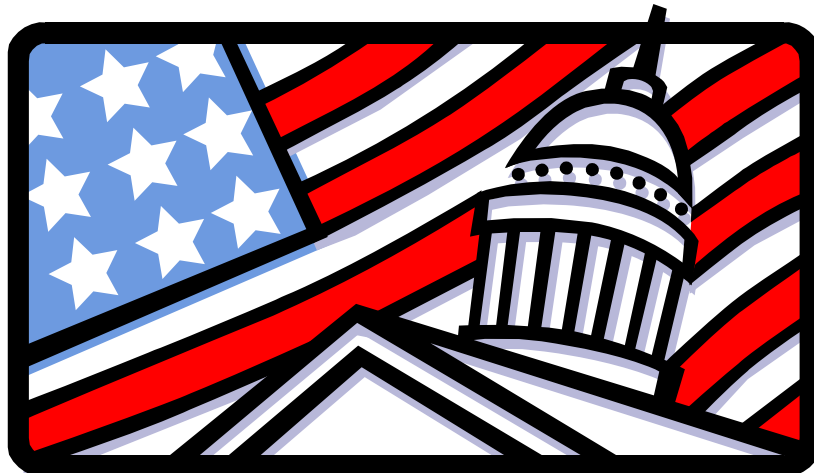




INTERNSHIP GUIDE

WASHINGTON MENTORSHIP PROGRAM



American University
4400 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20016-8083



THE WASHINGTON MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Dear Washington Mentorship Student,

This mailing contains much of the information you will need to help you secure the perfect internship when you arrive in the DC area. Enclosed are several documents that will be of help to you. Specifically, they are:

- ❖ Internship Guide
- ❖ Information from the AU Career Center, Including:
 1. Résumé Writing (with sample résumés)
 2. List of Action Verbs for Résumés
 3. Cover Letter and Thank You Letter Writing (with sample letters)
 4. Effective Interviewing and Salary Negotiation
 5. Informational Interviewing and Networking
 6. Etiquette in the Job Search Process
 7. Dress for Success

Please take some time to read through these materials and then work to perfect your résumé. Feel free to model your résumé after the samples given to you by the Career Center. When you feel that your résumé is ready to go, please email it to mentorship@american.edu if you wish to have early access to the WSP Internship Web. The Mentorship Program Staff will review your résumé and send suggestions back to you. Once we have cleared your résumé, you will receive clearance to access the Internship Web. Please be advised that you will not be able to have early access to the database until you have sent in your résumé! You will receive access to the WSP Internship Web once you get here should you choose not to send in your resume over the summer.

We are sure that you are excited to begin the search for your internship and look forward to reading those résumés and getting you off to a great start with the Internship Web!

Sincerely,
Washington Mentorship Program Staff



THE WASHINGTON MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Internship Guide

Introduction

The internship experience has become an integral element of the Washington Mentorship Program. While they vary in form and content, all internships can:

- ❖ provide needed on-the-job experience
- ❖ allow you to test career interests
- ❖ integrate classroom learning into real world situations
- ❖ enhance personal development and the development of interpersonal work skills
- ❖ provide practical knowledge of and exposure to the real world

Above all, the internship presents you with an exciting challenge—and requires a great deal of adjustment. A typical internship will expose you to the commuting scene, require you to adjust to varied office routines and co-workers, allow you to learn by being involved in the political process or private work force, and provide you with the opportunity to make contacts that may prove useful when you are pursuing future career goals.

Remember, however, that your internship is what you make it—it can be as rewarding as you allow it to be. Although it may prove trying at times, an internship is an exceptional method of learning by doing and can be one of the most valuable components of the semester.

The internship in the Washington Mentorship Program is an academic endeavor as well. The course that accompanies the actual work experience helps you place your internship in the larger context and relate your experiences to those of your peers. Several class sessions plus a series of written assignments and projects constitute the course requirements. Completion of these requirements, along with a formal evaluation submitted by your office supervisor, are the elements factored into your final grade for the internship component. A formal syllabus outlining specific requirements is included in the packet of materials you will receive once you're in Washington.

In the Washington Mentorship Program, each student is required to intern two days a week. Be aware that interns do not normally receive monetary compensation for their work—you are trading your services for access to organization and for the on-the-job training the organization will provide.

The rest of this manual is designed to introduce you to and prepare you for the internship component of your Washington Mentorship experience.

The Process of Selecting an Internship

The Washington Mentorship Program will not place you in an internship; rather, the program acts as an information clearinghouse, providing you with a variety of resources to help guide you in the selection process. The underlying rationale for this type of approach is twofold. First, it allows you the opportunity to choose an experience that most closely conforms to your personal and career interests; and second, the interviewing process is an important learning tool in its own right. The rest of this section describes the resources available to you and discusses the process involved in locating a position.

Before You Arrive

Prior to your arrival in Washington, you will be given access to our extensive database of internship opportunities associated with the specific program for which you have been accepted *if* you send in your resume over the summer. The database contains the names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail/Internet addresses, and contact persons for the organizations that wish to sponsor a Washington Mentorship intern, as well as a brief description of intern responsibilities at each site. This list will serve as an important guide to the range of experiences available to you.

Remember two facts about the database. The first is that it is by no means definitive. If you have an office in mind that is not listed, you should feel free to contact it. The second fact to remember is that *the list changes constantly*.

Before turning to the list, begin thinking about the internship experience that is right for you. For many students, these considerations are clouded by a variety of myths. For example, choosing an internship with a senator who has graduated from Harvard Law School will not guarantee you admission to Harvard Law School. Similarly, the most prestigious organizations will not necessarily provide you with the most substantive experiences. Often, it is the smaller, lesser-known organization that will allow you to work and to reach your full potential. The point is to expand your consciousness and consider the full range of experiences available to you.

In that vein, ask yourself several questions. What type of experience am I most interested in? Do I want to do research or write? What skills do I want to enhance? What types of issues intrigue me most? What are my long-term career goals? Obviously, you may be ambiguous on some of these points. And further, few internships will satisfy all of your needs or interests. The idea is to begin to narrow your choices to those offices you wish to investigate further.

After completing the “soul-searching” exercise and establishing the parameters of the experience you are after, the next step is to begin to scrutinize the list of positions you find. Several resources available on the Internet and in most public libraries will help you to gain information about the offices that interest you. These include The Congressional Staff Directory, The Washington Information Directory, The Federal Yellow Book, www.idealists.org, www.monstertrak.com, and numerous guides to internships published commercially. All provide background information on agencies and organizations, such as their orientation, their clientele, and their mission.

In addition, you should feel free to write, e-mail, or call those organizations that interest you, either to express your interest or to gather information about the organization. It never hurts to enclose a one-page résumé listing your work experiences, interests, relevant course work, and so forth. (See the “Résumé Writing” insert) Don’t worry if you haven’t had a professional-level job—the point is to

demonstrate that you are bright, hard-working, dependable, and interested in the type of work done by the organization. Also, don't be alarmed if you do not receive a reply – some offices are simply too busy to respond. You can follow up your inquiry with a telephone call when you arrive in Washington.

Finally, unless you are *absolutely* certain about an office, do not commit yourself to an internship there until you arrive. You will have two weeks to locate a position once you arrive in Washington, and experience shows that a visit to the actual office is important in making your final choice. We also strongly recommend that you interview with at least three different organizations.

Once You Get Here

Much of the first two weeks of your Washington Mentorship experience may be devoted to seeking an internship. During this period, you will have access to several resources. First, program faculty and staff are available to discuss various possibilities with you. Second, the program maintains binders filled with student evaluations of the offices in which they worked. These evaluations provide valuable insights into the range of experiences available to you.

And finally, the program holds an Internship Bazaar at the beginning of each term. Approximately 100 supervisors from various offices around Washington participate in an informal forum at the university, where they are available to answer questions about their organization and discuss intern opportunities. The idea behind all these resources is to expose you to a range of experiences that will help facilitate your decision-making process.

If you use these resources, three to five interviews should be enough to obtain an internship that is mutually beneficial to both you and the organization for which you intern.

Interviewing

It is important to remember that the impression you leave with a prospective employer is a function of what you say, how you present yourself, and the general level of self-confidence you radiate. Whether or not you get a particular internship can be a direct result of these factors. Therefore, it is wise to prepare for your interviews beforehand. You should do some background research on the office, utilizing the various resources identified in the previous sections. You might wish to practice interviews with your friends to help you feel more comfortable in the interview setting. It is important to present a nice appearance—prospective employers want interns who they feel represent them appropriately.

If possible, bring a résumé, a writing sample, a transcript, and a letter of recommendation from a former employer or faculty member with you to each interview. Even if these are not required, they can prove useful as a way of showing your professional-level skills and abilities.

Consider the interview a conversation rather than a confrontation. Try to be articulate and confident in your abilities without being arrogant. And remember that the interview is a two-way street – you need to gather information that will enable you to make a decision. When you leave the office, be certain about who will get back to whom and when, and what is expected of an intern.

It is essential for the goodwill of the program that you follow through on your commitments. Never skip an interview you have arranged; people have set aside valuable time to meet with you, and you don't want to give the program—or yourself—a bad name. Also, when you have accepted an internship, always

call or write all of the other organizations you have contacted, thanking them for their time and offer and informing them that you have taken another position. These courtesies are not only professional, but sensible. You never know when you may encounter another office or individual again – whether you're requesting information or assistance or applying for a job in the future.

In sum, the internship experience should be memorable and fulfilling, and whether it is depends to a great extent on the success of the interview. The first step to a rewarding internship is a successful and informative interview in which both sides find out what is expected of them.

Final Comments on the Process

Remember the following as you go through the process:

- ❖ Part of the experience is the search to locate a position in which you will be happy for the duration of the semester.
- ❖ Use the interview to gather information about the office and your role in it.
- ❖ Interview with several offices for an internship. This will give you a good basis for comparison in deciding where to intern.
- ❖ Bring a sample of your writing with you when you arrive for the program. Some offices ask to examine a term paper or an analytical piece that you have completed to be certain that you can write well. Also, if possible, bring a personal letter from a professor or former employer and a transcript – they might prove useful.
- ❖ The vast majority of student internships are unpaid. *You should not expect to be paid*, but if pay is offered, you may accept a nominal salary or stipend.
- ❖ Honesty is always the best policy – never promise more than you can deliver.
- ❖ Follow up on all commitments, and always inform every office of your decision.
- ❖ The most important relationship is the one between you and your supervisor. Remember that it is your *office supervisor*, not the organization, the representative, or the senator, who will determine your assignments.
- ❖ Clerical work is normally part of any internship. The program tells office supervisors that this should not exceed 40 percent of your work; however, responsibilities vary with each office. Suffice it to say that you should not expect to find a position for two days a week in which you are actively involved in policy making.
- ❖ It is a good idea to look for an internship with an organization with a philosophy compatible to your own.
- ❖ If you want to work on Capitol Hill, keep in mind that a representative's office or a committee office has a smaller staff than a senator's and potentially offers you a greater chance to handle a variety of tasks. However, responsibilities vary with each office, and you should check out the Senate if you are interested in working there.
- ❖ Your own representative or senator's office is normally a good place to begin when seeking to arrange an internship on Capitol Hill. Also note that new representatives and senators may not be on our lists.

- ❖ Answering constituent mail and running messages are the most common duties of a new intern on Capitol Hill. Other assignments may include research, speech writing, and casework (assisting a constituent who has a problem with one of the bureaucracies.)
- ❖ A large number of students prefer non-congressional internships.
- ❖ Volunteers are common on the Hill. Interest groups, local government, research groups, and smaller organizations often offer more meaningful positions.
- ❖ A number of students who hope to enter law school attempt to locate an internship with the Supreme Court. Our experience indicates that such a placement is very difficult to obtain unless you have a personal contact. Also the issue of security clearance normally precludes internships in such organizations as the CIA.
- ❖ You must be a U.S. citizen to work for most federal agencies.
- ❖ Washington Mentorship students in the past have evaluated their internships positively. They have found them to be highly rewarding experiences.

Student Obligations

Even though you are offering your services in a voluntary capacity, it is important to remember that you are demanding a great deal of attention from people in the organizations you visit. Please keep the following rules of behavior in mind.

- ❖ Keep the appointments you make.
- ❖ Allow sufficient travel time between appointments.
- ❖ Phone the prospective employer if you will be late or have a conflict.
- ❖ Once you accept a position, immediately notify other offices with which you have interviewed – they may be keeping positions from other prospective interns on hold until they hear from you.
- ❖ Be clear with each prospective employer regarding the offer and when you need to respond.

The Final Step

Once you accept a position, you must have your supervisor complete the Description of Internship Duties. You then need to return this contract to your faculty supervisor as soon as possible. You are now ready to begin your internship experience.

The Internship Experience

There are certain things that you should and should not expect from your internship experience. The first few weeks in the job are normally spent getting acquainted with your co-workers and familiarizing yourself with office procedures and practices. Because of this introductory period, you should not expect to be given a great deal of responsibility at the very beginning. The nature of assignments changes and the level of responsibility usually becomes greater as time goes on. Remember also that most interns (and most staff members) are expected to perform a certain amount of clerical work. Program standards state that clerical work should not exceed 40 percent of your responsibilities. Also, do not

expect monetary compensation for your work – experience, knowledge, and contacts are the types of compensation you will receive. Finally, expect to have both good and bad days.

Making the Most of It

As with any job, you are bound to encounter some difficulties in your internship. A very common complaint is that two days per week is not enough time. Often, a project you begin will be completed by someone else. You may find this frustrating to a degree, but it may be unavoidable.

Another difficulty is the lack of office space. Many offices are cramped to begin with. Therefore, you should not expect your own desk. Here again, you will have to learn to adjust and make the most of the arrangements available.

In some situations, you may feel as though you are being exploited. If the feeling persists, discuss your feelings with both your office and faculty supervisors. If the problem persists and you act swiftly enough, it may be possible to switch to a more comfortable internship.

You may encounter personality conflicts in the office. Try to work out the conflicts as you would in any other situation. If the situation becomes unbearable, discuss the problem with your faculty and office supervisors.

Note that not all students encounter problems in their internships. The point is to be aware that problems may arise and that the key to dealing with them involves a commitment to flexibility on your part. The door is wide open for you – it is up to you to make the most of your internship.

It is important that you establish a good work ethic from the very beginning. Do not take too many liberties in the office. You must follow the policies, rules and regulations of the office you are working in. If you need to make a personal call, be sure to ask your supervisor if it is okay to use the phone for a personal call. Don't use the computer (or internet) for personal reasons. Treat your internship experience like a real job and take nothing for granted. Always be on time, don't take extended lunches and don't leave early unless you are asked to do so. You are expected to be at work at least two days each and every week of the semester. If you need a day off for illness or personal reasons, be sure to contact your supervisor and be sure to offer to make up that day off. Follow through on the commitment to make it up. Remember that your supervisor will be recommending a grade for your internship experience. How you conduct yourself on the job could have a major impact on your final grade!

Summary

You should now have some idea of what to expect regarding your internship and how the process of selecting a position works. It cannot be stressed enough that much of the success of an internship rests with you. It is you who ultimately will decide where you will intern, and it is you who will have to learn to adapt to the circumstances you find yourself in. If you are willing to make the requisite level of commitment, experience shows that the benefits can be enormous.

Below are some comments from students:

- ❖ *“Working on Capitol Hill and being exposed to the political atmosphere which is so omnipresent in Washington was an absolutely fabulous experience.”*

- ❖ *“As an economics major, I had a fantastic experience working at the Department of Commerce. The people are extremely friendly and made a big effort to make my internship worthwhile. I gained an overall picture of the federal bureaucracy—its politics and inner workings. I also had an opportunity to meet many important officials and gained invaluable knowledge concerning international trade.”*
- ❖ *“Working for a noted public interest organization gave me the opportunity to work with an enthusiastic group of people. I talked to people all over the country and played a role in getting them involved in lobbying. I really found out how a lobby group works and what lobbying can do.”*
- ❖ *“I had a fantastic experience in working with some of the best and most committed attorneys in the country. It gave me a chance to participate in the inside workings of the justice system.”*
- ❖ *“The experience I gained in interning at one of the leading museums in the country should aid me considerably in my future career in arts management.”*
- ❖ *“The care and interest of my supervisor as well as the excitement of working as part of a congressional committee staff made my internship an invaluable experience.”*



THE WASHINGTON MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Internship Suggestions

Reflections and Suggestions by former Washington Semester students

Editor-In-Chief: Richard R. Holley III (Bates College)

Editor: Dan Weigel (Tufts University)

Editor: Jenny Little (University of Alabama)

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The following is a compilation of thoughts, reflections, and suggestions, written by the students of Professor Christian Maisch's Foreign Policy class. This guide is an effort to pass on our bits and pieces of wisdom on how to find and keep the right internship. We hope that you will find this both helpful and useful, preparing you for what you're about to experience in the coming semester. Remember that this is a collection of our personal experience and advice that may not be universally applicable. In fact, you will find that in some cases, depending on other people's goals and personalities, some recommendations may seem contradictory.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE—PREPATORY WORK

Despite the tendency to procrastinate, we strongly urge you to begin the process early. The most important thing you can do before you arrive is to work on and polish your résumé. If you arrive in DC with a finished résumé, you will find that things go a lot easier since having your résumé out of the way is one less thing to worry about. Furthermore, some places may ask for letter of recommendation, a transcript, and a writing sample. It would be a good idea to get these lined up before you come. This section will outline how to make your résumé shine and how to mentally prepare for your internship search. **Remember that you have the option to turn in your resume over the summer if you wish to have access to the WSP Internship Database *before* you arrive for classes.**

The Résumé

- ❖ Keep the résumé to one page but make sure it's not congested. The purpose of the résumé is to outline your most significant attributes/achievements. If you run out of room, feel free to mention other achievements in your cover letter. Remember, "brevity, clarity, and consistency are the three pillars to an excellent résumé." *Joe Longobardo (Lycoming College)*
- ❖ "List interesting or exceptional things that distinguish you from other applicants – interesting tidbits will stand out in an employer's mind and give you an excellent conversation piece during the interview." Focus on what makes you unique and what makes you a good employee. *Richard Holley III (Bates College)*
- ❖ "Don't worry about whether you're qualified for the job or not. These employers don't expect you to have an amazing résumé with a ton of important substantial work experience. They

know your main objective is to learn and gain experience. This is why it is important to look carefully at your options to find the internship that will best benefit you." *Kalee Villemure (Gonzaga University)*

- ❖ Along with your résumé you might need to include your transcript, several letters of recommendation, and a writing sample – Be prepared to send these items, however do not send them unless specifically asked for.
- ❖ Writing Sample – Don't just take a few pages from your last term paper. Write something personal, perhaps pick an issue of interest to you and talk about it. Your writing sample should be between 3 and 5 pages. Remember, if it's interesting it will be memorable. Pay close attention to the ad – they may require you to write something particular to their business.
- ❖ Pay *close* attention to the wording of the advertisement and *only* send what is required. Adjust your resume and cover letter to reflect what they are looking for. They are too busy to sift through many documents that are not pertinent. Your resume should reflect exactly what is wanted for the position.

First Contact/Setting Goals

- ❖ "When selecting an internship, BE BOLD. Don't be timid about gathering information on organizations of which you know little about, but are interested." *Jenny Little (University of Alabama)*
- ❖ Think about what type of internship you'd be interested in – public or private, the Hill or a think tank, etc. "This part of the search should rely on what the student hopes to achieve from the job that he or she might be interested in." *John Dickerson (Skidmore College)*
- ❖ "Call various organizations that interest you and tell them that you are interested in an internship and let them know what your areas of interest are. Ask them to send any information possible; not only on the agency itself, but also on the role you would play as an intern." *Betsy LeFeaux (Spring Hill College)*
- ❖ Many internships fill up fast, especially those on the Hill. So send out résumés, ask for applications, or just show an organization you're interested – this can give you an important leg up.
- ❖ "The more preparation done prior to arrival, the more time there will be to focus on interviews and securing an internship." *Beth Geller (Connecticut College)*

TYPES OF INTERNSHIPS

There are various types of internships in the DC area. Everything from working for a Senator or in a museum, to working in the courts or for a stock broker. Furthermore, there are differences between public and private sectors as well as large and small organizations. We've broken them down according to small and large. A small organization is considered anything with approximately five to fifteen people

working in the office. Government internships include the Hill and all branches of federal, state, or local government. Private internships include law offices and many profit organizations. Non-governmental internships include think tanks and other advocacy groups. This section will provide some thoughts on what's available.

Small vs. Large

- ❖ "I strongly recommend working in a small organization...there is always work to do and the interns, believe it or not, have some input in what types of projects need to be done." *Elizabeth Farrel (Gettysburg College)*
- ❖ "The best way to get the most out of your internship experience is to work with a small staffed organization that relies on interns for a majority of their work. Yet, one still has to realize that a majority of the work is legalized slave labor – copies, faxes, phone calls, stuffing envelopes, and on occasion you may have to write a few memos. Further, if one works for a small organization they will have a better opportunity to get to know the people they are working for and the purpose of the work they are doing." *Jess McCluer (Texas A&M University) Government, Private, and Non-Governmental Organizations*
- ❖ "If you plan to have a political career, apply to a member of Congress...making contacts in the office combined with a letter of recommendation from a well known politician adds up in the long run." *Chad Brand (Hartwick College)*
- ❖ "Many people complain they don't get enough real work or are basically used as slaves in the office. The best way to avoid this, first of all, don't get a job on Capitol Hill. The private sector is generally more organized and demanding, making for more work." *Dan Weigel (Tufts University)*

WHEN YOU GET HERE

When you arrive in DC you'll want to hit the ground running. But even if you still don't have any idea of what you want to do, relax – many people don't. But by now you must start making a list of internships that interest you, send out your résumés and materials, and start setting up interviews. Below are some tips on how to survive this process. Remember – you will find an internship, of that there's no question. It's just a matter of finding the *right* internship to meet *your needs*.

- ❖ Thumb through all the lists of available internships. It's overwhelming but useful. Remember, not everything listed is necessarily available. These listings are also not always sufficiently informative – they're only a few sentences long. So use them as a guideline.
- ❖ Use the evaluations of former students conveniently located in the reserve reading room (though remember that these are subjective accounts). "You should create a list of ten to twenty from the booklet of internships issued to you, but you can only really separate the good from the bad and the ugly by reading about the experiences of others." *Rob Collier (University of Salford)*
- ❖ Talk to your internship professor. They usually have a bunch of contacts in the area and are familiar with the working environments of various organizations. Tell your professor your interests and they may be able to help you find a good match.

- ❖ Be organized. "Make a list of all the places you are applying, the names of the contact person (spelled properly), the phone numbers, directions on how to get there via Metro, and (once you have it) the interview time." It's tough to juggle 10 to 20 applications at once—staying organized will be a godsend. *Richard Holley III (Bates College)*

Set Up Interviews & Send out the Résumés

If you have not already done so, send out the résumés and cover letters (along with letters of recommendation and transcripts if required). You can e-mail, fax, mail, or deliver them in person. Mailing is more professional than faxing, and delivering them in person shows the employer that you're truly interested and can often leave a good first impression. It's usually a good idea to send them your résumé and other papers before your interview, that way they have an idea of who they're dealing with.

- ❖ "Set up as many interviews as you can even for those positions that you don't really want because the interviewing practice is extremely valuable." *Nicole Varnes (Gonzaga University)*
- ❖ "It's phone tag. Deal with it. Set up an interview time that is good for you. List several alternatives that are good for you and then let your employer choose which one is best for them." *Matt Heller (Trinity College)*

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Don't view the interview process as a burden; it's actually a good experience. You'll want to schedule as many interviews as possible – this is great practice for after college. Plus it exposes you to a big cross-section of DC. Don't be too nervous during the interview, just be yourself. Most importantly, the interview is as much for you as it is for your potential employer. Use this as a chance to "sniff out" the office environment and see if you "fit in." This is in many ways the most important consideration when choosing the right internship.

Dress Nicely

- ❖ "Play it safe," for the traditional look is very much preferred in this city. Good grooming does count. "Clean-cut" and "professional" are adjectives that go a long way. *Matt Heller (Trinity College)*

Posture/Smile/Handshake

- ❖ You've heard it a thousand times from mom and dad, and they're right. Stand up straight, with an air of confidence. Give a warm smile and use mild humor when appropriate. Be pleasant. Shake hands firmly and look your interviewer directly in the eyes. You'll leave a great first impression!

Always Visit the Office

- ❖ "Beware of internship offers that don't require interviews. Make sure you visit the office and meet the people you will be working with before you accept an internship." *Kara Brault (Cedar*

Crest College)

- ❖ “Scrutinize your supervisors before you accept the position...if you disregard this you may end up working under miserable, angry people.” *Scott Tumpak (Occidental College)*
- ❖ “You should be prepared to conduct yourself in a professional manner during your interview. Thus, I would strongly advise against the following during your interview: (1) profanity, (2) assault and battery, (3) the use of illegal narcotics, (4) theft.” *Jason Berman (University of New Hampshire)*
- ❖ “The most important thing I learned through my interviews is to be yourself. I went into a couple of interviews thinking that I had to be businesslike and stern when in reality the people who interviewed me were laid back. Of course, I needed to remain professional, but at the same time I could relax my guard. They were much more interested in getting to know my personality and interests than hearing about my past work experience.” *Laura Milazzo (Whitman College)*

Questions

- ❖ Here are some questions to ask:
 - ✓ As specifically as you can, please elaborate on what my duties would be as an intern.
 - ✓ How long have you had an internship program?
 - ✓ Will I have a semester-long project to work on?
 - ✓ Will there be other interns working with me during my office days?
 - ✓ What would a typical day be like? “Make sure they give you a satisfactory answer—if they don’t push the question until you are satisfied.” *Betsy LeFeaux (Spring Hill College)*
- ❖ “Know a little background information about the place to which you are applying. Giving the impression that you are knowledgeable about the organization lets them know you are interested in working there.” *Jessica Heflin (Gettysburg College)*
- ❖ “Emphasize particular skills you would have, such as doing research, or having considerable knowledge in a particular subject.” *Chad Brand (Hartwick College)*
- ❖ “You must feel comfortable at the place you are applying – if you don’t feel comfortable then it’s just not going to work out.” *Jessica Heflin (Gettysburg College)*
- ❖ “If your interviewer concentrates on the word ‘filing’ you might want to shop around.” *John Dickerson (Skidmore College)*

ONCE YOU HAVE THE INTERNSHIP

“The most important project is your first. The quality and thoroughness of your first project will be a big determinant of future assignments you will have. The best advice is to always do more than you are asked. If your supervisor tells you to do some research and highlight the pertinent information, take it another step by creating an outline of all the information you gathered and write a summary. Go the extra mile because it will help in the long run.” *Nicole Varnes (Gonzaga University)*

“Eavesdrop on your supervisor every once in a while to see if there is something that needs to be done.

If you know that you can do it then mention it. (I ended up networking the office computer system and saved them \$200 in computer consultant fees.)” *Joey Herzog (Illinois Wesleyan University)*

“I recommend working with different people in the office at least once to gain exposure and network within the office. Communicating and working with other people in the office helps to develop a good rapport that leads to a good working environment and, potentially, future jobs. It also gives you the chance to see a selection of different working styles and opinions within a working environment.” *Elizabeth Geller (Connecticut College)*

“Washington DC runs because of the work of unpaid interns. Therefore, always keep in mind that you are just as valuable to the place you intern as the internship experience is to you.” *Kara Brault (Cedar Crest College)*

DEALING WITH PROBLEMS

“If the situation does occur where the internship is not what your contract stated nor what you expected, be calm and handle the situation professionally. Give your job time, but be wary of giving it too much time before you receive substantive work. If a problem does arise, talk with your employer, it is imperative to develop an open line of communication. You may want to suggest a possible project, for in proposing a project you exhibit initiative while gaining some more responsibility. It is also best to inform your advisor immediately to make them aware of your situation.” *April Adams (Drew University)*

“Many offices don’t trust interns with greater responsibilities because they’ve had bad experiences in the past. Prove to them that you are hard working and want more... Overall, employers like to see interns who are efficient, productive and eager. Usually, they will recognize these traits and increase their dependence on you. If not, it comes down to a matter of showing or telling them about your abilities.” *Dan Weigel (Tufts University)*