2016 Convention

Academic Seminars
1: Students pose for a photo outside the *Tampa Bay Times* Forum
2: DNC student meets former Charlotte, N.C. Mayor Harvey Gantt
3: RNC student smiles for the camera during her fieldwork placement
4: Two students during the VIP tour of the DNC convention venue
5: Student working hard at his media fieldwork placement
6: RNC student steps up to the microphone during a break in the action
7: Student takes advantage of an opportunity to ask a question at a morning session
Once every four years, our country takes part in an effort essential to our democratic system: the election of the President of the United States. At the heart of this process are two extraordinary events: the **Republican** and **Democratic National Conventions**.

Here, the parties showcase their candidates, ideologies, platforms and strategies. When complemented by a structured academic program, the national conventions provide an unrivaled environment for learning with unique opportunities for insights into the political process of the United States.
“Coming from a background in environmental science and policy, I saw the DNC academic seminar as a way to gain first-hand experience with national politics. My fieldwork placement provided an inside perspective on political communications and gave me the opportunity to meet incredible people—from fellow students to politicians and media personalities. My career path has focused on bridging the gap between science and policy, and learning more about how debates are framed on a national level through this program was a critical part of my education.”
Exceptional Opportunities for Learning

An Invitation to Engage
In each election cycle since 1984, The Washington Center (TWC) has helped colleges and universities give their students an inside perspective on the National Political Conventions. We invite your institution and students to be represented at these historic events in 2016. The Washington Center’s Republican and Democratic National Convention academic seminars remain the only programs of their size, scope and visibility to provide students access to these national events at the collegiate level.

A Once-in-a-Lifetime Academic Experience
The Washington Center’s convention programs feature academic instruction led by nationally renowned faculty directors. Students also attend briefings and engage in thought-provoking discussions with distinguished visiting speakers from both the political and media realms. Among many others, past speakers have included media professionals like Bob Schieffer of CBS News and C-SPAN founder Brian Lamb, governors like Bill Ritter of Colorado and Terry Branstad of Iowa, and convention chairs Jo Ann Davidson and Leah Daughtry. Students also participate actively—volunteering in the field with organizations involved in the conventions.

These seminars combine traditional academic structure and experiential learning. Students return to their campuses energized and with a deeper understanding of the electoral process of the United States. Many share their experiences by presenting to their campus communities or appearing in local newspapers, television, radio or other media.

For coverage of the 2012 conventions, please visit www.twc.edu/2012Coverage.
Program Structure

In the summer of 2016, the host cities of Cleveland and Philadelphia will become our living classrooms. During each program, students will have the opportunity to experience a convention from behind the scenes and witness democracy in action at both the grassroots and national levels.

Setting the Stage for Learning

During the first week, students experience the excitement of convention preparations while getting acquainted with the host city and the key venues. They learn how the convention comes together and how other events held throughout the city contribute to the main event. Academic topics include the history of U.S. political campaigns and conventions, the nomination process, convention planning and procedures, party organizations, campaign finance and media coverage.

Experiencing the Convention

During the week of the convention, students engage as participant observers, reflecting on each day’s events and critically analyzing what happened. Discussion topics include the keynote address, platform, party factions, selection of the presidential and vice presidential nominees, campaign issues and strategies and relevant races occurring during the election cycle.

The Washington Center works closely with both political parties to identify opportunities for access to tours of the convention center, invitations to youth events, rallies and issue forums, etc.
Jeffrey Thompson ’12
University of Alaska–Fairbanks

“As a justice major and practicing paralegal, I found the Democratic National Convention academic seminar to be a great program. Through my fieldwork, I interviewed one of the deputy chiefs for the city of Charlotte, who explained the planning and coordination involved with providing security for the DNC. I was able to secure credentials for the convention floor when President Bill Clinton spoke. To hear from and interact so closely with public figures and dignitaries is an incredible experience that will enhance any student’s understanding of our nation’s political process. This seminar also provides participants with unique networking opportunities that extend beyond their time at the convention.”
“At Temple University, we prepare students to become ‘real-world ready.’ Our students are given the knowledge, experiences and practical resources they need to take charge of their futures and create change in the world. Temple’s partnership with The Washington Center perfectly illustrates both our commitment to empowering students and our ability to power the world. We welcome the opportunity to be the home for The Washington Center’s DNC program in 2016.”
Past Academic Partners

1984
Dallas, TX
Texas Christian University

1988
New Orleans, LA
Tulane University

1992
Houston, TX
M.D. Anderson Medical Center

1996
San Diego, CA
University of San Diego

2000
Philadelphia, PA
University of Pennsylvania

2004
New York, NY
Pace University

2008
Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
Augsburg College

2012
Tampa, FL
Hillsborough Community College
Republican National Convention

July 10–22, 2016 | Cleveland, OH

TWC will partner with Baldwin Wallace University for the Republican National Convention academic seminar.

1 & 2: Baldwin Wallace University campus
3: The Arcade in downtown Cleveland
4: The Cleveland Museum of Art
5: The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum
6: Tower City Center, downtown Cleveland
7: Cleveland skyline
8: James Garfield statue in the Garfield Memorial
Democratic National Convention

July 17–29, 2016 | Philadelphia, PA

TWC will partner with Temple University for the Democratic National Convention academic seminar.
1: Statue of Benjamin Franklin housed in the Franklin Institute
2: The Liberty Bell
3: Philadelphia Museum of Art
4: Temple President Neil Theobald teaching a class
5: Philadelphia City Hall
6: Philadelphia skyline
7: Temple University campus
8: Row homes in Old City
Robert Helmer
President
Baldwin Wallace University

“Baldwin Wallace University is excited to welcome your students to Northeast Ohio as we prepare to share a singular moment in our nation’s history. Baldwin Wallace is uniquely positioned to offer an exhilarating front-row seat to American democracy in action. We believe there is exponential value in putting the lessons of citizenship and leadership into practice, and we are eager to collaborate with The Washington Center to provide each student with a powerful, unparalleled and unforgettable learning experience.”
Learning Activities

Each convention academic seminar spans two weeks, starting one week before each convention’s official kickoff.

Introduction and Overview
The faculty director launches the program with an intensive introduction to the current state of the presidential campaign. In addition, The Washington Center orients students to the logistics of the convention sites and the host city, including important safety and security procedures.

Speakers/Briefings/
Panel Discussions
Students encounter a diverse set of viewpoints as they hear from notable current and former public and party officials, members of the media, campaign professionals, policy experts, corporate representatives and others. These sessions include interactive question-and-answer with the speakers.

Small Group Meetings
Students meet regularly with experienced faculty in small groups to discuss presentations, the convention proceedings, assigned readings and related topics. In this setting, students also learn collaboratively by sharing perspectives, opinions and personal observations of convention-related events.

Fieldwork
Through fieldwork assignments, students contribute to the convention in a variety of ways. Placements range widely, from media and advocacy groups to host committees and state delegations. Past students have conducted interviews, prepared for events, met VIPs and supported the convention from behind the scenes. Sample placements from 2012 can be found on the opposite page.

Convention-Related Events
and Activities
Students will attend a variety of sessions organized by the parties, host committees and other interest groups. These typically include workshops, issue forums, press conferences, committee hearings, welcome rallies and youth-focused programs.

Detailed information, including past schedules, can be provided upon request. Please contact Campaign2016@twc.edu.
Sample Fieldwork Placements from 2012

- CNN
- *Dallas Morning News*
- Democratic Convention Committee
- Fox News
- International Republican Institute
- Host Committee
- National Women’s Political Caucus
- National Democratic Institute
- MSNBC
- Republican Committee on Arrangements
- Rock the Vote
- Talk Radio News Service
- The Creative Coalition
- *The National Journal*
- State Delegations
- Voice of America

1: DNC students in front of the convention stage in Charlotte
2: The *Dallas Morning News* keeps students busy as part of their fieldwork placement
3: Students are hard at work for CNN during the Convention
4: Two students working for *Politico* pose for a photo
5: An RNC student takes a quick break from her fieldwork placement inside the *Tampa Bay Times* Forum
"As a political science major, I loved the opportunity to connect what I was learning in the classroom with real, hands-on experience through the RNC academic seminar. I enjoyed being able to see all of the behind-the-scenes work that went into the planning and execution of the convention through my fieldwork placement with CNN. At the time of the convention, I was working on my honors thesis project on how language shaped the debate around immigration in America. Through my experiences in Tampa, I was able to gain an even better understanding of political communication and political media coverage within the United States that laid the foundation for my research."
The Washington Center actively strives for equal access to its programs for all, regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical challenge or veteran status.

The information in this brochure is correct at the time of printing. The Washington Center reserves the right to make changes as circumstances warrant.

The Washington Center is a 501(c)(3), nonpartisan, educational organization, not affiliated with any political party. We do not directly provide students with credentials, but we work to notify students about what to do to apply or arrange for credentials as well as strategically assign them volunteer fieldwork to maximize their access. Through our efforts and the leadership skills of the students, most students are able to gain access to important convention-related activities.