

POL 398.01 PUBLIC SERVICE INTERNSHIPS

Dear Prospective Intern:

I look forward to working with you and appreciate your interest in finding an internship now. While I would like to meet with you face-to-face, it is important that we get you started on your own journey to find an opportunity you might love.

Please review this—and look at your own networking and connections—and find some places where you might like to do an internship. That will get you started.

Then ...

1. Choose 5-10 places you might enjoy, learn from, and contribute to professionally.
2. Put the name, location, contact person and phone number (NOT email, phone) on its own index card.
3. Then, go on-line and research each organization to find:
 - a. The organization's mission (what it does, why it exists)
 - b. Its current goals (an organization USUALLY promotes its interests on its site)
4. Review the information on each card, then put the cards in order from "most-desirable" to "less desirable."

Now you are ready to start your calls (remember, don't bother to email these contacts until, or unless, they ask you to ... use the phone).

1. Call the number, ask to speak to the contact (if the contact is not available or no longer with the organization, ask to speak to the internship coordinator).
2. If you end up on voice mail, leave a message, but then make a note to call back the next day—be persistent.
3. If you reach the contact, start out by saying (in your strongest, most confident voice): "Hello, my name is _____ and I am a student in the Department of Politics and Government at Illinois State University and I want to be your intern."
4. Frequently, the response from the contact is "Why?" Here is where your preparation comes in on those little note cards.
 - a. Talk about what the organization does.
 - b. Talk about its current goals, plans and programs.
 - c. Talk about how YOU would like the opportunity to come in, work hard and learn by contributing to the success of what that organization is doing.
 - d. The continuing conversation is less predictable ... remember to listen before you respond, and think before you ask.
 - e. If you are still highly interested, it is good protocol to say "I would love to meet with you in person. When would be a convenient time to get together?"

5. Be prepared, though ... some of these conversations COULD lead up to an offer RIGHT OVER THE PHONE. So, have a response ready.
 - a. If YOU KNOW this is what you want, then say “wow, I didn’t expect an offer over the phone, but I would love to be your intern and can commit right now if we can work out the dates.
 - b. If you ARE NOT 100 percent sure, then say “I am flattered ... I did not expect an offer over the phone. However, I am talking with other organizations and can’t make my decision this minute ... can I call you back in a week with a firm answer?”
 - i. If this happens, you can still work with other possibilities (for a week—or whatever time you negotiate), but MAKE SURE you make EVERY promised phone call BACK –and we’re NOT talking voice mail or text messages.
 - ii. If this happens, give EVERY similar organization the same consideration ... and stick to your schedule.
 - iii. If the organization wants a firm answer then ... well, you have to decide. It’s okay to ask for an hour or two ... but STICK TO THE TIME SCHEDULE

Once you find something ...

1. Confirm the starting time and regular responsibilities for your internship.
2. Complete the application for internship.
3. Complete the Internship Packet.
4. Get an override and then register for your internship section (NOTE: An internship for credit is a class without a classroom ... you do some assignments, get evaluated, get a grade and academic credits. So, you are responsible for tuition & fees, like any other class.)
5. Receive your syllabus on ReggieNet and enjoy your internship experience.

Get back in touch with me if you have questions or concerns. Enjoy the experience of searching for your first professional opportunity.

Best wishes,

--Professor Rankin