**Tennessee Legislative Internship Program**

**Department of Political Science and International Relations

2016**

This program is an outstanding opportunity to gain work experience and see state politics and lawmaking up close and in detail. Two types of legislative internships are available through our Department: the statewide Tennessee Legislative Internship Program (i.e., the “state program”) and the MTSU program (i.e., the “private program”). The application and selection process for the state and private programs are run jointly, so it is just one application. The state and private programs differ in some ways, but they are very similar and both offer extremely valuable and enjoyable experiences.

Legislative interns perform a range of duties, including research, bill analysis and tracking, constituent work, and clerical/office tasks. Specific duties will vary day to day and according to the intern’s placement. All interns, however, enjoy the rare opportunity to observe the state legislative process on a daily and up close basis.

**Key Questions about the Application Process**

**-1- Who is eligible to apply?**

The program is open to all majors.

Applicants must have earned at least **60 hours of college credit** (not counting developmental or remedial hours) at the time of application (i.e., at the start of the Fall semester during which you apply for the internship).

*For the state program*: A **GPA of at least 3.0** at the time of application (i.e., at the start of the Fall semester during which you apply for the internship).

*For the private program*: A **GPA of at least 2.5** at the time the internship would start (i.e., at the start of the Spring semester).

This, if you have a gpa of 3.0 or higher, you are eligible for both programs, and if your gpa is between 2.5 and 3.0, you are eligible for the private but not the state program.

**-2- How do you apply?**

Complete applications include several components:

 a. an application form;

 b. a biographical statement;

 c. two recommendation forms completed by faculty members; and,

 d. a transcript of all college work.

**Contact Dr. David Carleton, Peck Hall 245,** **carleton@mtsu.edu****, to receive an electronic copy of the application form (which includes instructions for the biographical statement), and the recommendation forms.**

Submit all of the application materials to Dr. Carleton no later than **October 10**, 2015. Faculty members completing recommendation forms may send/give them directly to Dr. Carleton.

The timeline:
 - Applicants who qualify for both programs will automatically be considered for
 both.
 - Short interviews are held with all applicants on campus in October.
 - After these interviews, some applicants (usually four) are nominated for the
 state program. These students go to Nashville in mid-November for another
 interview.
 - After the state interviews, final decisions are made about all applicants. You
 should know for sure whether you will be doing an internship by
 Thanksgiving.

**Note:** If you don’t know your status by the time of registration for Spring classes, go ahead and sign up for regular courses as a backup plan. If you do get an internship, you can then drop those courses and add the internship course.

**-3- How many legislative internships are available?**

Each year, about four MTSU students usually win state internships; another five or so become private interns.

In addition, while not guaranteed, many years additional students are hired as clerks by the state House and state Senate, and/or are hired to work as legislative interns with the governor’s office or individual state agencies. When these additional opportunities arise, we select people from the applicant pool for this program.

**-4- Which legislator or committee will you work?**Interns work for individual legislators or for legislative committees. The State interns are placed by the state’s intern coordinator. The Private interns, who typically work for legislators representing part of Rutherford County, are placed by MTSU’s internship coordinator. Private interns will know their placement by early December; state interns usually do not find out about their specific placement until January.

 **-5- What about pay, grades, credits, and papers?

 a. Pay:** Interns are currently paid $350 per week, with an additional $350 paid
 at the start of the internship to help cover moving or clothing expenses. State
 interns are paid directly by the state. Private interns are paid once a month by
 MTSU. All interns are eligible for mileage reimbursement for one round trip per
 month between MTSU and the legislature. **b. Grades:** You will receive a grade of A through F based on your performance as an
 intern and your fulfillment of course requirements.  **c. Credits:** You must be enrolled as a student during the semester of your internship.
 The course you will take is P.S. 4360; you can enroll for 3, 6, or 12 credit hours. In
 most cases, up to six hours can count toward Political Science majors or minors; an
 additional six can count as elective hours to be used toward graduation.
 **IMPORTANT:** meet with your academic advisor(s) to verify exactly how your
 internship hours will apply to your program of study. The internship hours cannot
 always substitute for required major or minor courses.

 **d.** **Paper:** All interns will write a paper describing and reflecting on their internship
 experiences. Papers for students enrolled in 12 hours will be at least 15 pages
 long; papers for students enrolled for fewer hours will be somewhat shorter. No
 academic credit will be awarded until this paper is done. Further details about the
 paper will be provided.

 **-6- What are the dates and work hours for legislative interns?**The 2016 legislative internships will begin on **January 11** and end on **April 29**. You will need to be available for work in Nashville during these dates. Interns work 8:00 to 4:30, Monday through Friday, at the Legislative Plaza in Nashville. Interns receive state holidays off, but not university holidays. Unpaid overtime is not usual but may occasionally be required.

**-7- Can you take other classes while doing a legislative internship?**

No regularly scheduled courses can be taken. But, subject to permission by the MTSU intern coordinator, the legislature’s intern coordinator, and the staff of the office to which you are assigned, you may be allowed to take one distance learning or Saturday course. In all cases, your internship duties must take precedence over your studies.

**-8- How can you help prepare for the interview?**

Having some basic knowledge about Tennessee government and politics, and about current political events in the state, is very helpful. You are not expected to be an expert, but if you have no clue about what state government does, or who the key players are, you will be at a disadvantage. Good ways to familiarize yourself are to follow current political news and to browse through the state Blue Book (www.state.tn.us/sos/bluebook). You might also visit the state web page at www.tn.gov.

**-9- Who can you contact if you have any questions throughout the process?**

Dr. David Carleton
Department of Political Science and
 International Relations
Peck Hall 245
carleton@mtsu.edu
615-898-5461