



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Brandeis University
Brown University
California Institute of Technology
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Duke University
Emory University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Harvard University
Indiana University
Iowa State University
The Johns Hopkins University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
McGill University
Michigan State University
New York University
Northwestern University
The Ohio State University
The Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Purdue University
Rice University
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Stanford University
Stony Brook University –
State University of New York
Texas A&M University
Tulane University
University at Buffalo –
State University of New York
The University of Arizona
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of Chicago
University of Colorado, Boulder
University of Florida
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
University of Iowa
University of Kansas
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
University of Missouri, Columbia
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rochester
University of Southern California
University of Texas at Austin
University of Toronto
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin - Madison
Vanderbilt University
Washington University in St. Louis
Yale University

AAU Internship Description

The Association of American Universities (AAU) offers undergraduate unpaid internships for the spring, summer, and fall semesters. The focus of the internships is on science and higher education policy.

AAU is an organization of 59 leading research universities in the United States and two Canadian universities. The major activities of the association include federal government relations, policy studies, and public affairs. AAU programs and projects address institutional issues facing the association's member universities, as well as government actions that affect these and other universities.

Specific activities that AAU interns will be engaged in include:

- Completing one or two major substantive projects relating to science and/or higher education policy. These projects will vary depending upon the intern's skills and specific interests and the various needs of the AAU office staff at the time;
- Attending and reporting on congressional hearings and meetings pertaining to the higher education and scientific communities;
- Tracking legislation and congressional committee hearings and schedules;
- Drafting correspondence to Congress, briefing papers, and other written materials;
- Using the Internet to conduct research on and analysis of science and higher education policy issues; and
- Shadowing AAU federal relations staff in their daily activities and assisting them as deemed appropriate in order to gain exposure to the work of Congress, other higher education and scientific associations, university government relations representatives, the executive branch, and federal agencies.

AAU is confident that these responsibilities will provide students with a solid understanding of the association's federal relations activities and help them gain practical and real world work experience in Washington, DC.

For additional information or if you have specific questions about the AAU internship program, please contact Kristen DeForrest at kristen.deforrest@aau.edu or 202-408-7500.



PAST AAU INTERN COMMENTS

Christian from University of California, Berkeley: “I found my internship to be very valuable. Having worked on the Hill last summer, I wanted an opportunity to see federal relations from a different perspective. I enjoyed being able to go to meetings and hearings on the Hill, and to see the different people that work on the same issues (from industry and scientific societies, to other higher education associations). I did not anticipate the breadth of topics that I would learn about. I really had an opportunity to learn about issues and create something with the research that I did. I felt that my opinion was valued in this environment.”

Ana from University of Texas, Dallas: “I was given the freedom to discover DC, which I really appreciated, and I was given the opportunity to not only learn about higher education issues but to further my education on what it means to work in an office. My major project was a video on university finance. This entailed researching college finances, organizing information into a compact and easily absorbed block of facts, and creating a PowerPoint slideshow to represent the information. It also included recording audio narration, and piecing all of the various components together into a clear and professional, yet attention-grabbing and attractive video.”

George from University of Michigan: “This internship opened my horizons about the American government, public policy, research funding, and college finance. Now I am greatly interested in pursuing a degree in public policy, which I had never thought about prior to coming here. The internship was exactly what I expected, but better.”

Stephanie from University of California, Los Angeles: “I really appreciate the opportunity and experience that AAU has given me. I initially was deciding between internships, and I believe I made the right decision. Everyone was very friendly and made me feel comfortable working here. I also feel that I have learned a lot and that I have gained some new tools I can take with me to future careers and opportunities. Those are the only things I wanted from an internship: friendly staff and meaningful experience. Thank you for everything!”

Elissa from Harvard University: “This internship is my first time working in an office so learning about office life as well as working with other members of the office gives me a valuable experience. Previously, I had been very unfamiliar with the area of policy and specifically biomedical research policy. For a pre-med like myself, it is incredibly interesting to understand the inside scoop on decisions made around the NIH, funding, and research. Regarding policy in general, I found it very valuable to witness how organizations advocate for a specific side of an issue. These skills of gathering support, learning about the issues at hand, and sending out a message will be useful in any pursuit I might have.”

Meegan from University of California, Berkeley: “My experience at AAU was invaluable: I was surprised to be treated as a colleague rather than an intern, and this really helped me feel like an adult working in DC. In creating the soldier graphic, for example, I had the opportunity to speak with the chief scientists of the Army and the Air Force, and it was exciting to see that they respected my work and were happy to help. At the same time, staff really taught me the art of government relations. By the end of this internship, I was much better at crafting convincing arguments.”

Jessica from University of Michigan: “My favorite part of my internship was the fact that I was able to do a lot of different projects in many areas that always seemed to be appreciated and needed. I was able to learn a great deal by doing these projects. My writing skills and communication skills were strengthened throughout the semester because of the hands-on work I was able to do. AAU truly treats their interns as one of the staff members which enhances the experience. I really appreciated this and thought working on important projects that AAU will be using was extremely rewarding.”



Association of American Universities Intern Program

Key Issue Areas, Regular Activities, and Examples of Past and Ongoing Intern Projects

Standard Intern Projects/Regular Activities

- Research on-demand.
- Monitor hearings based on AAU interest and staff portfolios
- Attend hearings – provide hearing summaries and analysis
- Assist appropriate staff with the development of advocacy documents
- Attend meetings – internal staff, coalitions, task forces, Council on Federal Relations, etc.

Education Policy (primary focus on policy affecting higher education)

- **Agencies we engage**
 - Department of Education (DoEd)
- **Past and Ongoing Intern Tasks/Projects**
 - Monitoring reauthorization of Higher Education Act
 - Compiling information on the cost-drivers for AAU institutions
 - Researching how AAU institutions control costs and tuition growth
 - Developing an inventory of AAU universities' partnerships with K-12 schools
 - Assessing undergraduate research programs
 - Researching AAU National Defense Education Act project
 - Examining the uses of university endowments
 - Planning and coordinating Student Aid Alliance event
 - Researching new approaches to student aid
 - Collecting data on federal student aid programs at each AAU university (annual data)
 - Collecting data for annual Facts and Figures info sheet on AAU institutions

Science Policy (focus will be on federal policies affecting health, other basic science and engineering research)

- **Agencies we engage**
 - National Institutes of Health (NIH)
 - National Science Foundation (NSF)
 - Department of Energy (DOE)
 - Department of Defense (DOD)
 - National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
- **Past and Ongoing Intern Tasks/Projects**
 - Monitoring and analyzing funding for key research agencies
 - Helping collect, compile AAU research success stories (current and historical) by federal agency and societal need (e.g. Health, Defense, Energy, etc)

- Examining societal benefits that resulted from basic research projects with funny sounding names that received Senator William Proxmire's Golden Fleece Award
- Helping to develop and update one-page documents that show the value of federal investments in research
- Compiling energy innovations made possible by energy research conducted at AAU universities and examining what government structures could best harness university research talent
- Researching science policy metrics
- Tracking and comparing authorization bills introduced in Congress on innovation and competitiveness
- Compiling list of contributions of social science to U.S. competitiveness and innovation
- Working on projects for the Task Force on American Innovation (<http://www.futureofinnovation.org>). Past interns have played a significant role in helping conduct research for and to prepare Task Force reports
- Researching history of the Internet and Sputnik; creating Sputnik anniversary graph and document for AAU web
- Creating database for federally funded university research examples
- Developing interactive maps on products created through research: iPod, pharmaceuticals
- Examining policy issues surrounding stem cell research
- Researching conflict of interest policies at AAU schools
- Creating bibliography of materials related to economic returns on biomedical research
- Examining correlation between federal energy R&D spending and price of crude oil
- Developing medical advancements timeline
- Creating infographics on societal benefits of NIH research
- Research, writing and layout for Scientific Enquirer newsletter series on basic research and "funny-sounding science."

International

- **Agencies we engage**
 - Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
 - Department of State
- **Past and Ongoing Intern Tasks/Projects**
 - Researching immigration issues related to student visas and comprehensive immigration reform
 - Examining the status of higher education in other countries
 - Reviewing State Department and university efforts to engage in partnerships with non-U.S. universities
 - Compiling list of AAU universities with campuses and research activities overseas
 - Researching foreign/Chinese competitiveness in biotechnology
 - Compiling data on export controls

Humanities

- **Agencies we engage**
 - National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)
- **Past and Ongoing Intern Tasks/Projects**

- Analyzing funding trends of core NEH programs
- Analyzing the membership of the House Humanities Caucus and the Senate Cultural Caucus
- Compiling 1994/95 funding cuts in NEH programs

Public Affairs and Communications

- **Past Intern Tasks/Projects**
 - 2008 Campaign – Creating database on Presidential candidates and their views on AAU priorities, including monitoring candidate statements and speeches for mention of higher education and research-related statements

Intellectual Property

- **Past and Ongoing Intern Tasks/Projects in the areas of**
 - Technology Transfer
 - Updating AAU's issue brief on the Bayh-Dole Act
 - Patent Reform
 - Peer-2-Peer File Sharing

Other

- **Past and Ongoing Intern Tasks/Projects**
 - Updating congressional alumni database
 - Updating database of boards of trustees of AAU institutions