



Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Programme

“Matching good people with good people in good places”

10 years of internships in Congress



2009 guide

first edition

Welcome to the tenth year of a unique international exchange between Americans and Australians taking place in the United States Congress!

History

In 1999, an educational and professional internship opportunity was designed and created in Washington, DC exclusively for Australian university students. Personalized experiences and attention in the Nation’s Capital have been hallmarks of this exchange from a modest beginning of 5 students put forward by a single Australian institution and arrived in January of 2000. By 2003 the demand in Washington for more student interns and for greater diversity in field study led naturally into an expansion since known as the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Programme. UCWIP today includes 8 participating Australian universities as programmatic partners and works to match 12 students annually and exclusively to House and Senate offices within Congress.

Principles and Achievement

A core principle of the Programme is to match good people with good people in good places. 81 students have been successfully matched across the first 9 years, including the single-uni beginnings. Internship prospects are offered in Democratic and Republican offices; personal and committee offices; the House and the Senate; and one congressional commission office. Matched students are drawn from many academic disciplines including international relations, politics, commerce, law, political communications, economics, science, and of course American studies. The success of the Programme has been owed to the commitments of many individuals towards enhancing American-Australian relationships. In the last 9 years, 16 statements in the *Congressional Record* along with news media accounts in both countries have confirmed the importance and value of this concept. In 2006, two speeches in the Australian Parliament – one in the House; one in the Senate – extended this official recognition to *Hansard*.

Practices

UCWIP interns are accorded unique access to the US political system and institutions across their 2-month, full-time internships each January/February. In-office experiences will vary widely according to the needs of the congressional hosts. Administrative functions, constituent liaison, and legislative research and support have been among the touchstones of past internships. Offices typically encourage interns to attend hearings, briefings and press conferences both on and off Capitol Hill. UCWIP has also organized briefings at the US State Department and the Australian Embassy; roundtable discussions with *National Journal*’s senior congressional reporter; access to political dinners, evening events; a day-trip to Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania; and a day-trip to the origins of the American republic in Philadelphia’s Independence Hall, Congress Hall and the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. In 2005, UCWIP became a charter member of the National Center on Citizenship, a service and civic engagement network in the United States.

For the 2009 Programme, **19** congressional offices form the universe of prospective hosts:

Rep. Mike Castle (Republican of Delaware)
Rep. James Clyburn (Democrat of South Carolina)/House Majority Whip’s office
Rep. Joe Courtney (Democrat of Connecticut)
Sen. Mike Crapo (Republican of Idaho)
Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart (Republican of Florida)
Sen. Christopher Dodd (Democrat of Connecticut)
Rep. Philip English (Republican of Pennsylvania)
Del. Eni Faleomavaega (Democrat of American Samoa)
Rep. Sam Farr (Democrat of California)
Sen. Charles Grassley (Republican of Iowa)

Rep. Alcee Hastings (Democrat of Florida)
Rep. Jerrold Nadler (Democrat of New York)
Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (Republican of Florida)
Rep. Loretta Sanchez (Democrat of California)
Rep. John Tierney (Democrat of Massachusetts)
Rep. Zach Wamp (Republican of Tennessee)
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Majority office)
Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee (Majority office)
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

The Programme offers individualized attention to the student interns before, during and after their internships. Contact has been sought and maintained across the years for continued assistance and career development. Notable measures of intern success have included numerous letters of recommendation from congressional hosts; Floor recognition for legislative work; extended internships; a Member request to recruit a student for an American summer internship; and at least a half-dozen congressional job offers, with one accepted. Alumni later pursuing other work in the public sector have attained positions in the Prime Minister's office, in a variety of federal departments and agencies in Canberra, at the Australian Consulate in New York, at the Australian Embassy in Washington, DC, and at the World Bank in Washington, DC.

Leadership

UCWIP was created in Washington, DC by Eric K. Federing, who directs and manages the program *pro bono*. Federing was a senior congressional advisor for a dozen years, serving as communications director/press secretary for Rep. Norm Mineta of California, the House Transportation Committee, and Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut. Federing is now Executive Director, Business and Public Policy, Government Affairs for KPMG LLP, the global audit, tax and advisory services firm. From 1992 through 1998 while still a congressional staffer, Federing conducted frequent speaking tours at numerous universities, business groups, and think tanks across Australia regarding American government, politics and news media. He is a Board member of the National Conference on Citizenship, a congressionally-chartered non-profit in the U.S. In 2004, Federing received a KPMG Chairman's Award for Excellence in Volunteerism in Washington, DC in recognition of UCWIP. Partnering in the UCWIP effort is Daphne Clones Federing, herself a former congressional staff veteran (as a senior economist with the Joint Economic Committee) and Federing's wife.

Applications and Preparations

Each participating university determines administrative and application procedures in conjunction with UCWIP and university policies. Internships are unpaid and must be conducted for university course credit. Deadlines are uniform and set by UCWIP. Annual costs are affected by the US and Australian dollar exchange rate. Planning a personal budget and fundraising cannot be overemphasized. Air travel, accommodations, commuting, food, visa, etc. are estimated to be A\$9,000+. Student interns in 2008 reported and recommended an overall budget of A\$13,000 to A\$15,000, assuming an exchange rate of A\$1 = US\$.90.

UCWIP is competitive and seeks mature, engaging, articulate students to serve as ambassadors for themselves, their universities, and Australia. In each of the last 4 years, approximately 60 applications were received for review. The Programme applies no quotas of any sort. Applicants are asked to demonstrate an understanding for and an appreciation of the American political process. Students should aspire to benefit from the experience academically, professionally, culturally, and personally. Academic study is only one of many factors considered. Paid and voluntary work experiences are also important. Sophisticated interpersonal skills, resourcefulness and knowledge are exceptionally important. Critical selection factors include a free-style essay explaining why this opportunity is of interest. Applications then ask students to choose up to 4 of the listed congressional offices and explain why each is of interest. UCWIP works to find the best 'match' taking all these factors into account.

UCWIP respects interns as young professionals. Resources offered include safe-and-secure upmarket sharehouse arrangements in northern Virginia; counsel towards the US Government-required J1 visa; and continual on-the-ground guidance. The J1 visa is obtained by each successfully-matched student through US consulates (typically Sydney, Melbourne and Perth) and in direct conjunction with their congressional hosts, a process enabled through the Council for International Educational Exchanges; CIEE's Australian affiliate is Student Placement Australia. All internships evolve into direct relationships between congressional host and student, the accommodations provider and student, etc. UCWIP is the organizer, facilitator, advisor, quality controller and risk mitigator. Only Australian students enrolled within the 8 participating universities are eligible to apply and should do so through:

Deakin University (www.deakin.edu.au)
Jo Sarah, Experiential Learning Officer, Faculty of Arts, Jo.Sarah@deakin.edu.au

Griffith University (www.griffith.edu.au)
Heidi Piper, Manager, Study Abroad & Exchange, Griffith International, h.piper@griffith.edu.au

United States Studies Centre @ The University of Sydney (<http://sydney.edu.au/us-studies>)
Dr L. Carson, Academic Program Director, lcarson@usvd.edu.au

University of Canberra (www.canberra.edu.au)

Dr. Trish Payne, Faculty of Communication and International Studies, trish.payne@canberra.edu.au

University of Melbourne (www.unimelb.edu.au)

Miranda Stewart, Faculty of Law, m.stewart@unimelb.edu.au or Thomas Davis, Department of Political Science, tdavis@unimelb.edu.au

University of Queensland (www.uq.edu.au)

Majella Todd, International Development Manager, Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, mtodd@uq.edu.au

University of Western Australia (www.uwa.edu.au)

Emma Matson, Arts Practicum & Student Exchange Coordinator, Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, emmag@cyllene.uwa.edu.au

University of Wollongong (www.uow.edu.au)

Trish Tindall, Manager, International Relations, trish@uow.edu.au or studvabroad@uow.edu.au

A sampler of what others have said in the news media, in Congress, and in Parliament



Down-Under Interns *by Timothy Taylor*

February 8, 2006

“Instead of surfing and tanning, 12 Australian university students are spending their summer breaks in a cold and wintry Washington, D.C., to learn about the Congressional process and U.S.-Australian relations. The students are participating in the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship program, which selects undergraduates from seven of its participating Australian colleges and universities to come to Washington and partake in the political feast better known as Washington politics.

“Ryan Conroy and Jessica Gurevich said that they have both come to enjoy their time in Washington for the [eight]-week internship program. Gurevich, who interns in Rep. Mike Castle's (R-Del.) office, said that she could not have passed up the opportunity to work in Congress. She also described her colleagues as a "family," in which she and her co-workers have taken a mutual liking for one another and have been able to learn of the cultural and political similarities and differences....

“[Director and founder Eric] Federling likened the program to the Fulbright Scholar Program "with a twist" (Fulbright, sponsored by the State Department, allows students and other scholars to study in different sections of the world). However, he said that the Uni-Capitol program is unlike any other program because of its focus on the students as individuals.

“The application process is key in pairing a student up with a host office, Federling said. Conroy, an international relations major with a focus on law and the arts, interns in the office of Rep. Sam Farr (D-Calif.), who serves on the Appropriations subcommittee on Agriculture, rural development, Food and Drug Administration and related agencies, which has congressional oversight of the Health and Human Services Department. Conroy said that he is interested in both international and domestic policies and health issues Conroy added that working in Farr's has afforded him the opportunity to attend briefings on such issues as a United Nations response fund to assist developing countries.”



AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AS AMBASSADORS TO AND FROM CONGRESS **SPEECH OF HON. JERROLD NADLER OF NEW YORK IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

February 4, 2004

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, there is a long list of people and institutions that have helped our nation flourish through our nearly 228 years of independence. One of our greatest traditions as Americans is to welcome friends from around the world into our lives--sometimes professionally and sometimes personally.

Most congressional offices host American college students, to help our nation's future leaders understand the political complexities affecting our constituents and our jobs as their representatives. Now, thanks to the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program, some of Australia's best and brightest university students have had the opportunity to participate in six-week, full-time internships in House and Senate offices. These internships have proved to be an invaluable learning experience, both for the students and for their hosts.

IN HONOR OF THE UNI-CAPITOL WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
SPEECH OF HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE OF DELAWARE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 15, 2005

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, each year America hosts thousands of foreign students from around the globe. For those of us who develop a professional or personal relationship with any of these individuals, we are truly enriched by their different perspective on the world....

For over 100 years, Australia and the United States have enjoyed a unique partnership that has endured world wars, economic malaise, and our current battle with terrorism. This tradition continues through the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program, which provides Australian students with the opportunity to experience American democracy first-hand through internships with Congressional offices.

UNI-CAPITOL WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
SENATOR DEBBIE STABENOW OF MICHIGAN
January 26, 2006

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, each year congressional offices host American college students as interns, to help our future leaders learn about public service and see how their Government works firsthand. Today, I would like to let you know about a program that gives Australian students the opportunity to experience our democratic and legislative process. It's called the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program.... Twelve of Australia's brightest are here, pursuing knowledge and understanding. In so doing, we are all finding new reasons to like an old friend....

The selection process for the students is competitive and intellectually rigorous, ensuring the highest quality applicant. All participating students are comprehensively matched with a congressional office and corresponding position. They come from a wide range of academic disciplines and bring as much knowledge and understanding to our offices as they take away....

Australia continues to be one of America's strongest allies. Our greatest gift is the friendship born of shared values. I thank the Uni-Capitol Program and these Australian interns for their hard work, and I wish the program continued success.

UNI-CAPITOL WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE CRAPO OF IDAHO
January 23, 2007

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, as modern communication makes our world increasingly smaller, linking global societies at unprecedented business, government and social levels, it is critical that America and other democracies worldwide engage in a process of ongoing co-education about the efforts and work of democratic governments. This educational exchange is best facilitated by hands-on learning and personal experience. A terrific example of this effort is the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Programme, in which outstanding college students from seven of Australia's top universities compete for the opportunity to serve as interns for Members of the U.S. Congress....I am fortunate to be able to participate this year. Charis Tierney from Brisbane, Queensland, has been a wonderful addition to my office this winter. She says of this opportunity:

The UCWIP has been a once in a lifetime to not only observe but participate in the work of the U.S. Congress. Working within Senator Crapo's office has given me the kind of unique appreciation for the United States Senate's work that can only be gained from behind the scenes. My daily interaction with the fantastic staff of the Senator's office has only enhanced the experience. ...

This valuable program bridges the 9,000 miles that separate the United States and Australia with the friendship of shared experiences and realization and application of common goals and interests.

TRIBUTE TO THE UNI-CAPITOL WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
SPEECH OF HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN OF SOUTH CAROLINA IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES
February 8, 2007

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, as we listen to our constituents, grapple with their needs, speak out, legislate, and otherwise work to improve their lives and the life of our Nation, we take great pride in the ability of Congress and our system of government to inspire the world beyond our borders. But just as important as this inspiration is the recognition of what we all can learn from that world, from people who want to study, visit or otherwise immerse themselves in this great institution as a means towards better understanding the United States.

For the last 8 years, a unique international exchange has taken place here in Congress. Future leaders of Australia have participated in what's known as the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program. Through this program each year, one dozen of Australia's best and brightest university students have been carefully matched to House and Senate offices for two-month full-time internships. These internships have enabled me and many of my colleagues to share our pride in the American republic while at the same time learning more firsthand about the Australian commonwealth, its people, its ideas, and our numerous shared values.

It is an understatement to say that Australia and the United States are close allies globally or that we merely have such similarities as vibrant democracies, free-enterprise economies, and diverse societies. We are in many ways close cousins with complex national histories. That is what these young Australians get to learn as they are welcomed here, and how we profit by their all-too-brief presence among us.

This year, it has been my pleasure to participate in this program for the third time and host Sylvia Gaston from the University of Melbourne. Her kindness, can-do spirit, eagerness to learn, and willingness to share her views with me and my staff have made her an exceptional ambassador for her university and for her country. During her time with us, the closeness of the Australian and American peoples is clearly evident, just as it is evident that this exchange is not merely an academic exercise or even confined to Congress. It is about building for tomorrow, about personal and professional growth, and about lasting international friendships....

Madam Speaker, many of my colleagues have recognized this effort over the years. I did so myself 4 years ago when the annual intern group was much smaller and drawn from only a single Australian university. It is heartening to see how much this program has grown, thrived, and how tribute has been paid not just here but in the Australian Parliament....

My great hope is not only that this program continues, but that others will be founded in its spirit and focused towards as many peoples and places as possible in our world.

HONORING THE UNI-CAPITOL WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
SPEECH OF HON. JOE COURTNEY OF CONNECTICUT IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 7, 2008

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, for decades the United States has looked towards Australia as one of our closest of cultural, economic and security partners. This is true not just between the two governments but among Americans and Australians who have crossed the Pacific to visit with or work with each other. I am pleased to rise today to recognize the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program, which annually delivers some of Australia's best and brightest university students to a bipartisan and bicameral array of congressional offices for two-month internships.

This is the first year that I have been privileged to participate in the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program. A student emissary to my office, Anthony Bremner, has added first-hand value to our understanding of global issues and perspectives as seen from Australia. Anthony, who visits us from the University of Queensland, is a text-book example of the high caliber of this program. Over the past two months, he has applied his volunteer experiences from the constituency office of Australia's newly elected Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, to my office. During this time, Anthony has attended committee briefings, drafted constituent correspondence, and assisted my staff with research....

Anthony is not alone in this effort. This year, a record 13 students from all across Australia were matched with as many congressional offices. They were drawn from seven Australian universities in four different states and the Australian Capital Territory. Far from a solely academic exercise, the Uni-Capitol program is a practical investment in our global community, given the diverse array of congressional participants and an equally diverse array of student interests ranging from law to commerce, from the environment to communications, from international affairs to American studies....

Madam Speaker, I would encourage all of my colleagues to seek connections with members of our global community. Similarly, I would encourage American university students to seek established and creative ways to connect with their counterparts around the globe. On this note, I ask my colleagues to join with me in recognizing the contributions of the Uni-Capitol Internship Program and, again, thank Anthony Bremner for his participation and hard work.

UNI-CAPITOL WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME 2008

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE CRAPO OF IDAHO

February 11, 2008

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I am proud to be involved for a second year in the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Programme, an exchange program in which outstanding college students from Australia's top universities compete to serve as interns for the U.S. Congress. The program is in its ninth year of bringing the Washington experience to our friends from Australia, firsthand. In addition to working in congressional offices, the program provides students with a number of other opportunities and activities, including visits to historic sites, visits to government agencies, meetings with government leaders, and educational events.

This year, Suzi Allan, a student from the University of Canberra, Australia, is taking a 2-month hiatus from her communications degree to help me serve Idaho constituents. Of the program, Suzi says, "The UCWIP has given me the unique opportunity to gain firsthand insight into the world's most influential government. I have had incredible experiences while working in Senator Crapo's office and have enjoyed learning more about the U.S. Congress. Working in the heart of America's political establishment is a fantastic experience that I will always remember." ...

Free nations have a responsibility to work together to promote the liberty that have provided social, cultural, and economic success. Bringing young people together in their formative educational years promotes these partnerships for prosperity across national lines and highlights our Nations' shared goals and interests. I am pleased to be able to participate in this well-crafted and successful program.

IN HONOR OF THE UNI-CAPITOL WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

SPEECH OF HON. SAM FARR OF CALIFORNIA IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 12, 2008

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program. This program is a wonderful educational experience for both the intern who works in a congressional office, and for the office who receives an intern from the program. The program annually delivers some of Australia's best and brightest university students who have a passion for and commitment to civic engagement and public service to congressional offices for 2-month internships.

The Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program began in 2000 and since its inception I have been a proud participant. This year I welcomed a wonderful student-ambassador to my office, Stephanie Lyons, who has shared with us her experiences as a newcomer to Washington from the perspective of an Australian. Stephanie, who visits us from the University of Canberra, is a great example of the high quality students who are involved in this program. With a bachelor's degree in communication, specializing in public relations and political communication, Stephanie will this year commence her honors degree, drawing upon her experiences here in Washington as a research stimulus. Throughout her time in this office, she has had the chance to pursue her interests in the media and a range of issues, from foreign affairs, human rights, and diplomacy to science and the environment.

Over the past month, she has been an invaluable asset to this office. She has attended committee briefings, drafted constituent correspondence, and assisted my staff with research. Her Australian accent has garnered the attention of many of my constituents on tours and over the phone. She is often asked to share her experiences in Washington, DC. ...

Madam Speaker, I strongly encourage my colleagues to seek international connections by participating in this rewarding program. It is truly heartening to see how much this program has grown over the years, and I look forward to its continued success. I ask my colleagues to join with me in recognizing the contributions of the Uni-Capitol Internship Program and, again, thank Stephanie Lyons for her participation and hard work.

RECEOGNIZING THE UNI-CAPITOL WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

SPEECH OF HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS OF FLORIDA IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 5, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program. Since the inception of the Uni-Capitol program, I have participated in this relationship building program that brings some of Australia's best and brightest future leaders to Washington. I have benefited greatly by the work of unique and talented individuals that produced top-notch work to both of my offices....This is the first year that I have also hosted an intern at the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe in my capacity as Chairman.

I have been pleased to host two amazing young women, Siobhan Coughlan and Katrina Mae.

Siobhan Coughlan, who is in her third year at the University of Queensland, first arrived in the Helsinki Commission's office on January 3, 2008, and since then has provided able, thorough, and important assistance to the professional staff of the Commission. Over the past two months with the Commission, Siobhan has demonstrated her honorable personal character and integrity in the way she confronted the topic of human rights

and democratic principles and the manner in which she interacted with staff on economic development and tolerance issues in a domestic and international context. Siobhan has served our organization in a number of capacities, and at each stage has proven to be valuable because of her professionalism, her drive to succeed, and her ability to work well within a group dynamic. Siobhan always demonstrated the highest level of conscience in keeping the respectability of our program as she sought to achieve our common goals. Siobhan brought her courteous and positive demeanor to hearings, briefings and events that the Commission held and events she attended on behalf of the staff here at the Commission. Much as been gained by having an international student at our side and Siobhan has greatly contributed her experiences, ideas, and thoughts that are shared by our good Australian friends across the water. I am delighted that she's able to extend her internship for another two months.

In her short time here, Katrina Mae has become an indispensable asset to my office. An undergraduate law student at the University of Wollongong, Katrina came to my office with an ardent interest in civil rights and a desire to work with individuals who support policies that encourage tolerance and cooperation across racial and cultural lines. Over the course of her two months, she has attended hearings and briefings on a myriad of policy issues, drafted countless constituent correspondence, assisted visitors and callers in her always patient and thoughtful manner, and helped several staffers with legislative research and special projects. While her professional skills and academic credentials are certainly impressive, Katrina is also an absolute pleasure to work with. No matter the assignment, she is always eager to help and approaches every new task with a smile. The anecdotes of her adventures as a first-time visitor to the United States were a constant source of entertainment, and her tales of life in Australia gave our office a greater understanding of her country's rich history, culture, and values. Katrina arrived on Capitol Hill hoping to acquire a better understanding of the U.S. legislative process, and it is my sincere hope that she benefited as much from this experience as we did from having her with us. ...

Over the last nine years, my staff and I have greatly benefited from the relationships that have been made from the result of this program as it continues to provide all of us an extraordinary experience with our friends on the other side of the ocean. It has been a great privilege to host Siobhan and Katrina and I ask all my colleagues to extend their open arms to the Uni-Capitol Internship Program and to our Australian friends in the future.



Senate

Wednesday, 21 June 2006

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST **Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program**

[Senator Concetta FIERRAVANTI-WELLS](#) (New South Wales) (12.47 p.m.)—I rise today to speak about a very interesting and important program for young Australians. University students from across Australia are being given an opportunity to intern in the United States Congress in Washington, DC through a program now known as the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program.... The success and growth of the program has been in large part due to the manner in which these young Australians have acquitted themselves in the US Congress. We should be proud of the way these students have served as ambassadors for themselves, for their universities and for Australia.... They have done this nation and the Australian people numerous proud acts of public service, which I hope will continue for many years to come....

There are so many common values between our two countries and yet there is such a huge physical distance between us which means that contacts between individuals can be very difficult to achieve. We see in our Prime Minister and President Bush the value of a solid professional and personal relationship. The relationships these students are developing are important, particularly because the future strength of the alliance between our two countries is not going to be just about economic and military relationships but is going to very much depend on the people to people strengths that will develop in us an understanding of each other. I congratulate the students who have already acted as ambassadors for our country and ensured the growth of this program. I would encourage future university students to utilise opportunities like this when they are made available to them.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THURSDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2006

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE **Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program**

[Mr. Warren SNOWDON](#) (Lingiari, Northern Territory) (4.49 p.m.)—Every year for the past seven years, students from around Australia have undertaken a journey, travelling halfway around the world, often at their own expense, in order to learn about another culture, to witness another system of government and to work as part of the United States Congress. The students undertake this journey as part of the

Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program, a program which offers university students around Australia the chance to undertake an eight-week internship in a congressional office in Capitol Hill, Washington DC....

The Program facilitates this by enabling the formation of genuine friendships and the exchange of views and ideas between the Australian interns and their respective offices. I have often enjoyed the interaction that has occurred between my Australian and American interns. This, my colleagues, is how we build relationships which will ensure that the U.S. and Australia remain friends and allies for years to come....

Programs like this give young Australians a once in a lifetime opportunity. This program provides students with a strong interest in civics and in progressing and developing our nation further through new ideas and new policies with an avenue through which to gain invaluable skills, knowledge and understanding and experience that will help them achieve their goals and, in turn, make their own contribution for the benefit of others.

Young Australians will go on to work all around the globe in a variety of fields and careers, as we know. It is important, however, that we have programs that offer dedicated students who have an interest in public service and public office places where they can come to learn and experience. We need to continue to foster such educational and employment opportunities so that we can continue to have a strong and vibrant pool of individuals who are equipped to represent and work for the Australian public.

I commend the many people who have made such a program possible—the congressional hosts, the variety of people and organisations that have taken time to meet and help the students during their stay, the universities involved in the program and the program coordinators who make this possible. Without their help and the help of many others, this opportunity would not be available to our students....

Other intern experiences have included ...



A 2007 roundtable with Richard E. Cohen (center, seated), senior *National Journal* House correspondent and *Almanac of American Politics* co-author.



The Inaugural Ball for Washington, DC Mayor Adrian Fenty in 2007.



At the Gettysburg National Military Battlefield in January 2008, with a senior licensed battlefield guide. The group is standing near the point where Pickett's Charge began on July 3, 1863.



The 2008 group standing outside Philadelphia's historic Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was debated and ratified in 1776.

Scenes from the annual reception held in the United States Capitol Building

For the last 5 years, UCWIP has organized receptions honoring the students and their Congressional hosts in the US Capitol Building. The receptions have been co-sponsored by the Australian Embassy in Washington and by the participating Australian universities. These are scenes from the February 13, 2008 event, held in one of the largest rooms in the building; more than 100 guests attended.



Rep. Alcee Hastings (right), Australian Ambassador Denis Richardson, Australian Counselor for Congressional Affairs Jane Hardy, Rep. Sam Farr, and Stephanie Lyons (UC student intern)



The gathering listens in HC-5 as Rep. Sam Farr (very far right) speaks during the formal program.



Ambassador Richardson addresses the gathering. To his left are Monique Salm (Griffith) and Madelene Fox (Deakin). Federing, who led and emceed the program, is to his right.



Rep. Hastings discusses the historic news of the official Australian Government apology to Aboriginal Australians earlier on February 13, 2008.



Tim Goyder (UWA) speaks on behalf of the interns and honors the events of February 13th back in Australia. With him are James Paterson (left, Melbourne), Katrina Mae (UOW), Anthony Bremner (Queensland)



Six-time intern host Sen. Chuck Hagel speaks as Peter Fischer, Chief of Staff to Sen. Mike Crapo, Jane Hardy, and Ambassador Richardson look on.

Photos by Daphne Clones Federing

Intern recollections

Reflections on this road to Washington, DC



Estee Fiebiger

Flinders University

Applied in 1999
Internship in 2000

Internship: Rep. Loretta Sanchez

As one of the five inaugural participants in 2000 in the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Programme I felt a great sense of pride in being able to represent my university and Australia in Washington DC.

The internship was an amazing opportunity which allowed me to gain a valuable working understanding of the political process in America by interning in the Office of Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez. The Congresswoman had a particular interest in US foreign policy and was the ranking woman on the House Armed Services Committee. This particularly appealed to me and I was fortunate enough to be able to attend both an Armed Services and International Relations Committee hearings. Another highlight was attending a lecture given by then President Bill Clinton.

Washington DC and in particular the Capitol are amazing. There is a lot about the history of the United States that can be learnt from DC and being able to experience it in such a unique way is remarkable. Australia and the United States are alike in so many ways and have a long history of shared values, particularly evident in our close security relationship. Working as an intern gives a small insight into what binds our two countries.

The support from Eric Federing and his wife Daphne Clones Federing is what ensured the experience was professional and very worthwhile but also that we felt secure in traveling so far from home. Visiting the Australian Embassy in Washington also provided an interesting look at the work Australians are doing overseas and their support was also appreciated.

After completing my International Relations degree the internship programme encouraged me to pursue a career in politics in Australia which has lead me to my employment with the Prime Minister of Australia, Hon John Howard MP. I thoroughly encourage anyone considering the internship programme to seize the opportunity and then make the experience your own.



Luke Toy

University of Canberra

Applied in 2003, 2004
Internship in 2005

Internship: Senator Christopher Dodd

The Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program really does offer a once in a lifetime opportunity, on so many levels. First, there's the experience of simply being inside Capitol Hill with all of its energy and its 'buzz'. Walking inside the halls, each painted with unique history; witnessing on a daily basis what we would only ever catch a glimpse of in a heavily truncated news bulletin at home; being a small part of the whole ongoing political process.

Secondly, there's the work experience – an area largely dependent on your own enthusiasm and entrepreneurship. Working with other interns, liaising with senior staff, researching policy, attending press conferences, sitting in on committee hearings - how much you get out of the experience largely depends on you. Representing your country as one of a very small handful of Australians working on the hill provides you with an important ambassadorial role as well. But it's also an opportunity to make new and long-lasting friendships with your UCWIP group, and with people you meet in and around Washington, DC.

Thirdly, there's the ability to deepen your understanding of U.S. history and culture through exploring the surrounds of Washington's many monuments and museums; through visits to Gettysburg, Philadelphia's Independence Hall, Congress Hall; or through trips to New York, Boston or wherever your weekends take you.

But more than anything it's a chance to more wholly develop an understanding. Not just of the United States, but of what it means to be an Australian representing your country abroad, and in such an exciting environment. This program offers not just the chance to build upon your own knowledge and skills, but also to share your ideas and to exchange your views - to learn, but also to teach. It is these broader experiences, skills and relationships that will continue to serve you, as they have me, long after the internship itself is over.



Marianna O'Gorman

University of Queensland

Applied in 2005
Internship in 2006

Internship: Del. Eni Faleomavaega

It's one thing to debate issues such as climate change or Iraq in a university classroom, but getting the chance to be on the floor when those debates are battled out in front of you and the players are people like Condoleezza Rice and Barack Obama ... that's something else.

My experience as an intern on the hill was one of the best experiences of my life. My time was spent in the office of Congressman Eni Faleomavaega, someone who inspired me with his ability to voice, not only the concerns of his American Samoan constituents, but those of many other people world-wide by bringing their stories of human rights violations, natural resource degradation and other cultural exploits to the House floor. For many interns, your Congressman will be your first real boss in the working world, so having a Congressman or woman who pushes the boundaries and inspires you and your workmates to really fight hard, can have a life-long impact.

The UCWIP is different to what you may expect in an internship program. The focus is on the individual, on building relationships and opportunities. From the individual side, Eric and Daphne Federling will work with you to ensure you feel at ease in your new home and office overseas. In terms of opportunities, provided you turn up with a hard-working, open-mind attitude, you will be given many opportunities to contribute to your office in more ways than you can imagine: Darfur, Asia-pacific security, 911 and global sustainability are just some of the many issues that the UCWIP interns have worked on over the past few years. And your office colleagues will be just as memorable. I now live in DC and still pop up to the Hill, now and again, and say G'day to all the office staff.

The UCWIP was nothing short of life changing for me. The friendships formed are life-long and I couldn't imagine a better way to travel, get real-world experience and kick-start your career.



Leng Lee

University of Melbourne

Applied in 2003
Internship in 2004

Internship: Joint Economic Committee

Participating in the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program represents a unique opportunity to see the inner workings of the United States Congress. Although the actual tasks interns do are often straightforward, immersion in the political life of the capital offers a great range of challenges, and complements academic study of US politics and society. For me, interning in Congress was a sort of 'boot camp' on America's political and economic life. Everybody I worked with knew a lot more about most things than I did, and were very generous with their time in teaching me what they knew.

The other highlight of the trip was spending a lot of time with like-minded Australians who were as interested in US politics as I was. It was always fun to end a day of work and debrief with the other interns. Offices differ from one to the next, from one year to the next, and even from one second to the next in how much time staff can take to get to know you. There are no real guarantees in that apart from goodwill and best intentions. There were still plenty of outside-work opportunities to see how things worked inside the Beltway. Not content to just place us in a Congressional office, Eric also organised a full program of briefings to give us a wider feel for what working in DC was like. In my year, we met with a National Journal editor, went to Foggy Bottom to hear from State Department officials, celebrated Australia Day at the Australian Embassy, and made a trip to Philadelphia.

The internship program is really more than just interning at Congress. It is a chance to learn a little bit more about what makes the United States what it is, and thus to understand one of the countries that shapes the military, political and economic course of the rest of the world. I look back at my internship experience as one of the real highlights of my university years.



Louise Squire

University of Western Australia

Applied in 2003
Internship in 2004

Internship: House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

When asked to describe to my internship changed me, a whole boatload of clichés and metaphors came to mind. All of the clichés fail to describe the enormous change that this programme can bring about; in fact trying to describe the plethora of effects that the Uni-Capitol Exchange programme had on my life is like trying to describe Lorenz’s ‘Butterfly Effect’. I feel like a tragic ‘Anthony Robbins’-esque clone when I say that it ‘took off my blinders and made me realise my full potential’.

The statement ‘this changed my life’ gets bandied about a lot, so I don’t think it captures it. Last night while watching TV I saw a hair removal product that would apparently change my life. If electrolysis can change my course, aspirations and outcomes in the way that my Uni-Capitol Exchange did, I think they’re seriously undercharging at only \$89.95 per month for three months.

‘It opened doors’ wouldn’t really cover the effects either. The intern experience is universally acknowledged to be ‘amazing’ and ‘incredible’ (the look of awe and respect is something you never get tired of) and undoubtedly is admired by potential employers and networkers; but it also makes you consider other doors that were always open to you, that you always had access to, but never realised were there.

Having this experience behind you gives you the courage to put your hand up for more amazing opportunities that you wouldn’t have thought you could do before. The only comparison I can think of is that I’ve got “three wines worth of courage” flowing through my veins, without any of the associated giddiness or nausea. ‘Gaining confidence’ just doesn’t describe the leap forward.

The opportunities afforded through the exchange and the lasting support of Eric and my fellow interns simply couldn’t be replicated by another experience. The experience affects you as much as you choose to let it, and the broad interactions and experiences offered by the Uni-Capitol exchange ensure that those who want to learn, grow and develop will find endless opportunity to do so.



Stuart Broadfoot

University of Western Australia

Applied in 2005, 2006
Internship in 2007

Internship: Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Challenging, rewarding, scary, exhilarating and beyond your wildest imagination. All phrases that describe this extraordinary experience known as UCWIP. The opportunity to get first hand experience in this most recognisable of world political institutions is without doubt awe inspiring. Working daily in the hustle of the Congress, you gain an insight on the many competing pressures associated with this completely different world.

I was the first Australian intern to be placed in my office, a proposition which was simultaneously nerve-racking and welcoming. There were no pressures or expectations associated with previous interns performances and I had the opportunity to craft my own experience as together the office personnel and I discovered this new experience. However, you are nervous to ensure that the experience is a positive one for the office, so that future interns are able to have access to the opportunities.

I had the great opportunity to attend a number of hearings of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and was fortunate enough to hear both Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright testify. Listening to these stalwarts of American Foreign Policy for the past 14 years was amazing, and there can be nothing but respect for their opinions.

This experience however is more than the experience of Washington DC. In one such experience we were lucky enough to be huddled with millions of others in Times Square, New York to celebrate New Years’ Eve, eating pizza and drinking coffee on the middle of Broadway! The electricity of the moment is enough to make the entire trip, however it is just one of the many experiences that form this endless stream of highlights, each of them forcing you to pinch yourself to ensure that it is real! And the people you share these experiences with become lifelong friends.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and the honour and privilege of undertaking it will leave you with an eternity of memories and a profound understanding of the US as a country and its close relationship with Australia.