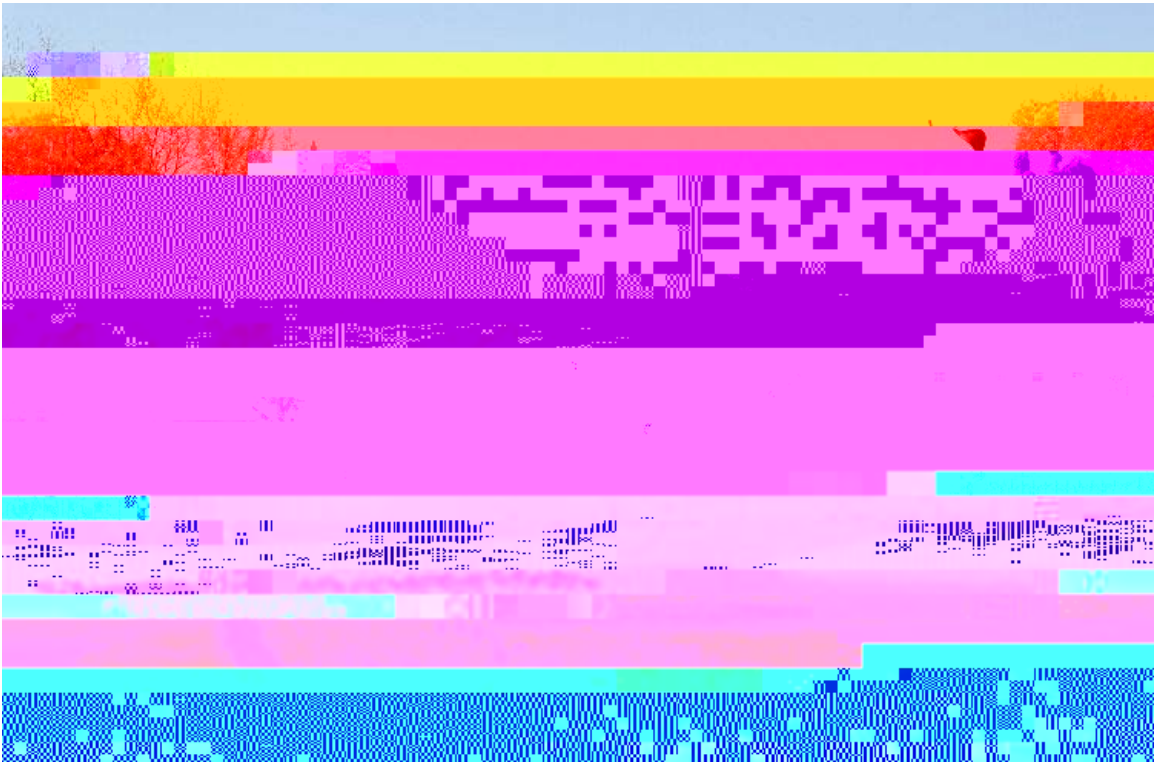


# WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK



*The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey*

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## General Description

The Washington Internship program is an intensive para-professional and academic experience in which Stockton students live, work, and study in the Washington, D.C.,

- x ***Internships offer innumerable opportunities for personal development.***  
A semester can profoundly and positively affect an individual's growth and maturity. Many students become increasingly self-confident by successfully negotiating the demands of working at a full-time (36 hours weekly) internship; commuting to their internship job and program activities; meeting the academic requirements of their internship class; developing new friendships, enjoying the rich social and cultural life of the nation's capital; and maintaining an apartment with three (fellow-intern) roommates.

## **History of Stockton's Internship Program**

Since the mid-1970s more than 1,000 Stockton students have completed para-professional internships in Washington, D.C. One of the largest groups of Washington Center alumni in the country is from Stockton College. It is very common to find Stockton alumni in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region who trace the trajectory of their career paths to their internships as Stockton undergraduates.

## **Types of Internships**

It is important to bear in mind that there are hundreds of individual internship placements within the following list of internship categories.

- x US Congressional Offices, the White House, and Political Campaigns
- x Executive Branch Departments and Federal Agencies
- x Nonprofit, Social Service and Advocacy Organizations
- x Federal and Local Criminal Justice Agencies and Law Firms
- x Broadcast and Print Media
- x Public Relations and Lobbying Firms
- x Museum and Cultural Institutions
- x Investment, Accounting, Marketing, and Advertising Firms
- x Foreign Policy and International Aid Organizations
- x Research Organizations in the Natural, Biological and Medical Sciences

As the largest internship organization in the country, The Washington Center utilizes its vast network of contacts to facilitate the placement of students. Internships are also possible with organizations, firms, agencies, etc. that are not currently part of The Washington Center's network of placement sites, i.e., for students who have a particular placement site in mind who has not previously

the student is virtually assured of acceptance. If a student's GPA is slightly below 2.75, a third letter of recommendation is required and the application is given an additional level of review by The Washington Center. All but one of the very few Stockton students who have applied with a GPA below 2.75 have been accepted and have received excellent internship placements.

- x **Please Note:** Internships are open to both U.S. and international students. However, some (Washington Center) scholarship opportunities with federal agencies are available only to U.S. citizens. Also, all prospective interns cannot start a Washington internship until they are at least a second-semester sophomore.

It is crucial to bear in mind that the main question for prospective Stockton students is not whether they will be accepted into the Washington internship – that is virtually assured with a 2.75 GPA and the Campus Liaison's signature on the application. Nor is it a question of whether students will receive internship placements: Once their applications are accepted, internships are *guaranteed*. Instead, the only real question is "*where*" students will be placed.

- x ***Talk to parents.*** It is absolutely essential that students discuss with their parents what a Washington internship entails. This should be done well before a student begins the application process, especially if parents are contributing financially to a student's undergraduate education.
  
- x ***Review program/graduation requirements with a preceptor.*** Students receive 12 academic credits for a Washington internship. Of these, 8 credits are for the internship itself and 4 credits are for the course all students take during their Washington internship. An additional option is for students to take a GIS independent study in addition to their TWC seminar and receive 16 total credits. Before an application is submitted, students should consult with their preceptor to decide – before the internship begins – where the 12 (or optional 16) credits should be allocated, i.e., either to program, cognate, or ASD requirements. However, because the internship experience is quite intensive, students should only consider taking the GIS independent study if they absolutely need 16 credits during their internship semester in order to graduate on time. Interested students should discuss this option with their preceptors and the Campus Liaison.
  
- x ***Review Financial Assistance Status.*** There are several considerations that students should bear in mind as they make arrangements to pay for their internship.
  - o **First**, the costs of the Washington internship program are paid directly to Stockton College, just like any other semester. Again, the fees are for flat-rate tuition, a General Educational student fee, and a housing fee.
  
  - o **Second**, whatever financial assistance (e.g. scholarships, grants, loans) students usually receive during the Fall/Spring is applied to their balance for the semester they are in Washington, D.C. Students interested in summer internships should determine whether their scholarships/grants/loans extend into the summer.
  
  - o **Third**, generally, an internship semester in Washington, D.C., costs about the same as a full-time semester at Stockton (i.e., the tuition and student fees for four courses, room and board, books, and personal expenses).
  
  - o **Fourth**, Stockton College gives each of its interns an \$800 stipend to help defray the costs of a Washington internship. The stipend is generally received at the mid-point of a student's internship in D.C. These funds can be used to pay down a student's outstanding balance to The Washington Center. Or, the money can be used for commuting expenses, meals, and personal items.

- o **Fifth**, The Washington Center also offers on a competitive basis scholarships of various amounts. In order to be considered for scholarships, students need to submit their applications before the “Competitive Deadline” for each individual semester. There are also a few fully-funded internship opportunities. These are few in number and they are exceedingly competitive. However, every semester at least one, or more, Stockton interns receive some form of financial assistance from The Washington Center. There is not a separate application for scholarships. Students merely have to mark the scholarship categories on the first page of the application form in order to be considered.

### **The Application Process**

Stockton students applying for an internship should visit The Washington Center’s Web site (<http://www.twc.edu>) and click on “Prospective Students.” One of the first steps is to create an account on TWC Web site. The application process is online although hard copies of the transcript and letters of recommendation can be submitted.

Students should familiarize themselves with the general details of the program; speak with their preceptor to discuss how the 12 (or 16) credits may be allocated among program, cognate, or ASD graduation requirements; carefully review whether they are financially prepared to assume the costs of an internship in Washington, and meet with the Campus Liaison (Asst. Professor Michael S. Rodriguez) before the application process is initiated.

The application packet includes the following items:

***The application form.*** Students apply online through The Washington Center’s Web site (<http://www.twc.edu>). On the homepage click on “Prospective Students,” and proceed to set up an account before filling out any application forms.

- x ***A current resume.*** Students should have the Career Services staff review their resumes before submitting them to The Washington Center. For assistance on developing a professional resume, students should call Career Services to set up an appointment for a one-on-one session. The office number is 609-652-4650.
- x ***An official Stockton transcript.*** The Campus Liaison will obtain an official transcript from Student Records. Students must have at least a 2.75 GPA at the time the application is submitted to be accepted into the Washington Internship Program. If a student’s GPA is slightly be

- x **Two essays.** These are probably the most important and time-consuming items of the application packet. Prospective students are required to write two essays.
  - o The first one (500 words) covers an issue of interest to the applicant. The essay is an opinion or reflection piece that demonstrates a student’s ability to think clearly, write cogently, and formulate a reasonably coherent argument. The essay should be a topic with which the student is generally familiar and it should relate to a student’s area of interest for an internship in D.C. For example, a biology major who is interested in a research-based internship may write about the ongoing debate, and controversy, on public funding of stem cell research. The 500-word essay is not a research paper, though a cursory review of a few news articles may be helpful in developing a more informed essay.
  - o The second essay (100 words) is a very short description of the type of internship work a student envisions, and how it relates to the student’s broader educational and professional aspirations. It is very important for students *not* to mention that they want an internship at a specific place. A number of prospective employers will read a student’s application. It is important for students to not give the impression that they are interested in only one potential internship placement.
    - f Both essays are reviewed by the Campus Liaison and returned for revision, if necessary. These essays must not be posted online until the Campus Liaison approves them.
- x **Two letters of recommendation.** Students need to identify two individuals to write strong letters of recommendation. At least one recommender must be a current or former professor. The second letter can also be from a professor, but many students ask individuals who have supervised them in an employment setting. Students cannot ask fellow students for a letter of recommendation. The application has a form that students must download and give to their recommenders. In addition to filling out that form, recommenders must also write a separate letter on their institution’s letterhead.

There is a non-refundable \$60 application fee. Submitting an application to The Washington Center does not mean that a student is “locked” into going to Washington. If circumstances arise that preclude a student from accepting an internship offer, the application can be withdrawn. If a student applies and subsequently withdraws his/her application, the \$60 fee will not be reimbursed.

## **The Placement Process**

Once a student’s application is received by The Washington Center, the following steps occur:





and prospective placement sites know that internship applications that come through The Washington Center are consistently from strong candidates.

- 11) After a student is interviewed, an internship offer may be made within a few days. If a student receives an offer from one placement site but is waiting to hear from another site, it is not uncommon to ask for a few additional days to decide whether to accept the first internship offer.
- 12) Before any internship offer is accepted, students should speak with their Program Advisor at The Washington Center and/or the Campus Liaison at Stockton. Students can accept one internship offer.

### **What Happens before an Internship?**

In addition to interviewing for and securing an internship placement, there are a number of steps students need to take before their internship begins.

- x ***Housing during the internship.*** Housing is provided by The Washington Center in a relatively new apartment complex known as the RAF (Residential and Academic Facility). Interns are generally pleasantly surprised by the superior quality of the housing as it is not what one generally associates with student housing. The Washington Center provides residence life staff members who provide assistance with housing issues and occasional social activities. The furnished apartments are single-sex, with two bedrooms (two interns per room), two bathrooms, a kitchen, and a spacious living room. The RAF has a variety of amenities like a fitness rooms, laundry services, classrooms, and a computer center. Before an internship begins, students fill out and submit a housing form to The Washington Center. The form is an opportunity for students to identify any accommodations they may need, a preference for certain types of students (e.g. vegetarians), and a preference for a particular roommate (if they have one in mind). The form can also be used to pay a \$300 housing deposit that The Washington Center requires from all prospective interns.

Washington Center typically offers between 30-35 courses each semester. The Washington Center hires the faculty, who are professors and practitioners from the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region. The Washington Center estimates that students spend \$50-\$100 on books. The classes meet once a week, in the evening for 3 hours (usually 6:30-9:30pm). To be frank, the quality of the classes can be uneven. Some courses are exceedingly rigorous, while others clearly are not. Stockton students receive 4 credits for the course they take during the internship. Also, students can enroll in a 4-credit GIS independent study with the Campus Liaison. Arrangements for this option should be completed before students move to Washington to start their internships.

- x ***Registering for internship credits.*** Before students begin their Washington internship they are registered for the following credits: Washington Internship (WASH 3940 – 8 credits) and Washington Seminar (WASH 3620 – 4 credits) and the optional GIS independent study. Students cannot register for these credits on their own. The Campus Liaison gives Student Records a list of all the prospective students. The registration is done by the Student Records staff. All 12 (or 16) credits are treated as Stockton credits, i.e. the credits are used to fulfill graduation requirements and the all the grades are reflected in a student’s Stockton GPA.
  
- x ***Notifying Stockton offices.*** The Campus Liaison emails a list of interns to a number of Stockton College offices and departments to notify them of the students who will be away for a semester. Some of the offices are Student Records, Financial Aid, Academic Affairs, and the Bursar’s Office.
  
- x ***Paying the Internship bill.*** The \$2,550 discount that Stockton students receive is already reflected in a intern’s bill from Stockton College. Students on financial aid should speak with financial aid and the Bursar’s Office to ensure that their financial aid is properly reflected in their Stockton bill for their internship semester.

### **What Happens During an Internship?**

A Washington internship is a very intense experience. Essentially, students do the following activities in the course of a typical week

- x ***36-hour work week***



Washington, D.C., area. Suffice it to say, Washington, D.C., is a highly complex, and cosmopolitan urban center, as well as the nation's seat of power. For students who are unaccustomed to living in an urban environment, they should know that it is always safer to explore Washington, D.C., in the company of fellow interns.

**General Remarks:**

It is certainly a bit cliché but true nonetheless: An internship is what one makes of it. A Washington internship has the potential to be a uniquely transformative period in a