

University revamps government internship program

■ **POLITICS:** Students have the opportunity to learn about Oregon legislature

By Laurie Phillips
Freelance Reporter

Students ready for a challenge can learn about politics and earn credit for their work while participating in the newly redesigned Legislative Internship Program.

The practice of placing University students in governmental internship positions is not a new one.

During the 1980s, the University put 60 interns to work in Salem, comprising the strongest program in the state among participating schools. About 25 law students and 12 other undergraduates are currently working as student interns.

Leslie Gray, a senior political science major, interns two days a week through the Planning, Public Policy and Management Department. She serves on the Oregon Student Association, which

educates lawmakers about student issues and earns four credits for her work.

Gray recommends the program for students who are not easily intimidated and are "able to stand [their] ground."

"[Ultimately] it's an incredible opportunity to learn about the laws that affect your lives, and have the power to change those laws," Gray said.

Carl Hosticka, associate vice president for Educational Services and Academic Affairs, said problems with the University program arose due to its very structure. The majority of student interns come from the School of Law, Political Science and PPM Departments, all of which have different requirements.

The School of Law also functions differently from the rest of the University both in its semester system and its method of calculating credits.

Although the University program was strong as a whole, Hosticka said, connecting the three

groups "was not made a top priority." To solve this problem, Legislative Relations created a Program Coordinator position and hired Judy Shioishi to fill it.

Shioishi considers the program both an opportunity to gain "life experience in the workplace" and to "begin networking early." She should know: In 1989, Shioishi served with the legislature as a researcher for the senate. Now it is her duty to recruit, train and supervise all University interns, periodically checking with them on an individual basis and facilitating group meetings at least twice a term.

Students are now being recruited for spring term, which Shioishi believes is the legislature's "most fast and furious period." Training offered during this time will be more intense, thus allowing students to begin working at the same level of fall interns. The legislature reconvened two weeks ago and will be examining a variety of issues for possible student involvement.

After interns are requested by legislators, they are placed where any openings exist. Opportunities include work on committees and in the governor's office.

Kirk Baily, director of Legislative Relations, feels the program is about "making connections" on a variety of levels. Structurally, unifying the three participating programs makes logistics easier for administrative purposes. Socially, students enjoy camaraderie by getting to know each other and learning from shared experiences, he said.

"[In the past] I'd go visit the interns in Salem, and people who went to the same school didn't know each other."

She hopes that by encompassing a broader focus the program will be even more successful than it was in the past.

Interns must commit to work at least one day a week and arrange for their own transportation to Salem.

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— Leslie Gray
Senior, Political Science

All students are welcome to apply, said Baily, given they demonstrate "a pretty high interest in the legislative process and state government." In addition, they should "have a desire to get involved" and be prepared to work in a "high-energy environment."

Interested students should contact Judy Shioishi for an informal interview. She can be reached at 346-2169 and shioishij@oregon.

Applications can be picked up in her office in 10B Johnson Hall.

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