An Invitation to Affiliate
For Public Colleges and Universities
Dear Colleague:

Do your institution’s priorities include:

- Recruiting and retaining strong students?
- Connecting students of all majors with high-quality internships.
- Cultivating special opportunities for particular groups, such as honors students, national fellowship candidates and students of diverse backgrounds?
- Launching your graduates—and future alumni—on successful career paths?
- Helping students develop leadership skills and become more civically engaged?
- Providing opportunities for faculty development?

For over three decades, The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars has helped colleges and universities accomplish these goals. It delivers more than a semester “away” and professional internships. It provides an integrated, creditworthy experience that transforms theory into practice, ambition into purpose and potential into achievement.

That’s why hundreds of public colleges and universities in the United States and abroad choose to partner with The Washington Center.

We hope you’ll want to work with us as well.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Alan J. Blinken
Chairman

Michael B. Smith
President
What is The Washington Center?
The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars is an independent nonprofit educational organization serving hundreds of colleges and universities in the United States and other countries by providing selected students with challenging opportunities to work and learn in Washington, D.C. for academic credit. The largest program of its kind, The Washington Center has 80 full-time staff and more than 50,000 alumni, many of whom have now assumed leadership positions in government, corporate and nonprofit organizations.

What exactly do we provide?
In our internship program, we provide students of all majors with academic semesters and summer terms centered on professional work experiences.

We also offer academic seminars—typically one to two weeks in length—in January and May. These intensive learning experiences focus on current topics, such as the presidency, bipartisanship, politics and the media, national security and campaigns.

Our Washington, D.C. internship program has three main components

A tailored internship: We maintain ties with hundreds of internship sites in the public and private sectors. With help from our professional staff, students choose a substantive, supervised internship tailored to their academic and professional interests and needs.

An academic course: We offer up to 30 course options each semester in a variety of disciplines and interdisciplinary areas. Students choose one course, which meets once a week for three hours. Faculty are highly qualified academics and are often also practitioners in their fields (a course guide with biographies is available).

The Leadership Forum: We enrich students’ internships and academic study with weekly programming. All participants hear from prominent speakers in the Alan K. Simpson–Norman Y. Mineta Leaders Series and attend panel discussions, site visits and other activities along with other students in a thematically-oriented program area (Politics & Public Policy, International Affairs, and others). Our Public Policy Dialogues enable students to meet in small groups with members of Congress. All students carry out a civic engagement project. Finally, they document, analyze and reflect on their overall D.C. experience by compiling a comprehensive portfolio.

“For more than 30 years, our students’ educations at The University of Iowa have come alive through the professional work opportunities of The Washington Center internship program. Our students have interned at the White House, a nonprofit focused on recent refugees, the Public Defender’s Office, the EPA and scores of other meaningful placements. A Pomerantz Career Center program at the UI, The Washington Center is a trusted partner in helping students transition from the classroom to successful careers in society.”

Sally Mason, Ph.D.
President
The University of Iowa
“UMBC students have benefited enormously from participating in The Washington Center. Placements range from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Department of Defense to the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the Department of the Treasury. Through these challenging internships, The Washington Center is helping to advance our students’ academic and professional development, and supporting our university’s mission.”

How can institutions be assured that a student’s work with us is worthy of academic credit?

Since they award their own academic credit for students’ work, there’s no more important question for our affiliated colleges and universities. With our nationally representative Liaison Advisory Board, we’ve been developing the answer for over three decades—and the fact that hundreds of institutions award credit for what students do while enrolled in our programs speaks to the success and appeal of The Washington Center’s approach.

The amount of credit and the type or types of credit colleges and universities award are, of course, institutional decisions. But generally students receive 12 to 16 credits for a 15-week semester and 6 to 12 credits for a 10-week quarter or summer term. Some credits may be in the major or minor, and some may be elective or general education credit. Some credit may be graded and some awarded pass/fail. We are happy to provide guidance as well as examples of “credit packages” from similar institutions.

How, then, can an institution be assured that a student’s work with us is creditworthy? Some of the key assurances follow.

Admissions Standards

We admit only students who are ready for a challenging academic and work experience. All have the official approval of a liaison or faculty sponsor. The average GPA of enrolled students is over 3.3. Successful applicants join one of the most diverse and motivated peer groups in the country.

The Internship

Internships are tailored to students’ professional interests and chosen from among options generated by Washington Center internship coordinators. Students are supervised by academic program advisors who visit each internship site at least once during the semester to ensure that institutions’—as well as students’ and organizations’—expectations are met.

Our agreement with hundreds of sites is that internships will be substantive and challenging and that at least 80% of the students’ work will be nonclerical. If we find that this is not the case, we will remedy the situation and, if needed, move the student to a more suitable organization.

Academic Courses

We hire only highly qualified instructors—the large majority with both terminal degrees in their fields and successful college teaching experience. Many also bring a valuable perspective of recent or current practice into their classrooms.

A detailed course guide is published prior to the beginning of each term and contains academic policies, biographical information on faculty and course summaries. We can also provide individual course syllabi upon request. Courses and instruction are overseen by our senior director of academic affairs.

Sample Internship Sites

ABC News
Amnesty International
CNN
Embassies
Interpol
Law firms and lobbying firms
Merrill Lynch
National Education Association
National Institutes of Health
Peace Corps
U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia
U.S. Congressional Offices
U.S. Department of the Treasury
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Voice of America
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
The White House
Among many others

Freeman A. Hrabowski III, Ph.D
President
University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC)
“There may be other programs offering a Washington experience to undergraduates, but there is none better than The Washington Center. The enormous personal attention given to students in The Washington Center’s periodic weeklong academic seminars and their superlative semester-length internship programs. Students return to campus filled with enthusiasm instilled in academia and government.”

**Guided Reflection and Portfolio Creation**

Under the guidance of their academic program advisors, students complete assignments that are uploaded to our online course management system MyTWC for feedback. These assignments, through which participants document, analyze, and reflect on their experiences, are compiled into a final portfolio.

Common components include an individual development plan, a revised résumé, an informational interview write-up, a civic engagement report, sample work products from the internship and academic course, and a capstone reflection. Guidelines for assignments and rubrics used by academic program advisors are available upon request.

**Grading of Student Performance**

Just as colleges and universities award their own credit for students’ satisfactory completion of our internship program, they determine students’ grades. The Washington Center, however, provides the campus with the thorough documentation it needs to make this determination. In addition to a brief midterm evaluation, institutions receive final evaluations from each student’s academic program advisor, internship site supervisor and course instructor, each of whom recommends a grade. The students’ portfolios are also sent back to the institution.

**Inspection Visits and Requests for References Encouraged**

We invite faculty and other campus representatives to visit at any time for a full orientation to our program—internships, academic courses and Leadership Forum—and to tour our facilities, which include our headquarters building in the Dupont Circle area and our state-of-the-art Residential and Academic Facility at NoMa five blocks north of Capitol Hill. If you would like to visit us, we may be able to help with expenses.

We also invite prospective partners to speak with members of our Liaison Advisory Board, who are faculty, staff and administrators from affiliated institutions across the country. Please don’t hesitate to be in touch with us if you would like selected names and contact information.

**Below**

Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (top), former Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta (center) and former NPR President Kevin Klose (bottom), addressing Washington Center students.

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Ross K. Baker, Ph.D.
Professor of Political Science
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick Campus
“The Washington Center’s internship programs and academic seminars provide exceptional opportunities. Through their experience as interns in all kinds of workplaces in Washington, D.C., our students gain a deeper understanding of politics, economics and social justice in a national and global context. Our affiliation with The Washington Center enables students of all majors to receive academic credit for their internships through their home academic departments, and they return to our campus greatly enriched by these experiences.”

James McKusick, Ph.D.
Dean, The Davidson Honors College and Former Campus Liaison
The University of Montana

Is housing provided?
Yes, it is guaranteed to all accepted students. Students live in shared, fully furnished apartments in our Residential and Academic Facility @ NoMa (pictured above), just a few blocks north of Capitol Hill, or, when additional apartments are needed, in carefully selected and well-established area neighborhoods.

All housing facilities are easily accessible to Washington’s Metro subway system. Student services professionals—including alumni in residence assigned to each building—organize a range of social and professional development activities and provide an important “safety net” in case of emergency.
“The University of New Hampshire has exclusively affiliated with The Washington Center for D.C. internships based on the academic rigor of the program and the support students receive. Many of our participants over the past 25 years have been students from small towns whose parents never attended college. From the moment these students are accepted by The Washington Center, they are mentored, guided and ultimately transformed into young professionals.”

What is the cost? How is it paid?
The Washington Center’s program fee (tuition) is set between the average tuition of public and private institutions nationally. The program fee and housing fee for each upcoming term are available at www.twc.edu/program-fees. Students’ actual costs vary as a result of aid received from their institutions, states, or The Washington Center’s own substantial financial assistance program.

Most public affiliates have calculated that supporting participation is a sound investment. Featured in admissions and advancement materials, for example, these students’ words can make the institution’s case to prospective students, parents and donors in a uniquely powerful way. These colleges and universities therefore establish billing arrangements that waive or forward tuition, enabling at least a limited number of students to take part. Public affiliates also frequently identify further support—such as discretionary funds administered by presidents, chairs or honors programs, and scholarships provided by university foundations or donors.

Since students remain enrolled on their home campus, the institution is still credited with their FTEs, and the students can usually receive their regular financial assistance. Again, we can provide examples of arrangements in place at similar institutions.

What are the academic seminars that are available to students?
Academic seminars are intensive one-to two-week programs that draw on the extraordinary resources of Washington, D.C. By going on site visits, hearing from speakers, and participating in small-group discussions, students gain insight into some of the most important issues of the day. Typically run in January and May, the seminars are open to students at all levels.

Topics covered include Exploring Bipartisan Solutions, Politics and the Media, and National Security, among others. Every four years, our Campaign Series focuses on the presidential election process and includes programs at the conventions and the inauguration.

The Washington Center provides incentives for faculty to bring groups of students as part of a mini-term or semester add-on course. The faculty development opportunities are also considerable. For upcoming seminars, please visit www.twc.edu/seminars.

Visibility and fundraising opportunities
Affiliated institutions can use our reception space at a special rate, and many have hosted alumni and prospective student receptions there. Our annual fall Gala brings together friends and supporters of The Washington Center—including many college and university sponsors. Institutions have leveraged Gala to connect with local alumni and potential donors. Washington Center students are also featured on close to 100 videos on C-SPAN’s archives at www.c-span.org.
We hope this summary clarifies why The Washington Center has become the largest organization of its kind and the partner of choice for colleges and universities. Few institutions are in a position to offer their own program in Washington, D.C. And even those that are may find that by partnering with us, they achieve their goals at a fraction of the cost, without the liability and with a far greater assurance of quality.

We invite you to explore an affiliation between your college or university and The Washington Center. An affiliation is a simple no-cost, no-obligation agreement that spells out your institution’s preferences regarding the credits students will receive, the handling of fees and the appointment of a campus liaison.

To take the next step toward affiliation, you can access a copy of our brief Institutional Preferences Form at www.twc.edu/affiliation (click on “Documents”). Completed and signed by a senior academic officer, this form will provide the foundation for our partnership.

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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.

Need a tour, an overview, sample arrangements or answers to questions? Please contact:

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