, 100 Senators, nearly 50 committees (each with both a majority and a minority staff), and about 100 other employers. Focus on members in your own district, state, or school area. Downtown, there are dozens of departments and bureaus, thousands of corporate offices, untold numbers of lobbying groups (public and private interests), and the normal businesses you would find in a city the size of Washington, D.C. Use your imagination, do some research, and choose a variety of places to apply to.

For example, if you are interested in environmental policy, you might apply to the Congressional subcommittees or members of Congress most interested in the issue, the executive agencies that deal with U.S. environmental policy, the private agencies administering their own programs, the lobbying groups pressing for legislation, and the newspaper that is writing stories about the problem. Each of these organizations works

from its own perspective, yet they all come together to fashion policy. Remember that despite its visibility, Congress is but one player in the policy-making process.

If you know of some organization, office, or public figure that you would particularly love to work for but find that they offer no internships, take initiative. Conduct intense research, contact people at the organization/office, and convince them why they should let you work for them for a summer. Initiating your own internship shows perseverance, motivation, enthusiasm, and creativity. Of course, no one asking for an internship to be created for them should expect monetary compensation.

THE SENATE

An intern for a U.S. Senator works right in the middle of the nation's policymaking process. A Senator's employees typically consist of a chief of staff, legislative aides and correspondents, personal secretaries, and receptionists. An intern's responsibilities may vary from sitting in on committee hearings to working in the mailroom. Much of an intern's time may be spent doing busywork and mundane tasks, such as photocopying or filing papers. If lucky, you may find yourself researching various issues confronting a Senator who sits on several committees. It should be noted, however, that many internships on the Hill involve a lot of drudgery, such as answering phones. This is not to say that they are not good experiences, but they may not be the most substantive internships available. Many times, you need to ask/look for meaningful projects; they rarely fall into your lap. Senate offices usually have large numbers of interns, especially in the summer, ranging from seven to thirty-five students.

Since competition for these internships tends to be rather stiff, you stand a better chance of being hired by your own state's Senators. If you are determined to work for a Senator other than your own, base your application on some clearly-stated common ground. For example, if your grandparents live in Kansas and you visit them often, you may have become familiar with the pressing issues in that state. You would therefore have some justification in applying to a Senator from Kansas. Keep in mind that the prestige or seniority of a Senator rarely has anything to do with the quality of his or her internship program.

* Top Senate Internships (proviso: by the time some internship programs have an excellent reputation, their sponsoring politicians may no longer be in office) [source: Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars]:

Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)
Charles Grassley (R-IA)
Tom Harkin (D-IA)
Edward Kennedy (D-MA)
Arlen Specter (R-PA)

Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ)
Richard Lugar (R-IN)
Don Nickles (R-OK)
Robert Smith (R-NH)

For the phone numbers of these senators, call the Capitol Operator at (202) 224-3121.

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Because Representatives have much smaller offices than their Senate counterparts, they generally offer fewer internships. Like those in the Senate, internships in the House range from research-oriented positions to more clerical jobs that consist mainly of writing letters to constituents and answering phones. Because of their smaller office size, Representatives are looking for flexible interns who are competent in a variety of roles. Above all, your ability to write clearly and persuasively (as demonstrated by a scholarly writing sample) will enhance your application and prove invaluable during your internship.

Offices on the House side tend to be smaller and more congenial than Senate offices in Washington. Attire is usually less formal than that of a Senator's office, and you will probably find the Representative more accessible than you would a Senator.

Once again, we cannot stress enough the importance of applying to your own member of Congress. This is especially true during the summer, when many students apply for a limited number of positions. Competition is even stiffer for spots on the staffs of the most prestigious members of Congress. So, if you do decide to apply for such a position, you should demonstrate serious interest and perhaps some research experience in areas of special interest to the Representative.

* Top House Internships (proviso: by the time some internship programs have an excellent reputation, their sponsoring politicians may no longer be in office) [source: Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars]:

Sanford Bishop (D-GA)

Gene Green (D-TX)

Richard Gephardt (D-MO)

Earl Hilliard (D-AL)

Steny Hoyer (D-MD)

Susan Molinari (R-NY)

Richard E. Neal (D-MA)

Donald M. Payne (D-NJ)

John E. Porter (R-IL)

Robert Scott (D-VA)

For the phone numbers of these senators, call the Capitol Operator at (202) 224-3121.

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES

Internships with Congressional committees and subcommittees tend to offer the most interesting work on Capitol Hill. Many Senate, House, and joint committees offer internships during the school year and summer. Unfortunately, few committees and subcommittees have formal programs that exist from year to year. Positions may or may not be available, depending on the committee's workload at the time, available space, and your special qualifications. You can find out which committees or subcommittees are offering internships by phoning them directly or by getting in touch with the offices of the chairperson or committee members.

If you do apply directly to the committee or subcommittee, remember that there are two staffs, one for the majority and one for the minority offices, and that they both might have positions available. The majority staff consists of the party that is in control and they tend to have larger staffs. The minority staff has fewer positions open. Since the Republicans and the Democrats each choose their own personnel, hiring for each is a separate process, and you should inquire with both or with the one that interests you more.

Internships with Congressional committees involve very different tasks from those in legislative offices. Committee interns generally do more research and less clerical work. You may also evaluate legislation brought before the committee or prepare summary reports of committee meetings and hearings. Because the tasks you will perform focus on specific issues, your application should demonstrate your interest and background in the subject.

When applying for an internship with a member of Congress, you can also mention your interest in any committees or subcommittees on which he or she sits (state in your letter the specific names of the committees). All Senators, and most members of the House, are members of more than one committee, and all are members of several subcommittees; thus, you might want to single out one specific interest of yours. This approach is particularly effective if the Senator or Representative is the chairperson of the committee, but it may also work if he or she is a senior member of it. Therefore, if you want to work for a committee, you can apply both directly to the committee or subcommittee chairperson (sending the application to the committee's address), and indirectly by writing the chairperson's personal office. In some cases, the same person will consider both applications, but in other situations different individuals will process them. If you become an intern in a member's personal office, you should also explore any opportunities that arise to work with the staffs on the committees or subcommittees on which he or she sits.

When applying to committees and subcommittees, be persuasive. Convince them that you really know something about their area of interest. Emphasize your ability to work independently and your knowledge of the specific issues. Familiarizing yourself with the subject through recent issues of the National Journal or Congressional Quarterly is an excellent step to take. Remember that these internships are hard to get, but they are often the most substantive opportunities on the Hill.

OTHER OFFICES ON CAPITOL HILL

There are many employers on Capitol Hill other than members of Congress and committees and subcommittees. The officers of the House and Senate (Speaker, Whip, and Sergeant at Arms) all have staffs and might offer internships. In addition, there are many support agencies on the Hill, such as the General Accounting Office, the Office of Technology Assessment, the Congressional Budget Office, the Library of Congress, and the Congressional Research Service. GAO is the investigative arm of Congress, studying just about everything the government does. OTA advises Congress on scientific matters,

while CBO attempts to predict the economic effects of proposed legislation. The Library of Congress and CRS provide research support for Congressional offices.

Explore the possibilities by looking through the Capitol Hill phone book and directories. You may find some out-of-the-way offices that will offer you a position. Although these offices may be less glamorous than others on the Hill, they generally offer rewarding internships for those with an interest in their fields of specialization.

PUBLIC INTEREST AND LOBBYING ORGANIZATIONS

Many students have discovered that much of the power in Washington, along with a greater number of internship opportunities, is found off of Capitol Hill. Hundreds of lobbying groups, public interest agencies, and national organizations with headquarters in Washington offer a wide variety of internships quite distinct from those on the Hill. Such internships are particularly attractive if you have a specific research objective, interest area, or political issue in mind because you will be able to focus your energies on the organization's research priorities or lobbying objectives. The day-to-day responsibilities of these internships may include some clerical work, monitoring Congressional hearings, or preparing issue briefs and press releases. You may even end up writing articles for the organization's newsletter.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

There are two basic ways of finding internships with an executive department or agency. You can always contact the offices and departments directly to see what positions are available. A few phone calls or letters and a bit of persistence can pay off. Sometimes an office will not have a formal internship program; however, if your qualifications are strong and your interests are specific, a position might be created for you. You can also look on the Office of Personnel Management website (www.usajobs.opm.gov), which lists the summer jobs that should be available in each department.

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

For those interested in communications and journalism, Washington is full of opportunities. The DC area has newspapers of its own, as well as bureaus for countless newspapers and periodicals from around the nation. The same goes for both television and radio. In addition, just about every organization in Washington has a communications or public relations office.

DC also offers internships for those interested in the arts. The Smithsonian Institution's museums regularly offer internships. Positions may also be available with organizations such as the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Congressional Art Caucus, as well as Washington's private museums, like the Phillips Collection. To find out what positions are available in these fields, you should check the listings on Jobtrak and in the Haas Center's Clearinghouse. Once you have done that, you should contact the organization directly.

GENERAL TIPS FOR FINDING SUMMER JOBS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT *(if you want to work in government but also need to make money during the summer for college expenses and tuition)*

1) Contact the agency of interest directly

2) Call **Career America Connection at (912) 757-3000**. Career America Connection is a recorded job-listing compiled by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

3) Log on to one of OPM's 24-hours-a-day electronic bulletin boards, which provide the same information as on Career America Connection but also allow you to download information.

Some relevant phone numbers:

WASNET	(202) 606-1113
FJIC	(313) 226-4423
OPM MAINSTREET	(202) 606-4800
Federal JobLine	(818) 575-6521
PayPerNet	(202) 606-2675
FJOB	(912) 757-3100
OPM Express	(214) 767-0565
FedJobs	(215) 580-2216

4) Visit your local Federal Job Information Center (FJIC), which has counselors who can help you identify and apply for summer jobs.

CHAPTER 3: THE APPLICATION

The internship application typically consists of a cover letter, resume, writing sample, recommendations and transcript. The following information describes each of these components and includes some tips for improving your chances of gaining an internship.

THE COVER LETTER

The cover letter is often hastily written by internship applicants, but, in truth, **cover letters may well be the most important aspect of your application.** Busy internship coordinators flooded with applications often only skim the cover letters first. If a cover letter strikes them as unoriginal, past internship coordinators have admitted that they trash the application without even glancing at the resume. Think of the cover letter as an opportunity to make a positive first impression.

Most cover letters are limited to one page, but this is not necessarily a requirement. It is fine to write a letter that extends to a second page if it paints a picture of a **bright, eager, and interested individual who truly desires the position.** A one-page, standard-format letter may even seem impersonal to a potential employer and might not make your application stand out. If you are using the same cover letter for all your applications, you will seem less informed and enthusiastic in comparison to other candidates. An outstanding cover letter will take some time and research, but attention to details like this just might make the difference. Most successful cover letters include:

- **A first paragraph** that states your credentials and reasons for writing, with reference to the internship you seek.
- **A second and possibly third paragraph** which relate your interests and background to the specific work of the organization or legislator. You want to give the impression that you know something about the employer and that you can make a valuable contribution. Specific information can be obtained quite easily off the Internet. If you are applying for an internship on the Hill, find out about the particular interests of the legislator or committee, and mention them in relation to your own interests and skills.
- **A final paragraph** indicating the follow-up action you plan to take, such as calling them. Close with an expression of appreciation or thanks.

As you can see in the sample in the Appendix, you should use the standard business letter format. If you have any questions about your cover letter or resume, make an appointment to meet with the counselors at the CDC.

THE RESUMÉ

Potential employers rely on your resume to provide an accurate representation of you when they are choosing among candidates. Your resume is a brief account of who you are, where you live, what you have done, and where you have studied. You should never

falsify information about your education or experience. Give careful attention to accurately presenting yourself in the best possible way. Concentrate on the skills you have to offer an employer and elaborate on accomplishments that show your potential as an internship applicant.

A one-page resume should be sufficient for most internship applications. Avoid crowding it with too much information, and maintain a clear structure. A well-written resume allows a potential employer to grasp the most important information quickly. It should include a brief statement of job objectives, an account of your college education, a summary of your work experience, and any other information about your accomplishments and interests that relate to the position you are seeking. The resume is typically broken down into the following categories:

Personal Information: Include your name, current Stanford address, permanent address, phone numbers, and e-mail. Be sure to update potential employers if any of this information changes later.

Job Objective: The objective should specify the type of position that interests you. Avoid generalities such as "to work in government" and try instead to identify specific skills you hope to bring to the job and how you plan to use them. For example, one objective might read, "to work as a Senate intern using research, writing, and analytical skills." You may be applying to a variety of offices and consequently your stated objective may vary. An objective tailored to suit a Senate office may not be relevant to a public interest organization. Obviously, it might be appropriate to state a slightly different objective for each organization. It is perfectly acceptable to omit the "objective" portion, as long as your accompanying cover letter or some other part of your application makes clear what you are seeking.

Education: Include all institutions attended beyond high school, dates of attendance, degrees, and major areas of study. These items, as well as your work experience, should be listed in reverse chronological order. Do not worry if your major is not directly related to the organization to which you are applying. Remember to list all courses that your prospective employer may find relevant. If you have not yet declared a major, just provide information about the types of classes you have taken.

Work Experience: Include dates, employers, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Use **active** verbs in the past tense when describing what you have done. To say you "planned," "organized," "supervised," "coordinated," or "implemented" sounds much better than saying you "were involved in" or "participated in." Do not forget to include summer, part-time, and volunteer experiences. Be aware of what your employer may be looking for- research and analytical skills, creativity, drive- and emphasize those qualities when you list your previous experience.

Additional Information/Skills: Include other relevant information that might improve or add a personal dimension to your application. Membership in University committees or honor societies, extracurricular activities not listed under experience, computer and word processing skills, languages, and relevant hobbies could all be mentioned here.

Your resume is one of the most important elements of your application. Spend time developing a strong one. When you are nearly finished, read over it as if you were an employer and ask yourself whether it is effective, or ask a few friends to criticize it. It must be error-free. Brief appointments can be made in Career Services to have a professional counselor look over your resume for you. This service can be very helpful. Remember, the information you choose to include, and the manner in which you include it, can be the key to obtaining a summer internship.

THE WRITING SAMPLE

The writing sample is the one opportunity that employers have to evaluate your writing ability directly. An impressive writing sample can often make up for any weaker parts of your application.

Use three to five pages as a rough guide for the length of a writing sample. One or two pages do not give an employer much opportunity to evaluate your work, while ten to twenty pages can be too cumbersome to read at all.

The topic is usually less important than the quality of the paper itself. A public policy paper that analyzes an issue relevant to the office's area of interest is ideal because it lets you demonstrate not only your writing skills but your knowledge of the issue as well. If you are unable to submit a public policy report, any other work, such as an English essay or IHUM paper, will be fine as long as it demonstrates critical thinking and persuasive argumentation. An excerpt from a longer research paper is also acceptable.

Graded papers are useful if the professor has expressed approval. Otherwise, you should submit a retyped, strengthened version of the original.

RECOMMENDATIONS

If you know a few individuals who could write solid letters of support, you should submit them as part of your application whether the office requests them or not. You should limit yourself to two letters of recommendation. The content of the letter is far more important than the identity of its author. Good sources for recommendations include professors, teaching assistants, resident fellows, and employers.

TRANSCRIPTS

Some offices will request a transcript with your application. For obvious reasons, employers are interested in knowing what classes you have taken and how you performed in them. Remember to include your GPA and any coursework completed elsewhere (such as over the summer or abroad). Even if the office you are applying to does not specifically request a transcript, it would be helpful to send a list of courses you have taken, arranged by departmental groupings (i.e. social sciences, humanities, mathematics, etc.). This will be especially helpful if you have taken a lot of courses in fields which relate to the internship or if you have a group of courses that demonstrate a particular skill, like quantitative ability. Since it is sometimes difficult to read an official transcript, you may want to type out a copy that looks more professional and readable.

TIMING AND PERSISTENCE

Sending your resume will not do any good if it does not arrive on time. The timing of the application process varies from office to office. Some offices such as the State Department require early applications because interns need security clearance. On the Hill, it is not too early to make inquiries in December. Call or write the office first and ask how the application process works, who makes the decisions, whether they want references, transcripts or writing samples, and when they make their decisions. Calling first ensures that you know exactly how to comply with their particular requirements.

Try to send all application materials as soon as possible. It is important for you to call the office before sending an application in order to make sure there is still time to apply. Some offices accept applications through March or even April.

Your work is not over once you have completed your application and sent your last letter to DC. **A few weeks after sending your application, make phone calls, remembering that the Congressperson or committee will almost never make the final decision about hiring you.** Find out who the internship contact person is (on the Hill, this is generally the Congressperson's staff director) and make your calls directly to him or her. This is important because there is a very high possibility that this person decides on the interns. During the rest of the year, think about supplementing your application with new information as it develops. For instance, after receiving your quarter grades, send a copy of them to Washington with a brief letter explaining your desire to update your application. Do not overdo it or be obnoxious, but a call or letter every month or so will not hurt you if you are tactful and friendly about it.

Once again, perhaps the **most important factors in securing an internship are perseverance and following up.** Many students do not get the internship they want simply because they sent their application to the wrong address or it is incomplete. Call and make sure everything is in order. Reiterate your interest, and do not be afraid to make yourself known. Simply mailing in your application and waiting for an offer may be taken as a sign of disinterest, and might hurt your chances of getting the position.

CHAPTER 4: GETTING ACCEPTED

Around April or May, responses start to arrive in the mail or by phone. If more than one internship offer comes, you will have to make some decisions. Before jumping into anything, ask a few questions, such as:

- What type of work will you be doing (policy analysis or photocopying)?
- How large is the office staff?
- How many interns work there?
- Where is the office located?
- How close is it to the Metro (the DC subway)?
- What are the hours?
- How formal is the office environment?

Feel free to contact the office's Intern Coordinator and any previous interns you know about these or any other questions that may help you decide which offer to accept.

Remember, once you have accepted a position, you are obligated not to accept any other offers. You should also notify all the other offices you applied to that you have accepted another position and will respectfully withdraw your application. Remember that you are dealing with professionals and thus should act with courtesy.

On the other hand, if you find yourself receiving rejection after rejection, do not despair. Write a brief letter to thank the Intern Coordinator for reviewing your application and ask that it be considered in the next group of applications or for the following summer program. If an opening suddenly becomes available, a demonstration of your continued interest may just land you an internship after all.

Social Opportunities for DC Interns (Not All Work and No Play):

Washington is not only the nation's capital, but also America's intern capital. If the intern social scene is important to you, check the following (no membership fees for either group). You'll have the opportunity to meet non-Stanford college students who share many of your interests and enthusiasm. Not only can you make new friends and form contacts all over the country, but students report that many long-lasting romances between interns began with these:

- The Washington Intern Network (WIN) events have been described as "a raging frat party." Established in 1995, WIN hosts several events throughout the summer at DC nightspots, such as V Column and The Cellar. Approximately 750 college-aged interns attend each event. Contact info: Washington Intern Network//4514 Westbrook Lane//Kensington, MD 20895//(301) 460-0561//(301) 460-9597 (fax)//email: windc@aol.com
- If huge parties aren't your thing, then check out the Noodle Club, which meets throughout the summer at pasta restaurants for great conversation and yummy food. About 60 Noodlers attend each meeting. Contact info: The Noodle Club//phone (202) 546-3950//fax (202) 546-3749//email: noodleclub@aol.com

CHAPTER 5: CREDIT AND COMPENSATION

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY!

Most interns are not paid for working in congressional offices, executive agencies, or public interest organizations. Those who are paid earn average salaries ranging from \$600 to \$1000 per month. Paid positions are often very competitive and usually given to students who demonstrate financial need. Compensation varies dramatically: trade organizations sometimes offer good pay while public interest lobbying groups might offer only a small stipend for lunches and transportation. In any case, it is a good idea to find out if there is any financial compensation available for the positions you are considering.

READING AND WRITING FOR SUMMER CREDIT

You may be able to receive academic credit for your summer work through a directed reading or an independent study project.

Directed Reading

Directed readings usually involve a substantial research project and count for units that can be awarded during the fall quarter. Directed reading is a unique opportunity to pursue a particular area of interest and become better acquainted with a faculty member. The key to a directed reading is to begin early and check with your department, since there are often limits to how much direct reading credit can be applied to a specialization.

Independent Study

You can also earn credit by undertaking an independent study project under the direction of an individual faculty member. Most professors will require that all arrangements be finalized before the beginning of the quarter in which you undertake your internship. To earn credit, you and a faculty member decide upon a course of study. Keep in mind that academic departments offer varying programs and credit, so requirements for an independent study may differ.

CHAPTER 6: SIG SERVICES

HOUSING

Here are options for summer housing in DC: Washington-area alumni, local universities, and rental houses or apartments. A housing guide will be available in the Career Service office and on our website.

- *Alumni:* The Alumni Association is attempting to provide many students with housing through alumni cooperation. Some housing may be free, and some require rent. A housing book will be available with a list of alumni in the DC area who are willing to house students for the summer or a specified period of time.
- *Local Universities:* Georgetown, George Washington, American, and other local universities offer summer housing in their dormitories for student interns. Check online for information.
- *Rental Properties:* Although it is difficult to find an apartment in DC while you are in California, there are resources that can help. Check the Washington Post classified listings on their website, and also check a listing of off-campus housing by Georgetown at <http://data.georgetown.edu/student-affairs/och/>. Many students that attend universities in DC sublet their apartments or houses for the summer.
- *WISH:* Washington Intern Student Housing is an organization that offers inexpensive move-in summer housing options for students. See the Career Services office for more information or check online at: <http://www.internsdc.com/>

APPENDIX
SAMPLE RESÚMÉ
MICHAEL N. MCGRANN

P.O. Box 12345
Stanford, CA 94309
(415) 497-0101
mcgrann@stanford.edu

54 Upland Road
Denver, CO 80906
(303) 475-9470

OBJECTIVE: To work as a Senate intern using writing, research, and office skills.

EDUCATION: **Stanford University**, Stanford, CA. Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, anticipated June 2003. Other coursework includes economics, Spanish, calculus, and computer science. GPA: 3.5/4.0

Cheyenne High School, Denver, Colorado, class of 1999.
Valedictorian of a class of 207 students.

EXPERIENCE:

9/00 - present **Assistant Director**, Speakers Bureau, Associated Students of Stanford University, Stanford, CA. Successfully invited national political figures to speak at Stanford, including Senator Robert Dole and Justice Anthony Kennedy. Publicized the events, coordinated the logistics, and introduced speakers.

6/00 - 8/00 **Administrative Assistant**, Home Roberts & Owen, Attorneys at Law, Colorado Springs, CO. Organized and delivered legal documents. Modified and streamlined the filing system. Assisted in employee training and evaluation.

9/99 - 6/00 **Staff Writer**, *The Stanford Daily*, Stanford, CA. Wrote articles for student-published campus newspaper. Covered Faculty Senate proceedings and wrote restaurant reviews.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Proficient with Microsoft Word and Excel.
- Stanford freshman crew, Rugby club team, intramural sports.
- Special Olympics Volunteer.
- Awarded the 1999 Denver Post Young Photographer's Prize.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

P.O. Box 12345
Stanford, CA 94309
February 1, 2001

Mr. Greg E. Walcher
Administrative Assistant
Office of Senator William L. Armstrong
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Walcher:

Thank you for speaking with me on the phone last week about Senator Armstrong's internship program. As I mentioned, I am a sophomore at Stanford University and am very interested in working in your office as an intern this summer.

I have long held a strong interest in the national political scene and would now like to get a closer understanding of the public policy process. As my enclosed resume indicates, I am a Political Science major and am very involved with the Stanford Speakers Bureau, a student organization that sponsors a number of political debates and discussions on campus. Since much of my coursework this year has focused on international relations and macroeconomic policy, I am particularly interested in Senator Armstrong's work on the Senate Budget and Finance Committees.

I am willing to do anything the job requires. I acquired valuable office skills working as an Administrative Assistant in a Colorado Springs law firm last summer. I have excellent writing skills, and I would also hope to use my academic skills and interests to pursue some independent legislative research, perhaps for one of the Senator's committees. Since Stanford operates on the quarter system, I could remain in Washington through part of September.

Thank you for your consideration. I will call your office to follow up on this letter within two weeks.

Sincerely,

Michael McGrann