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CSSA Legislative Internship Program

About the CSSA: California State Student Association (CSSA) represents the 388,000 students of the California State University system and maintains offices in Sacramento and Long Beach. The CSSA advocates positions before the state legislature and within the CSU system on a wide array of issues effecting students, including the state's education budget; student fees and services; student loans and financial aid; access, retention and remediation; proficiency standards; parking; housing; and CSU system-wide initiatives.

Legislative Internship Program: The California State Student Association is committed to providing meaningful opportunities for students to gain hands-on professional experience in statewide governance and politics. The CSSA Legislative Internship Program gives students the opportunity to achieve marketable skills that will prepare them for careers as lobbyists, organizers, public relations professionals, policy analysts, and/or event planners by participating in student-focused statewide advocacy efforts.

The CSSA Office of Governmental Relations in Sacramento coordinates legislative campaigns and student training events for California's largest professional statewide student interest group. While the focus of any internship will vary—depending on individual interest, political climate, and the organization's policy agenda—all interns will complete the program with the ability to demonstrate the knowledge and experience they have gained.

Mission Statement: It is the mission of the CSSA Legislative Internship Program to provide students with an opportunity to prepare for success in a professional capacity by expanding and demonstrating an understanding of the California legislative process, lobbying, grassroots organizing, media relations, non-profit interest group advocacy, and higher education policy.

By becoming active partners in the success of the CSSA Office of Governmental Relations, student interns will end their tenure with the ability to articulate political concepts, analyze complex issues, give well-reasoned recommendations, meet comfortably with legislators and other decision-makers, develop a professional appearance, and cultivate professional communication skills.

Upon completion of the CSSA Legislative Internship Students will have the professional experience and skill base to qualify for entry-level positions in a Senate or Assembly Member Office, lobbying firms, and non-profit interest groups.

Advantage: The relatively small size of the CSSA Office of Governmental Relations allows each intern the opportunity to be active participants in nearly every aspect of advocacy, depending upon on their own individual interests and career goals. CSSA Legislative Interns work closely with the Director of Governmental Relations during the orientation process to assess their interests and set goals, which ensures that both the students and the organization has a positive and meaningful the internship experience.

Program Description: The duties of interns are tailored to take into account both the needs of the office and the desires of the individual. Students typically work for an academic term (semester or quarter). The CSSA is willing to work with faculty and/or administrators on campus to assist interns to secure academic credit for their time.

CSSA strives to make sure that the experience is directly applicable to intern's long-term career goals. In order to do so, interns begin their tenure with general orientation, and an interactive assessment with the Director of Governmental Relations to determine the types of learning out-comes an intern will produce or expect/desire.

Portfolios: Intern portfolios ensure individuals will complete the program with tangible evidence of their accomplishments. Each outcome that an intern produces or participates in will be chronicled and added to his or her portfolio for use in future job searches. Intern portfolios include three reflective essays from the beginning, middle, and end of the academic term as well as at least five 'demonstrators'. Demonstrators may include press releases, bill analysis, research papers, promotional materials, campaign plans, letters to decision-makers, or other tangible outcomes.

Responsibilities: CSSA Legislative Intern's responsibilities vary, the internship includes:

- Tracking legislation, composing official correspondence, and attending legislative hearings
- Conducting research on higher education policy problems and preparing investigative reports and analysis
- Production of media events, assisting in preparation of news releases and opinion pieces
- Coordinating grassroots campaign activities, events, and training seminars
- Fine tuning written and oral communication skills

Pathways: Additionally, CSSA Legislative Interns will work with the Director of Governmental Relations to focus their experience into one of three areas of concentration:

Organizing Pathways

Interest groups derive power from the numbers of voting constituents that express their view. CSSA organizing interns will learn how to facilitate student participation in the legislative decision making process.

Legislative Research Pathways

The problems that face our society seem complex and often daunting. CSSA research interns take important information, cut through any confusion, and

present that information in a way that both educates and activates the campus and the community.

Media Internship Pathways

Alerting the public through the media is a key part of all CSSA projects. Media interns work to use newspapers, television and radio news to educate the public about issues that concern them. In addition to learning important media skills, interns do great public interest work.

Qualifications:

- Verifiable enrollment in a public higher education institution, including community college
- Able work at least 15 hours a week
- Have basic knowledge of California state government, the legislative process, interests groups, and student government
- Have good writing and communication skills
- PC proficient
- Exhibit responsible attitude and work habits
- Have a 2.0 GPA
- Be at least 18 years of age

To apply, please send a resume and cover letter to:

California State Student Association
Office of Governmental Relations
1107 Ninth Street, Suit 520
Sacramento, CA 95814

The cover letter should include a description of your career goals, what you expect to get from your internship experience, and a description of course work or extracurricular experience that make you particularly qualified.

For more information: Please visit the CSSA website at www.csustudents.org or contact, Laura Kerr, Director of Governmental Relations, at (916) 441-4514 or lkerr@csustudents.org.