

April 29th, 2019

Dear Future GWS 660 students,

The opportunity to take Gender and Women's Studies 660: GWS Internship is an incredible chance to gain valuable real-world experience in a professional setting while being granted course credit in your undergraduate degree. The diverse array of internship sites you will be interviewing for offer a wide range of options for any skill set and interest. Ranging from criminal justice work to education to working with kids, there is opportunity to learn and grow with any of the options Nina provides us. Having an internship in connection with a course allows for the internship site to be held accountable for giving each intern a good amount of work as well as a semester-long project at their site. Outside of the hands-on work you'll be able to do at your internship site, the class and assignments allowed me to not only reflect on my role as an intern but also as an activist, ally, and feminist. Having an allotted time each week to discuss my successes and challenges at my internship site and in life gave me the support I needed to persevere and thrive at my internship.

Before starting this venture, there were a few things I wish I knew that might be helpful for you. It's best to have a backup plan in terms of scheduling in hours for the year in case there are unforeseen circumstances that don't allow you to come into your site for your hours. Working with your supervisor at the beginning of the year to schedule off-site projects that have a specific amount of hours you will dedicate to working on is a great way to ensure you can achieve 140 hours working for your internship. Furthermore, I suggest planning your course-load around the days and times you will be at your internship site. In my case, I had to schedule an hour free before and after my on-site work just for commuting by bus which eliminated any free time on Mondays and Thursdays for periods between 5 and 8 hours. Finally, the last piece of advice I wish I had before I started my internship was knowing how it could be challenging to come into a space where everyone is paid for the work they do and has decades of experience more than me. Sometimes it can get frustrating putting a lot of time and effort into projects where you don't feel like you get properly recognized or appreciated for and that is natural in an unpaid internship. My biggest takeaway was realizing how much I gained that did not come in the form of monetary compensation.

The things I learned at my internship made up for missing paid hours at work and other positions I might have had if I did not enroll in this class. Although seemingly a small feat, getting more comfortable riding the bus in Madison and being able to figure out my way around even if I took the wrong bus line will be so helpful in the future. Getting to know the local businesses and amazing people that make up the Madison community was incredible for me. The most important thing my internship gave me was a realization that my future career path will not involve working with kids of middle school age. All of this is meant to say that taking this internship course has an incredible amount of benefits and is a rare opportunity you should take advantage of.

Sincerely,

Saja Abu Hakmeh

April 24, 2019

Dear Future Intern:

Congratulations on earning an internship with the Wisconsin Assembly Democratic Caucus! Whether you have an interest in politics or not, this is going to be a great experience and you will learn a lot about how state government works and learn a lot about how much people don't know about how state government works. I can confidently say that this internship is the highlight of my college experience, and I hope that you will find your experience just as rewarding and enlightening.

I spent the semester in Representative Gary Hebl's office and worked with him and his staff members Traci Bussan and Chris Stoa. The team dynamic in the office was something that I really appreciated. They always made me feel like a valuable addition to the office and that my work was meaningful and appreciated. I anticipate that many Democratic offices are the same way because that is the same feeling when I get when I go to staff caucus meetings. Everyone wants to work together to accomplish the best outcomes they can.

After completing the Gender & Women's Studies seminar and the internship, I feel that I have some words of wisdom to share with you from my experience in Representative Hebl's office that would also apply to many legislative offices. First, don't get freaked out by having to learn the filing system in the (S) shared drive. It may seem daunting for the first couple of weeks to remember which subjects fit into which agency heading, but you will catch on sooner than you think. I was sure that I would take me months to understand and navigate the files, but it only took a few weeks. Also, don't be afraid to answer or talk on the phone. If it's a constituent calling, it's probable that they don't make that kind of call often and are nervous too. When you're calling another legislative office, a fellow intern may be the one answering the phone. I've never had a bad experience with asking for information or answering a call; people are usually more kind than you think, and they are understanding because most people working in the building have been in your shoes.

You will get out of the internship experience what you put into it. And the best way to get what you want is to ask questions. The staff and legislators you're working with want you to be successful and they want to teach you the tools you will need to do that. You can ask neighboring office staff for advice as well; the Democratic caucus works together and is always willing to help. Figure out what kind of work it is that you like doing. If you like writing constituent letters, you can do that. If you want to be involved in the policy writing process you can do that too. The staff and legislators are happy you are there and want to make it a good experience for you too, so don't hesitate in asking for more of what you find interesting. You should try to network with people and always do your best to make a good impression when you meet new people. It may help you get a job in the legislature in the future or in another agency. Take advantage of talking to people and getting to know them personally; the more connections you have the more likely you are to be remembered in the future.

Best of luck,

Halle Breske

1 May 2019

Dear Future Intern,

This experience has been a whirlwind and a journey all in one. I was very fortunate to be selected as a legislative intern in Representative Chris Taylor's office this semester. Since beginning this position in January, I have worked on policy memos regarding pesticide regulations, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls, UW System Budget Cuts, sexual harassment, wet ash regulations, Right to Repair, and New Voices legislation. I have also worked on constituent correspondence regarding pay discrimination, Step Therapy Protocols, Pharmacy Benefit Manager regulations, public education, and Safe Harbor legislation for trafficked youth, as well as attended events on UW Extension, Black History Month, an intern training, Assembly floor sessions, and press conferences by the legislators.

I come from a science/pre-med background, so this field was almost completely foreign to me. I walked in on my first day having no background knowledge aside from my belief that as a progressive policy maker and fierce social justice advocate, Chris Taylor inspired me to do more. I would ask a multitude of questions every day that I was in the office, maybe to the point where people may have wondered why I took this position in the first place. I didn't mind, I was eager to learn all that I could in the short amount of time I was able to spend at the Capitol. I do, however, wish that I would have had a little bit more background knowledge coming in, but it has to start somewhere.

As an intern at the Capitol, you will gain insights into the processes of state government and your beliefs will be challenged. You will sometimes feel dumb, but only until you realize how much you have learned along the way. You must go in with an open mind and an eagerness to be involved in the betterment of our state. If you are open to being uncomfortable and, at times, way out of your comfort zone, you will come out with a tremendous amount of knowledge and a group of inspirational folks who would do anything that they can to help you reach your next goal.

Please consider interning for a legislative office at the state Capitol, you won't regret it.

Sincerely,

Samantha Crowley

Class of 2019

Letter to a Future Intern

Dear Future Intern,

Internships are a tricky and potentially controversial work commitment especially for those who don't provide any compensation such as class credit or money. Personally I feel very negatively about internships without compensation. That being said, this internship course is a guaranteed internship with guaranteed compensation (school credit) and for those two reasons I was very drawn to this opportunity. Long story short before I get into more detail I would take this opportunity again if I could because scoring a compensated internship is hard to come by these days.

If you are at all interested in applying for this program you most definitely should. I was intimidated coming into this experience because it was going to be my first internship. Let me say that there is nothing to be nervous or scared about because the class instructor, Nina, makes the environment so welcoming and we start each class by expressing our highs and lows for that week. In terms of seminar experience I also had an incredibly comfortable experience with my supervisor. I was a social media intern for Lachrista Greco and worked on her social media platform "The Guerrilla Feminist". Lachrista and I had an amazing bond and I felt so comfortable with her. She was so understanding of my busy schedule and worked well with me to get all of my required hours in. The work I did was at times stressful as I had deadlines to meet, but it was never overwhelming and was nothing compared to school stress. And the work I did was actually so fun so it didn't even feel like work. I think I may have a unique experience compared to some of the other students in the class because my internship was remote and Lachrista and I only met once a week to go over goals and tasks. So I worked mostly from home which was a really cool experience and great for my busy schedule because I got to put in my hours whenever I could.

Some things I wish I would have done differently was to try to get closer with the people in seminar. I really enjoyed all of their company in class and in discussions with each other and I would have loved to continue our bonds outside of the classroom. Therefore make buddies with the people in the class! Everyone in the seminar has similar passions and you could potentially find a lifelong friend in there. Another tip I would give is to just make the most of your experience because it flew by so fast. The semester I did this internship was the fastest semester of my college career so just keep that in mind when planning and doing your work. Lastly just have fun with it, and put your heart in! We are so lucky to have a program like this available at our university and I wish you the best of luck with your semester in GWS 660!

~Emerson Encell

4/30/19

Dear Future Intern,

The 660 Internship Seminar has been a great experience for me this semester. I was nervous about applying because I didn't know if I was going to have enough time to juggle an internship with all my other responsibilities. But, I'm so glad that I made it work because my internship at End Abuse Wisconsin really enriched my Gender and Women's Studies experience. For me, it was powerful to take all the concepts and ideas that we learn in the classroom and apply them to the real world. Working in a feminist office I immediately felt comfortable. The vibe was very similar to a Gender and Women's Studies class, just maybe a little bit more professional. I knew I was surrounded by people that had similar values and ideas as me and I heard people using similar terminology that we use in class.

Second, finding an internship can be a very intimidating process. Having the internship course to help guide you to an internship can make the process much less daunting. However, since you still have to apply, interview and get chosen by the organization it is still very rewarding and something to be proud of landing. Plus, since a lot of the organizations have been a part of the Gender and Women's Studies internship course you know that you will be doing a worthwhile, "Nina approved" internship.

Third, these internships are a great stepping stone towards your future dream job, whatever that may be. They are great to put on your resume and really demonstrate that you have taken what you've learned in class and used your skills out in the field. Not only that, but having an internship is a great way to practice your professional skills and get used to the culture of working in an office. Plus, I had the great opportunity to meet cool people like State Representatives and even the District Attorney.

Finally, my advice to you as a future intern is to ask questions and get involved! It can be intimidating to ask questions or ask for help but asking questions is the best way to learn. Also, I had some of the opportunities that I did during my internship because I asked to be involved. It is important to advocate for yourself and what you're interested in, in order to make the most of your internship. Also, I would recommend using this internship opportunity to venture outside your comfort zone. An internship is a great way to test out different career paths before your livelihood depends on it. Internships are a really good way to figure out what you do and do not like when choosing your future career. All in all, this internship seminar has been a really great experience for me. I got to explore a new field and then got to come back to a supportive classroom environment where I was able to debrief my experience with student interns in a similar boat as me.

Best of luck!

Lindsay Friedman

Taylor Friedman - The Office of Senator Lena Taylor
05/01/19
GWS 660 - Letter to a Future Intern

Dear Future Intern,

No matter what you are thinking or where you are in your life, you should take this class. I had always wanted a tangible work experience, yet had never pushed myself outside of my comfort zone to do so. Being in this class forced me to consider my options and obtain an internship. On top of this, being in the class gives you access to a plethora of internship opportunities, wrapped up in one convenient binder, that you would otherwise have to scourge for.

Don't be afraid to interview for internships that seem out of your skill set or comfort zone. As a psychology major, working for a politician was way outside of my comfort zone. While I am politically active, I have never been involved in government or taken any political science courses. Anything I knew about politics I had learned from the news or reading online. Because of this, I did feel quite behind compared to the other interns in my office. Although this was intimidating at first, by remaining confident and putting in the work, I was able to understand the system and become comfortable in doing my work. I also learned new skill sets through this process.

Although it is important to make sure that you are doing a good job at work, make sure that you also satisfy your own needs and interests. If there is something that you want to work on or are curious about, speak up! Your supervisor will be happy to see you taking direct interest in something. Your work will benefit when you are passionate about the projects you take a lead on. In line with satisfying your own needs, if you need a break or time off, make sure that you ask for it or take it. It is important that we take care of our mental and physical health in order to do good work.

Many internship sites offer trainings or have events that you can attend. Take advantage of these opportunities. As an intern in the Capitol, I had access to crash courses on things like coding. These types of training sessions can teach you skills that might help you get a job one day. Plus they are usually free! Events are also great places to network with other people in the field. Even if you are not interested in the topic at hand, it doesn't hurt to practice networking.

All in all, I think you should jump on this opportunity. Having the guidance of Nina and the course itself made the internship process much easier. I also learned so much about the job search and marketing myself through this class. Take the plunge!

Best of Luck,
Taylor Friedman

Dear future intern,

This semester I was a media development intern at PATCH (part of the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health), which stands for Providers And Teens Communicating for Health. This program works to connect teens with their health care providers and relay to them what they want out of their care through workshops. Additionally, they also use their workshops to inform teens of their healthcare rights, and have a new parents program coming out about informing their caregivers about confidentiality and how to have tough conversations surrounding their healthcare. My job at PATCH was to film and edit videos that not only convey PATCH objectives, but are used as a recruitment tool for both teens who want to become PATCH Teen Educators, or providers who want to attend a PATCH workshop. I also used this platform for educational purposes, creating videos that sister sites could use to learn, for example, how to conduct an interview for teen educators or how to pack for a workshop.

Although I spent a lot of time behind a camera and on my computer, this internship taught me a lot about the ins and outs of public health, as well as what teens in the Madison community believe need to change in order for them to get the care they deserve. I know teens can be a little intimidating, but these youth were specially selected for this program and all want to be there, and it is so powerful to see that! They were all so friendly to me and treated me with respect, and you'd be surprised at how educated and involved they are. I think that is part of what makes the environment at PATCH so inclusive and welcoming, as it is hard not to feel comfortable when you walk through that door.

Furthermore, I have nothing but the highest regards for this program and for my supervisor, Erica Koepsel. Erica is the PATCH Dane County Side Coordinator, meaning she mainly interacts with the teens, sets up the workshops, contacts other sites to help guide them, and so on. I am so thankful for this opportunity because it has brought Erica into my life. She is such a fun, bubbly, amazing human being and I have no doubt that if you meet her you will completely understand what I mean by this. She has also served as a mentor to me, helping me out with finding my way through potential career paths and exploring the field of public health. She wasn't always sure of her career path either, so we had a lot of discussion surrounding choices and how to follow what you love.

While at PATCH, I also got to interact with other staff that are a part of this program, as well as staff from the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health. Everyone was always so nice and accommodating, and always had their helping hands extended to me. It was really fascinating to be in a joint office, as I got to experience how both WAWH and PATCH are run, as well as what it takes to create a successful a non-profit. For instance, I had a few discussions with the policy director about their work and how they implement it so that it can thrive. All in all, PATCH is such an incredible and innovative program, and everyone in it could not be more sincere. I had such an amazing time working with all of them and using my talents to further this program. I highly recommend both Erica and the PATCH program to you, and hope that you would consider them for your internship! I promise you, you won't regret it.

Sincerely,

Josie Garwood

Dear Future Intern,

Internships are hard. They're so exciting, fulfilling, and difficult all in one. For me, I had to balance being a full-time student, working a paid service job part-time, and then an unpaid internship part-time. My number one suggestion in your internship is to understand your own personal priorities. Don't let anyone else's time management stress you out; you know how to take care of your mental and emotional health more than anyone else can decide for you. For me, it was super important to carve out time for my family and boyfriend and friends, and I would have gotten less out of my internship because stress would've gotten to me.

I interned at the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health, which was honestly one of the best experiences I have ever had. More than the work I did, which was meaningful, were the relationships I forged with my bosses and coworkers. I learned so much from my supervisor from how to be professional over email and in meetings to how to have fun while working in an office during long hours. I learned that I love an office setting if the coworkers are sweet and caring. Meeting deadlines was hard because I am such a perfectionist and wanted everything to be done to the best it could be on my own but reminding myself to take some care and remind myself what was most important in those scary times.

The main advice: have fun. Work hard and your stakes will be low because you are an intern. Use your time there to educate yourself on your organization's mission and befriend the people you are working with.

You got this!

Sarah

Kayla Moor
4/30/2019

Dear future Gender and Women's Studies Intern,

The Gender and Women's Studies internship program has been very helpful in my last semester of my undergraduate degree to transition from being a student to being a professional. If you are looking for an internship opportunity in gender & women's studies related fields I highly recommend taking this class because although it is unpaid, you do earn 3 credits and are able to connect with other fellow Gender and Women's Studies interns in the seminar class once a week. However, you must decide if the internship works within your class and work schedule so that you will not be too overwhelmed. Luckily, I only took 12 credits this semester and was able to lower my hours with Wisconsin Union Catering so I did not struggle too much with time management. If you decide to be in the gender and women's studies internship program I would recommend looking through the internship opportunities and apply as early as possible because I procrastinated and was stressed about finding a position during finals season. Prior to taking this course I did not have any idea of what kind of career I wanted after graduation; although I am still unsure of what I want to do, I am at least interested in working in non-profit/feminist work. In order to make the best of the internship program, one should get a lot of information about the organization they are interning for so that they can feel like a real part of the organization even though the internship is fairly short. Furthermore, one should be open to learning and helping out where needed at the organization. I found it helpful to be thinking about what I liked and disliked about working at the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) so that I could think about what jobs I am interested in post graduation.

Overall I had a great experience interning with WCASA because I am passionate about sexual assault issues and I was able to focus on campus sexual assault. My main project was to plan and host 3 Wisconsin Campus Sexual Violence consortium web-based meetings; one with employees that work for or with public universities, one for private colleges/universities, and one for community, technical, and tribal colleges. My supervisor, Jessi Corcoran, used to work as a sexual assault prevention coordinator at a Wisconsin college, and hosted the first WI Campus Sexual Violence Consortium meeting last October so she had a lot of experience and did a great job directing and supporting me. I was also able to support and attend one of WCASA's biggest events of the year, the survivors and allies day of healing and wrap around the capitol event where we offered therapeutic massage, self care activities, sessions about mindful self-compassion, enneagram for healing and relationships, emotional freedom technique or tapping for trauma, and spaces specifically for Latinx and Black attendees. This internship provided me with my first experience working in an office setting so I learned about their phone, email and calendar system, and had access to the shared drive of documents and resources. I learned out to set up meetings and do outreach work via email and phone calls. I also learned how to use surveymonkey.com to get feedback from meeting participant prior to and after the meetings. Furthermore, I did research and created presentations tailored to each meeting based on what the participants wanted to discuss.

Anna Nordin
Nina Valeo Cooke
GWS 660
4/30/19

Letter to Future Intern

Dear Future Intern

I hope this letter finds you well! You will probably be entering your junior or senior year of college and I just wanted to offer you a little bit of advice for choosing an internship, and what mine was like. I started off my internship process by applying to the internships that I seemed interested in. I know I wanted to work somewhat with youth so I looked into organizations that had a focus in youth. I applied to The Goodman Community Center, WCASA, and the Meadowridge Library. I ended up at WCASA, and I am really glad because I got to construct a prevention guide and resource book for child sexual abuse prevention as well as attend a teen summit. The internship process was challenging in a way I really liked because my coordinators asked questions like how will you negotiate your whiteness in this space and reflect our mission. This question made me think about how my Whiteness is important when thinking about workplace dynamics and centering women of color. They also asked how intersecting oppressions was relevant to sexual assault and I had to think about how all marginalized identities and individuals who face other forms of discrimination are disproportionately prone to sexual assault and degrees of support and services accessible to these individuals. These questions were super helpful in applying my gender and women's studies knowledge within the field and I felt like my answers were strong, but could be practiced more. I hope the gender and women's studies program is able to do more with practicing answering questions out loud and addressing more real life conversations.

At WCASA I was challenged by being assigned a project that did not have a lot of structure, but allowed me to be innovative and creative. We are so used to having strict guidelines for how to do assignments and tasks, but having those questions be open ended allows for new ways of thinking and designing. WCASA is also state - level work meaning you are never working directly with survivors, but providing technical assistance, trainings, and advocacy for different sexual assault service providers (SASPs) around WI. There are only eight staff, but they are all really close, and the office dynamics are very relaxed. I would choose a different internship if you like to things more hands on because a lot of the internship work at WCASA (at least in my experience) was more on the computer. However, I did get to attend the teen summit, which was an event put on my End Abuse and teens around WI in order to facilitate small courses on a variety of intersectional topics, such as Queer Representation in the Media. It is also important to make sure you ask a ton of questions and meet with all of the staff at WCASA because you gain so much more of an understanding about the work they do when you directly talk to them individually. It is more personal too, which can be needed when you are sitting at a computer for a long while. I have also gotten to use photoshop and Adobe Illustrator to edit and image that will be going in the toolkit that I created for WCASA, which has been fun! I would recommend to ask your coordinator if you can attend meetings and the White Folks Work WFW meetings on Monday because those are the most valuable parts of this internship for me. The WFW is an hour and a half discussion with white and white passing folks in the office - all are welcome, and it is in an open space so we can hold each other accountable. Basically, we just discuss readings, do workbooks, and have dialogue. It has made me know that I was to continue practicing my allyship in the work space and have that be a crucial part of my professional environment. The best of luck! - Anna Nordin

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter at the end of my spring semester and end of my internship at the Wisconsin Women's Council. Let me tell you, I am tired and very ready to be done with everything. However, I wouldn't say I am tired because of my internship or seminar, really just my other classes and jobs. This semester has been one of my best at Madison (I am ending my second year here) and I really have to attribute that to GWS 660. Taking GWS 660 is probably one of the best decisions I have made in terms of classes. It wasn't easy to take it, but I don't regret it for a second.

If you're considering taking the course, just do it. Don't make excuses, just do it. It will be such a rewarding experience. As long as you "trust the process" (as our amazing and fantastic instructor Nina says), you will make it through. It is hard to carve out 10 hours a week for unpaid work, especially since the spring semester is so cold and all you want to do is stay inside, but you'll find a way. Everything that happens will help you in the end. As you know there are two components to this course: the seminar and the internship itself.

Seminar is one of the only classes I am happy to do work for and go to every week. All the readings and assignments have a clear purpose and are designed to help you. The workload is never too much, and if you think it is, just talk to Nina. Nina is such a great resource for you and a great listener too. She genuinely cares about you and wants to help you succeed: I cannot say that about every instructor I have had. The other people in the seminar are also amazing. It is so cool to be surrounded by like-minded people who are going through similar things to you. You're all in it together. Everyone in seminar celebrates your accomplishments and supports you in your lows.

Now the internship itself is tricky. Apply and interview with a place that isn't exactly in your comfort zone or just a place you want to learn more about. Internships are great because at the end of the semester, if you hate it, you can leave and never look back. If you love it, you have a whole new network and connections that help you figuring out your life and career path. I have had the pleasure of being a Research Assistant at the Wisconsin Women's Council. I thought I was going to hate my work because I would sit at a desk and computer all day, but I actually ended up really loving it. WWC is a really small government agency that tries to empower women through research that can help inform legislation and form policy. It was weird for me because it is a bipartisan agency and I had to be careful and represent what the board wants to say with my research. I was conducting research on the Status of Women in Wisconsin and was able to choose my topics, but I had to be careful to not put any bias in my work. That was so valuable for me because odds are, in my future career, I'm not going to be able to put my opinion into my work all the time. I also liked the internship because I was able to work anywhere and make sure I got my hours in. Also, my supervisor, Christine, is fantastic. She is so knowledgeable and kind and is her own feminist network. She can get me a meeting with anyone in Wisconsin and she has so many resources to share with me. Of course, it wasn't all great, at times I felt lost or like I had no clue what I was doing, but Christine and Nina helped me through those times. My frustrations were never ignored and never not fixed. So whatever your doubts are, throw them away and jump into this experience. It is worth your time and effort, just from the connections alone. You'll gain valuable skills no matter where you intern and you'll come out of this course better than you were before: I promise.

Sincerely,
Tayler Palkowski

Hey, future intern!

I'm glad you're considering applying for the GWS660 seminar and internship program. I remember worrying about whether a twelve hour/week internship was something I'd be able to take on, and whether I would find the entire experience to be worth it — spoiler alert, it definitely was! My experiences within seminar and my internship at the Office of the Gender and Women's Studies Librarian (GWSL) have taught me so much about my skills, interests, and goals, and I'm taking so many life lessons with me. If you're still on the fence, I hope to convince you to go for it and apply. If you've already decided and enrolled, I hope this letter confirms your decision.

My advice in starting this process would be to broaden your horizon and be okay with leaving your comfort zone. When I first started, I thought I for sure wanted to apply to one of the busier sites that worked with youth, because I thought this work would be the most rewarding (based on my personal background and interests). However, when I was looking through the available internships, I found myself being drawn toward the social media internship at the Office of the GWSL. As someone who isn't very active on my personal social media accounts (I actually deleted my Facebook and Twitter a few years ago!), I didn't really understand why that site interested me, but I followed my gut and applied. In my interview, I spoke about this interest, despite the lack of personal experience, and something must have resonated with the supervisor and librarian because I was offered the position! My time as the Social Media Manager at the Office of the GWSL has been incredibly unique, different, and yes, rewarding! So be comfortable with being uncomfortable, and go for the sites or projects that intrigue you regardless of whether or not they are your primary or direct interest. No matter what site you are at, or what work you do, you will still learn a lot and gain valuable experience.

To maximize your experience as an intern, I recommend finding your voice at your site early and using it often. This can be incredibly awkward and uncomfortable, but the sooner you're able to speak up for yourself and your work, the easier this process will be. In the middle of the semester, you will have a sit-down evaluation with your supervisor. Although I did feel comfortable with my supervisor by mid-term, it felt odd bringing up issues/worries for the first time in this setting. I wish I had been more communicative early on, so that the evaluation experience wouldn't have felt so odd. Once I realized this, the second half of the semester was even more amazing because I felt much more heard and understood — so speak up when you feel it's necessary, and if you don't think you're able to, speak with Nina and she can always help!

I hope you're excited to join the GWS660 internship program, and are ready for a semester full of rewarding experiences and realizations! Go into it with an open mind and an enthusiastic willingness, and I guarantee you will come out the other end a more well-rounded intern, worker, student, individual, and activist. Best of luck!

Sincerely,

Brianna Pollari
GWS660 Spring 2019 Cohort

Dear Future Intern,

My name is Jenna Powell. I graduated from UW – Madison in Spring 2019 with a degree in Neurobiology and GWS. The GWS 660 Internship course was the highlight of my college career. I interned at Planned Parenthood Advocates of WI (PPAWI). I had the privilege of splitting my time between Public Affairs and Community Education. I had the chance to organize lobby days, design our 2019 GYT Campaign, attend our state-wide conference, and create resource-guides to clients to come. I had the honor of working under Katrina Morrison, Public Affairs Organizer, and Meghan Benson, Director of Education. These two women became me bosses, mentors, and friends over the five months we worked together.

The biggest advice I can give is to get as involved as possible. Ask to attend conferences, meetings, attend events, and do extra work. Cast your net and create your network. Over the last five months, not only have I had the privilege to work for one of the most foundational non-profits in feminist work, but I joined three committees, attended four conferences, and met the current leaders of our national federation. If you get involved, you get to meet cool people and do cool things. The president of PPAWI has offered to be a reference for me.

This course taught me insurmountable lessons. I learned the importance of connections, perseverance, and communication. Katrina and Meghan introduced me to amazing people who have helped them along their paths. That network will support you in planning and organizing events, as well as help you get a job when you finish college. A lot of the feminist work that you will do is long-term. We are creating small changes in the hope for a better future. Keep moving forward and be patient. Also, be confident in your communications. Learn to ask stupid questions, vocalize your concern, and offer your opinion. You are not just their intern. You are their colleague.

One thing I wish I had understood at the beginning of my internship is that it is okay to not be able to do a task. I like to overload my plate, so when my bosses were asking a lot of me, I found it hard to admit to my burn out. Understand that if you are meeting or exceeding the expected workload, it is okay to say you don't have time for a task. Your boss gets paid to do the work. You are still in school. Do as much as you can, but communicate when you are tapped out.

Be sure to get involved and support your fellow interns at their events, too. It's a cool group of people all working for a more equal world. Get a group hat going for events! Overall, have fun!

I wish you the best on your journey. The interviews aren't bad, either. Go get involved in our feminist community!

Take care,

Jenna Powell