

Minnesota Student Association First-Year Internship Program Overview

Overview

The MSA Internship Program began during the 2012-2013 school year. Since then, the program has evolved into a full-curriculum internship that provides first-year students with access to the internal workings of student government, professional and personal development, and unique change-making opportunities.

We hire first-years because of their motivation, their excitement, their energy, and their ability to learn. We offer other inside opportunities to upperclassmen, including a Spring Fellowship Program with our legislative team, where we give students the opportunity to learn about higher ed legislative issues, show them the basics of lobbying, and teach them about the local and state legislative landscape.

We worked out an agreement with the U of M's Poli Sci department to get students academic credit for both the First Year internship and the Spring Fellowship, if they want.

Timeline

MSA hires two Intern Coordinators who manage the application, recruitment, hiring, curriculum, and completion of the Intern Program.

The Intern Program is [advertised as such](#). We make clear that the program is NOT a guaranteed pipeline into our leadership team. However, it is an all-access program that provides them with unique opportunities, access, skill-building, and University-wide knowledge that sets them up for success in whatever they choose to do.

During first-year welcome/orientation is when our application goes live. The application asks them about their motivations, their experience, and interactive questions that require them to navigate the MSA website & learn about the priorities/platform of the organization.

The application closed after the first three weeks of classes. After that, we conducted standard job interviews and encouraged them to treat this as a real, professional, interview.

The intern coordinators, then, hired 15 first-year interns for this year. The amount of interns fluctuates every year. We recommend seven students maximum per Intern Coordinator. The internship ends at the end of the academic year.

Curriculum

Our internship curriculum is decided by the Intern Coordinators. This year, our curriculum is divided between the Fall & Spring semester.

Interns are required to:

- Attend a weekly intern meeting with their coordinators
- Hold two office hours a week
- Complete any project
- Attend our assembly meetings & our committee meetings

Interns receive:

- Resume and job interview training
- Diversity and inclusion training
- Self-care training
- Individual mentorship from the coordinators

Interns can assist the Leadership team with projects & the Leadership team submits those via a form. These can become their group projects or can be in addition. Some examples of projects:

- Taking minutes during meetings
- Compiling a spreadsheet of SGA contacts, legislative contacts, MSA alumni, etc
- Planning a Student Government reception
- Spearheading a project in a committee

In the Fall, interns learn the 101 of the organization, including the history, the structure, the teams, the techniques, and the goals. They get presentations from members of the Leadership Team and training from their Coordinators.

In the Spring, the interns are assigned to different groups in the MSA Leadership Team to assist them and learn the inside ropes. They rotate through all the teams (Finance, Communications, Committees, Internal Management, etc.,) spending close time with each team for a few weeks.

We often give them job references, connect them to internships, and assist them with their personal and professional journeys.