



SACRAMENTO
STATE

**California State University, Sacramento
Department of Government**

Government 195A Political Internship

**Professor. Michael Wadlé
Internship Coordinator**

Procedures and Requirements

The internships in government and politics offered through the Government Department give the opportunity for upper division and graduate students at CSUS to gain direct experience working in state legislative offices, with lobbying groups, in state executive agencies and at various locations in city and county government. This experience has proved to be a valuable “active learning” supplement to academic classes in government and politics. Moreover, it is especially useful as a way of exploring the career possibilities of working in government. Each year several students move from internships into full-time employment in various sites in state government and elsewhere.

The internship course is an upper division course. You must be a junior (completed 74 units) or preferably a senior to participate in the course and receive academic credit for an internship. This requirement serves students’ best interest as well. In terms of career-exploration and job opportunities, the later in your degree program you do the internship the better able you are to take advantage of such possibilities.

You must have passed the Writing Proficiency Exam. No exceptions.

You must have a minimum GPA of 2.5. No exceptions.

You should have had at least 12 units of upper division course work in Government before undertaking the internship; one of these courses must be Govt. 180, California State and Local Government, unless you are planning on doing the Sacramento Semester program. See separate handout on the Sacramento Semester.

Do not assume you will receive credit for something you have set up for yourself. See the

internship coordinator, Professor Wadlé, as soon as you contemplate an internship. The department will be as cooperative as possible in working with you to accommodate an internship opportunity you have found on your own, however, this is not always possible.

Internships must be supervised by the Government Department in “real time.” We do not award credit after the fact for a work experience you may have had. Nor do we award internship credit where a student may be working in a “government” job. Not all sites in government employment are suitable for earning academic credit toward the government major. The internship is expected to be a new experience, exposing the student to opportunities to learn about the political and governmental process that she or he would not have had otherwise.

Students who wish to undertake an internship in summer may do so, however, you **must register for this course in the “Summer Semester” as you would any other course.** Now that the CSU system is converting to “Year Round Operations,” Summer Semester fees will be state supported, just as fall and spring semesters are. With no activity fees, summer semester fees will actually be less than regular fall and spring semesters.

Govt. 195A can be taken for 1 to 6 units. Generally, the student intern must work 60 hours for each unit of credit; thus a 6-unit internship requires about 360 hours of work in the site. This is approximately 24 hours a week for a semester, more in summer. **We strongly urge students to commit themselves to more time in the internship site rather than less.** The more time you are in the office the more responsibility you are likely to be given and the more you will learn.

For Government majors, 3 units of the internship may be counted in the 33-unit upper division requirement. An additional 3 units of internship credit may be used to fulfill the remaining six units of the major. In any case, Govt. 195 units may be counted toward the 120 units required for the B.A. degree.

Students in the graduate program in Government may apply 3 units of Govt. 295 to their 30-unit requirement, with the approval of the graduate coordinator, Professor Jim Cox, if one of the fields they are offering is California State and local government.

The internship course is graded Credit/No Credit. When, in the opinion of the faculty and job supervisor, an intern’s work is “passing” but of sub-standard quality, a reduction may be made in the number of credit hours earned. **Ask for a copy of the course syllabus for all requirements of the internship course.**

What to Do First

In the current situation, there are more internship openings available to students than we have a hope of filling. **Students do not have to recruit their own positions!**

See Professor Michael Wadlé, whose office is in Tahoe Hall, 3101. You must fill out an

application for the internship course and talk with him about your interest. It's best to talk with him during the semester before you want to do an internship. Call him at 278-4012 to make an appointment or e-mail him at wadlem@csus.edu

Complete a resume. Before you set out on interviews, you will need to have an up-to-date, no-frills resume that details your education and any work experience you have had.

Writing sample. Some offices may request a writing sample. Others won't. Have one handy. And be prepared that some offices may ask you to sit down and do a writing sample on the spot. This might take the form of answering a letter.

Tips for Being a Successful Intern

- ✚ Plan your internship well ahead, at least by a semester, in order to give yourself time to accommodate it in your academic and/or work schedule and to have time to make a proper selection.
- ✚ Interview a minimum of two or three offices so you will have the chance to choose from more than one. Generally, there are more offices available than interns so you should be in demand. Take the opportunity to seek the best possible site.
- ✚ Be sure you interview with or at least meet the individual who will be your office supervisor. Agree insofar as you can on what you will be doing in the office; this may not be as formal as a "work contract," but you should both be pretty clear about what duties and activities you will get to do and participate in.
- ✚ Keep a weekly (preferably daily) journal to record your work hours, your work-related activities, what you did and most especially your observations and reflections on what you are doing and seeing and learning as you go through the internship.
- ✚ Of absolutely primary importance to having a good internship are: attitude, reliability, competence, and a cooperative and willing spirit.
- ✚ Be pleasant, be willing to take on more than is expected, and seek out ways to do more. In general, make yourself indispensable!
- ✚ Ask pertinent questions, make your work product excellent, and ask co-workers relevant questions about the field. Listen to their answers; write things down. You do not want to ask the same questions over again.