CAREER TRACK INTERNSHIP FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDENTS AT THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Patrick Fagan

The Heritage Foundation launched a special intern program in the Spring of 2002: a semester long (spring, summer or fall) $6,000 internship designed to help launch a career in shaping a conservative social policy. Those who have just finished their undergraduate studies, and who have taken quantitative social science courses and are somewhat familiar with statistics, are ideal candidates.

Because many social science students obtain little practical experience of public policy work during their undergraduate and graduate years they do not conceive of public policy as a career option. The Heritage program, operated by the nation’s leading conservative public policy research foundation, is designed to provide a small number of interns with a hands-on introduction to the public policy work involved in reshaping social policy. The internship is available primarily to graduate students in the social sciences—students who have studied sociology, or psychology, and statistics. In special cases undergraduates may be accepted.

Those who take this internship will have the continued mentoring of Heritage personnel during and after the internship and the backing of the Heritage Foundation to help them launch and establish their careers, using the myriad contact resources of the foundation to do so—a major benefit for a young professional seeking to become established in this field.

Why the Program was Started

The Left currently dominates social science research, university departments, journals, and the career structure of the social sciences. While conservatives have been quite successful in beginning to reshape social policy, it has been with very few committed people and with the institutional structure stacked heavily against them. Moreover, their ability to make a strong case for such things as faith-based approaches, education choice and a host of other policy changes is seriously hampered by the lack of conservative experts and players in the field. It is time to bring bright young social conservatives to Washington to make a career of making the country a better place to live in.
Structure of the Program

The internship is worth a total of $6,000, disbursed to the intern at $750 every 2 weeks over the 16 week semester. The intern must reside in the Washington DC area during the internship, and must be available 40 hours per week for the full length of the internship.

Interns spend approximately half their time at the foundation, engaged in policy projects chosen in conjunction with Heritage research staff.

The other half of their time is spent working at the offices of a congressional committee or Member of Congress with a strong interest in social science issues, an appropriate Administration agency, at another research institution in Washington, or a similar venue. The placement is chosen in conjunction with Heritage research staff. An intern may have more than one placement during the semester.

Interns have a series of meetings with individuals who have been successful in shaping social policy and learn from them how their individual careers evolved—staff of Congressional leaders, former Heritage interns who are in the Administration, even in the White House, and with key civil servants who have made a quiet but powerful career inside the bureaucracy. These meetings will also enable the interns to build helpful contacts in Washington that may assist them in their public policy career.

Applications

Students interested in the internship program should contact:

Ann Bula,
Intern Coordinator,
The Heritage Foundation
214 Massachusetts Ave NE
Washington, DC 20002  ann.bula@heritage.org

The applications for the Summer and Fall Internship should be mailed or e-mailed before the previous November and should include:

• A resume.
• A list of social science courses taken.
• A letter of recommendation: the best one possible related to this type of internship.
• A short essay (1,500 words max.) on the social policy change he/she would work to bring about if in a powerful political office today.
• A list of favorite social policy areas in order of interest, highest interest first.
• A letter explaining why this career track internship is of interest, why he/she should be selected.