

Dear future intern,

Although this class requires hard work and a lot of your time, I would highly recommend it if you're looking for genuine support from other interns, staff, and professionals as you take your first steps into your career.

As a graduating senior looking to enter healthcare, I was very determined to find a feminist focused organization that related to public health. I really put all my effort into one interview, which I wouldn't recommend doing but it's hard when one organization matches your interests so perfectly. I felt like I nailed my interview and had great experience on my resume, but I ended up not being offered the position at End Domestic Abuse WI (EDAW) initially. After completing one other interview, considering not taking the course (I was really being a downer), and reaching out to Nina for advice (DO IT), I got a call from EDAW offering me the position since another intern had turned it down. Although it didn't feel great to be a second choice, I happily accepted the legal intern position.

This internship provided me with valuable opportunities to learn about my personal work style, receive feedback, network with professionals, and develop a cool new section of my resume that's still relatable to healthcare and research. I learned about my multitasking abilities, communication, and a lot about self-care. I worked on multiple projects, such as my main Teen Project where I called over 50 state domestic violence (DV) organizations to talk about their services/programs for teens. Since I didn't have legal experience and I was hoping to work with teens and LGBTQ+ identified folks, I was able to communicate these interests with my supervisor and other colleagues so we could design a project that would also be useful to the organization. Through this project I connected with DV organization directors and advocates to learn about their work in schools, their consent policies, prevention work, and obstacles for teens. In addition, I still wanted to live up to my legal intern title though so I was excited to work on the state homicide report, and edit the Legal Manual that is distributed to statewide advocates.

As for self-care, I learned the most by working on the homicide report. I always thought of self-care as just lying on my bed or napping (which are totally valid), but for me it ended up being a more active process of reflection and taking breaks. At first I found myself moving quickly and treating all criminal complaints like a data entry project. Part way through the project, I was entering notes about a homicide that really affected for me some reason so I talked with colleagues who encouraged me to take walks, drink tea, talk about it with others (in a confidential manner) or work on another project. I felt incredibly supported at my internship and I quickly learned to love the non-profit workplace.

The most challenging aspect for me was adjusting to a non-competitive atmosphere as compared to other classes and jobs we explore. This seminar was a refreshing GWS course since everyone was so genuinely excited when others completed projects, had successful meetings/presentations, or were offered jobs! We had real life experience with interviews, resume reviews, elevator speeches, navigating adulthood, and learning how feminism will always be incorporated in our work. If you've ever wondered how to articulate the amazing skills you've learned through GWS classes, this seminar will help you find those concrete words.

Biggest takeaways: don't be afraid to brag about yourself sometimes, don't be afraid to reach out to Nina or your supervisors for advice during any step of the process, steer the ship and take some control at your internship, don't be afraid to open up and be a little vulnerable with your fellow interns, and recognize that you do tremendously valuable work in GWS.

Best,

Sarah Bennis
Bachelor of Science, 2017
Biology, Gender & Women's Studies, and Environmental Studies
Legal Intern, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin

May 3, 2017

Dear Future Intern,

When I first applied for the internship program, I had a clear idea of what I wanted to do as an intern and how the whole experience would look. I wanted to be on the social media end of communications, and I had my eye on a feminist Facebook page that I had followed for years prior. I began interviewing for a few different internship sites: Beautiful World, Guerrilla Feminism, and Wisconsin Women's Network. The first two organizations would allow me to follow my social media dreams while WWN was based around grant writing and research. This was something I had never really had an interest in and, to be completely honest, I interviewed with WWN not expecting to accept the position. I heard back from the sites I interviewed with and had to decide between GF and WWN. GF was everything I had initially wanted and more; a phenomenal local activist would be my supervisor, and I could engage in unapologetic feminist work. At first, I thought of WWN as a formal, boardroom-type experience that seemed too disconnected from grassroots activism. Still, something about WWN had caught my attention during the interview, and I had this unexplainable gut feeling to accept the offer. I soon learned my assumption about this "activist disconnect" was dead wrong. In fact, this internship would turn out to be the best and most impactful activist work I have completed yet.

I am sharing this story in hopes to reach a future intern who, like me, might think they already know exactly what they want from this program and write off any opportunity that does not meet this expectation. Being prepared and having goals was undeniably important in this process; however, letting go of my strict expectations and unexpectedly accepting WWN's offer gave way to a path of transformative change and learning. When I interviewed with Jenifer Cole, President of the Board of Directors at WWN, I heard passion and drive in her voice, as well as a real connection with the work she was doing. I realized then that was what I wanted. Being an intern suddenly felt real to me, rather than an abstract concept I had conjured in my head, and the more I learned about WWN, the more I loved their mission and saw their impact. Throughout my whole internship, I felt like every task I took on was important and valuable, no matter how small, because I was contributing to an organization that I believed in and loved. Most valuable to me was that my supervisor, Jen, became a mentor and trusted friend with whom I have already made plans to get coffee following the end of my intern work.

My parting words of wisdom would be to let go and trust your gut. This seems simple, but for a perfectionist who sometimes loses touch with reality in pursuit of their dreams, it can be quite difficult to slow down. Everything moves so quickly in our last few semesters of college, and there is pressure from our parents, our peers, and society as a whole to overwork and make ourselves marketable. During your internship and the accompanying seminar, look at your work as activism that is creating lasting change. See your work as inherently valuable – not by how much money it makes or how it looks on your resume, but for the impact it will have on your community and for all that you have learned because of it.

Best wishes,

Anna Blasco

Dear Future Intern,

If you are reading this letter, then you are likely considering the Gender & Women's Studies Internship course offered at UW Madison in which case I congratulate you! Having made it thus far in your college career is truly an accomplishment worth acknowledging. Attending a four-year university is a challenging and enriching experience with a plethora of opportunities for growth and scholarship. Engaging in an internship during college can be a great way to expand your learning beyond the classroom while gaining applicable job skills and valuable insight for your future career goals.

I entered UW Madison with the intention of majoring in Biology, following the pre-med track, and partaking in the traditional path of working in a medical research lab and volunteering in a local hospital. While I inevitably did all of those things, it wasn't until I took my first Gender & Women's Studies course (103, of course) that I began to consider a change in the direction of my undergraduate career. Had I not changed my major or explored courses outside of science and medicine I may not have considered the possibility of an internship. My decision to pursue an internship came before my enrollment in the course, but it wasn't until I began it that I truly saw the value in my work.

Deciding whether to take on an internship for university credit and within the frameworks of a guided course is certainly worth consideration. While some internships offer compensation, many small nonprofits unfortunately do not have the means to pay their interns despite their great value. Consequently, receiving course credit is a great way to honor the hard work you put into your internship. While the course interrogates the idea of unpaid internships and the privileges associated, building your internship into your course load is one way to make an otherwise unattainable extracurricular for some students a valuable part of your school coursework. As a student who has never had the financial support from family to attend college full time, taking on an internship alongside working part-time and volunteering was worrisome. However, pursuing the GWS internship course gave me the justification to take on this incredibly worthwhile endeavor.

The Gender & Women's Studies internship course is unique in that it gives students the opportunity to meet fellow peers involved with a wide range of agencies. This creates a supportive and reciprocal environment where students are able to share their inevitable losses and victories within their internships, academics, and personal life. Furthermore, the GWS department's focus on activism and community empowerment ultimately provides students with countless possibilities to engage with agencies committed to social justice and improving the overall wellbeing of the greater Madison community. By the end of the semester, you will feel satisfied by the contribution you have made directly or indirectly to improving our campus and city at large.

Additionally, participating in an internship course requires that you learn how to properly and eloquently explain the work that your agency does and what your role is within that. Being able to present this information to an audience is an important skill that you will undoubtedly perfect during your time in the internship course. Furthermore, as you gain new skills in your internship, this course provides you with the practice of articulating these skills both verbally and in a resume or cover letter format. Graduating college can be very daunting, and having the experience of communicating your internship and employment experience will be momentously valuable as you enter the job market. In the end, whatever decisions or pathways you choose to take will ultimately lead you to exactly where you need to be. Take advantage of every opportunity, give yourself a variety of experiences, and trust the process.

All the best,

Leen Bnyat

4/28/2017

Dear Future Intern,

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to read this letter! I hope I can provide you with important information regarding this class to ease your decision-making process.

My name is Brielle Ellis and I am a senior double majoring in English with an emphasis in Creative Writing, Gender and Women's Studies, in addition to receiving a Criminal Justice certificate. This semester I had the privilege to be the Development and Community Relations Intern at Domestic Abuse Intervention Services(DAIS). This position primarily centered around the Celebrate Independence Luncheon, which is DAIS's largest fundraising event that raises awareness about the impact of domestic violence/intimate partner violence.

I first heard about the internship class in Nina's email during the middle of the Fall semester., and initially ignored it, but after constant debates with myself, I decided to apply. Not long after I applied, I had my interview with Nina, which was truly a great experience because I got to see first-hand how my involvement with my sorority, the PEOPLE Program, and other classes prepared me to tackle issues discussed in the seminar. Needless to say, applying for this class was the best decision I could have made because I have grown academically, personally, and professionally. Being surrounded by individuals who challenge my thought process and an instructor who is a resource goes beyond what other departments can offer in terms of cultivating a community. The Gender and Women's Studies department is a home and the people within it truly care about the success of their students, which can be said for Nina.

This seminar is a place to deconstruct what is happening in our society and on our campus with the intention of engaging our activist mindsets. The assignments for this class are meant to connect our backgrounds with our own feminist activism. Everything that we have done has shaped our lives and, in many ways, are connected even if we cannot see it. Moreover, the fact that Nina brings in former internship students to talk about their work eases the stress about life after undergrad. For some their path remained the same, but for others the path changed, and that is okay. I came into this seminar thinking I wanted to get my Masters in Gender and Women's Studies then my Juris Doctor, but now I have swapped out the Masters in Gender and Women's Studies for a Masters in Social Work because of the information I learned while at my internship. This education shift is the right move for me because of the work I plan to do that deals with domestic violence/intimate partner violence, sex crimes, and human trafficking. The most important thing to take away from this seminar is the ability to be flexible with yourself.

In all, taking this class has equipped me with the necessary skills to succeed not only inside a classroom, but in a professional setting as well. Because of this experience I have connected with people who work with DAIS regularly and stepped out of my comfort zone to get the best experience this internship class could have offered.

Sincerely,

Brielle Ellis

Dear Future Intern,

If you are considering applying for the GWS 660, I cannot recommend it highly enough! In fifteen short weeks, I've learned so much about myself and my activism, have grown both professionally and personally, and have gained an incredible feminist network in the process. I have no doubt that you will do the same.

Know that it will probably feel a little overwhelming in the beginning, and that's okay. Between interviewing, choosing an agency, and your first day at your internship it's normal to feel a mix of excitement and nervousness. If I could offer you a piece of advice at the beginning, it is to really think about what you want to get out of your internship. What skills are you hoping to develop? What interests you? What type of work environment best suits you? After answering these questions, choose an agency that you think will meet your needs and goals, but also find an agency that you think may challenge you to learn new skills. Once you find a fit, make sure that you advocate for yourself when laying out your Learning Contract with your supervisor to make sure that the agency is utilizing your strengths and you are still learning something new. Nina is a fantastic resource throughout the entire process, but especially in the first few weeks as you're trying to get your bearings.

Once at your internship, savor all of the opportunities that you're presented with. If you're invited to a conference, training, or meeting--go! Several of my favorite moments at my internship took place outside of the office when I was meeting with community members and experts. One of these was Survivors and Allies and Wrap Around the Capitol, and Sexual Assault Victim Advocacy School. I was able to attend both for free and was able to use both of them in my work at the internship site, as well as in my other professional goals. In terms of learning more, I'd also recommend that you knock on the doors of your colleagues and ask all of the questions you can. Not only will you learn a lot more this way, but you will gain invaluable friendships and connections. From the relationships I've formed at my internship I have found a summer job, gained several references, and have been able to call on a few favors that have helped me in school and professionally.

In order to get the most out of your internship, continue to check in with your supervisor and Nina as the semester goes on. If you want to take on more responsibility and have the time to--do it! If you're feeling overwhelmed, communicate that with your agency and Nina, too. They are truly there to help you and will be fantastic resources. Something I found helpful was to focus on projects that would contribute the most to the agency, and ones that would give me deliverable products I could show employers in the future. Prioritizing these ultimately benefitted both myself and the agency, and I hope that you can find a similar balance!

All in all, I cannot recommend the class and internship experience highly enough. Your life will be transformed, you will create lasting professional relationships and friendships, and you will learn so much. Your feminist network will only continue to grow and I hope you enjoy it!

Best,
Janie Felton

May 5, 2017

Dear Future Intern,

First, let me congratulate your excellent choice in major or certificate! Gender and Women's Studies is an exciting field, and, contrary to popular belief, what you learn here will prove incredibly useful in your career (as you will learn in this course).

If you are considering this course, you must be entering the last semester of your senior year, or possibly that of your junior year. How exciting! You'll have lots of decisions to make about how to wrap up your college career, and you may be feeling as overwhelmed as you are excited. This course is unique in that it provides you with a network of peers who are also preparing to enter the workforce as feminists, all while completing an internship and receiving course credit!

When choosing your internship site, bear in mind that lots of other students likely have similar interests, and may be applying to the same internships. This is a self-selecting group, after all. You're all Gender and Women's Studies majors or certificates, and all driven to apply to an application-only internship course. Naturally, many of you will be interested in the same agencies. If you don't get your first choice (or even second or third!), it will be alright. These agencies have been selected for a reason, and you can have an enriching experience at any of them.

Personally, I was set on interning at an agency that works against sexual violence. I also worked at PAVE (Promoting Awareness Victim Empowerment), and quickly realized that I would rather intern at an agency in a completely different field, to give myself a well-rounded final semester of college. This was the right decision for me— I ended up having a wonderful experience at The Progressive, where I learned skills which will be useful to any future non-profit work, such as fundraising and grant research (and how to use tools like Google Analytics).

Whichever internship you choose, bear in mind that you will get out of the experience what you put in (as cliché as that sounds). You will have to communicate with your supervisor to get what you want out of the experience. This may seem intimidating, especially if you've signed up for this course because you don't have any work experience and are hoping to build your résumé (though, even if you've had hundreds of jobs and internships, talking to a supervisor is always a bit intimidating). Don't fret: this is exactly why there is a course to go along with the internship! You'll have the opportunity to bring up any problems you may be having, and to get advice, support, and/or sympathy from Nina and your classmates.

As you near the end of your college career, do be gentle with yourself. This is a stressful time in a college student's life. Remember to take care of yourself: drink lots of water, and get some sleep. And please try not to worry too much about what you're going to do next. Something will work out.

Unless, of course, democracy as we know it has collapsed by the time you're reading this and the country has descended into dystopia. In that case: congratulations on finding this letter, keep fighting, and nolite te bastarDES carborundorum.

All the best,

Samantha Garlock

Dear Future Intern,

If you are reading this you have become familiar with the binder chock-full of incredible organizations around Madison. If you're like me you are both excited about future possibilities, but also slightly overwhelmed about how to go about actually getting an internship. I would say don't worry but you should at least a little bit to stay proactive and not let the time get away from you like I did and have to scramble. Timing out the end of your semester going into the next does add a little more work, BUT it will totally be worth it. Additionally, the programs in that binder know what you as a person in GWS courses has to offer them and that is why they sign up to be apart of this class. You may not know exactly what your GWS degree/certificate has to offer you, but if you take this class there will be seminars and readings discussing just what skills we have that others without GWS experience does not.

If you still do not think the internship program is for you, consider the seminar itself. Every seminar you'll check in, and if there is more bad than good you have an entire class as a support system. All of your struggles along with your achievements will be met with attentive listening, advice, and praise when appropriate, you just have to be willing to share. Their success will start to feel like your success overtime creating an environment you look forward to being apart of. Your classmates are not the only things that make this experience great, but Nina is fantastic. She has so much experience with this seminar not only as a director, but also as a student (tip: during your interview ask Nina why she loves this internship program so much).

This internship program gives you all of the resources you need to succeed, organizations that value you, a director who wants to see you succeed, and an entire class filled with people who can relate to you and act as a support system. Therefore, if you are ready to put in the work you will leave with valuable experience that Nina will help you look great on a resume and a network that have connections to organizations all around Madison.

Thank you,

Past Intern

Dear Future Intern:

If you are considering applying for the internship program, do it! It is an incredible experience. Almost all students want an internship and it can be incredibly stressful trying to find one. This program sets you up to find an internship you will enjoy and can also get credit for; it is certainly something to take advantage of. No one in my internship seminar had a bad experience or an internship they did not enjoy.

If you have already been accepted into the program and want to know more about specific internships, I was a legal intern at End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin. You do not have to be a Legal Studies or Political Science major for this internship; however, I was previously a Legal Studies major so I was very interested in the position. My supervisor at End Abuse, Tess Meuer, is incredible. During my interview, we just clicked. A note of advice would be, don't get down on yourself if you do not get the first internship you interview for because you will likely end up at one that is the right fit for you. But, if you are interested in End Abuse, Tess will find the perfect project for you. This year, there were two interns from GWS 660 at End Abuse, but we did completely different work. End Abuse has about 15 different programs, so the other intern was actually working on a project relating to youth while I was working on a family law research project. I was looking at the effect domestic violence has on the outcomes of family law cases (divorce cases or legal separations where the parties have children). Specifically, whether or not the safety of the non-abusive parent and their children was taken into account when the court was deciding custody placements for the children. It was very interesting and right down my alley. I absolutely loved working on this project. At End Abuse, I also did some editing on documents in their Legal Manual and I'll be honest, after doing that for a couple weeks, I got sick of it. Another project you could dabble in at End Abuse is their annual Homicide Report. I was initially very interested in this, although they usually have staff do most of it.

Another word of advice is do not be afraid to try something out of your comfort zone. You can have a Public Health major and be a legal intern or do grant writing even if you have no experience with it. One of the best things about this internship course is it gives you such a wide range of internships to choose from. Another great thing is that my internship seminar had seventeen students. It was a smaller class size than any other course I've taken and it was nice to really get to know people in the course.

Lastly, I have some advice pertaining to interviewing. When I sat down with Tess, she kept saying "we're just having a conversation;" view every interview like this. You really are just talking and getting to know each other, you do not need to put a lot of pressure on yourself. Also, prepare for your interview. Research the organization, read their mission statement, and have an idea of the kind of work that they do. If you've never interviewed before, a lot of interviewers will ask if you have any questions for them so come prepared with a couple as it shows your interest in determining if the internship would be a good fit for you too. I struggle with coming up with questions, so google may be your best friend when it comes to this. One question I asked was if it was a lot of individual work or group collaboration. I also asked whether my supervisor would give me an agenda or what the structure of the internship would be in that regard. I hope this letter helps! Good luck!

Sincerely,
Michaela Moy

Haley Nippert
Nina Valeo Cooke
GWS 660
3 May 2017

Letter to Future Interns

What is up, fellow youths?

In just about a week and a half I will be stepping foot, for the first time, into Camp Randall and graduating from this university. It has been a long ride, from transferring here after freshman year to changing majors and deciding to take a year off post-graduation.

If I'm being honest, when I first applied to this course, I didn't read a single one of the letters from past interns. For those of you taking the time to read my words, hopefully you can cut me some slack and get at least a little something out of this letter!

My advice for future interns would be to look outside of the range of internships that are offered. While I am someone who loves feminist activism, I tend to be geared more toward education, and there really weren't many opportunities that provided a space where I felt I could flourish in that way. There really weren't many diverse types of internship experiences offered either, at least within the binder we're given to search through. Many of them focus in on sexual violence and direct, women-centered activism—which is fantastic—but if that isn't something you're particularly interested in, try searching elsewhere! There are great positions offered by AmeriCorps, the Middleton Youth Center and many local Madison organizations that provide opportunities working with after-school programs, anti-poverty and anti-racist activism, and other types of work that can be considered “feminist activism.” Don't limit yourself to the binder—Nina isn't limiting you to it either!

The most important advice I have it to *make your internship work for you*. *You* are the one providing a service. *You* are the one working for free (in most internships, at least). And more than likely your supervisors will be down to help you out and provide opportunities if you ask for them. If they aren't? Find another internship, because it isn't you who will suffer in that situation; it's the organization losing your labor. My supervisor at Wisconsin Progress has been absolutely amazing in terms of changing the internship around to fit what I want out of it. She's taken me on the road with her to recruitment meetings and given me space to address community leaders, all the while making sure I stay on task with the data entry I've been doing for her. That started because *I asked* to have a more active role in my internship. There's a lot of space that being an intern, as opposed to an employee, gives you, so don't be afraid to ask!

Last but not least: search out internships or work experience that pays! Several of the offered internships provide stipends for students, though they may not inform you of that up front. *You're allowed to find work that works for you*, and if you can't afford unpaid labor, you are allowed to look around for businesses and organizations that will better support you. Being able to take on an unpaid internship is a truly privileged position to be in, so if you *can* take an unpaid internship, that's something you have to acknowledge.

Overall, do what you have to in order to best position yourself! Interview at several different sites, search out various types of internships and experiences, and don't forget to take care of yourself along the way.

Best,
Haley Nippert

Dear Future Intern in the GWS Internship Program,

First, I commend you for considering to dedicate your valuable time to this internship program. As you know, interns do not always get paid for their work, even though what they contribute is valuable to the organizations they are serving. My hope is that you will find meaning and value in the work you are about to do as a volunteer for your non-profit agency, and that you recognize the privilege you have in participating in this great program within the Gender and Women's Studies Department.

Second, I encourage you to participate in this program, no matter where you are in your journey as a feminist activist. I entered this program as someone looking for a new experience in non-profit work. However, I was very intimidated by the amount of activism and feminist work my colleagues had already done and how knowledgeable they were. I felt a little out of place, and this was not a good attitude to have as I began the program. As time progressed and our class came to know each other better, I learned that all my classmates had different personal experiences with activism, and feminist activism isn't something that can or should be quantified. I was surprised to learn that, for most of us, this internship program was one of our first, big activist experiences. Ultimately, I realized that activism looks different for everyone. So wherever you are coming from, please know that where you start does not matter. This program is about where you end up and what you learn along your journey.

Based on my personal experience as an intern within the GWS program, I have a few points of advice I can share with you. I hope they can provide a bit of comfort as you begin this process!

1. Do not fear the interview process, even though it can be a stressful experience. When I began interviewing, my biggest fear was that I would end up with zero offers. As uncertain as the interview process can be, know that Nina and the non-profit agencies will make it work. My advice is to keep an open mind when choosing places to interview. Be open to opportunities that are outside your comfort and zone and previous experiences. You might find the perfect internship in the place you least expected!
2. Be assertive about your role and projects. More likely than not, your supervisor will want to assign tasks that you like and projects that you are passionate about. As the intern, it is your responsibility to make your voice heard. Be sure to tell your supervisor what you want out of the internship— do you want to learn something completely new, or utilize your existing skills? If the internship is headed in a direction you do not like or feel comfortable with, have an honest conversation with your supervisor, and offer an alternative path that works for everyone.
3. Push through the bad days, and celebrate your achievements. There will be times during the semester where the day is long and the work is tough. You may be sitting in a windowless basement, unable to focus— that was my experience on a few occasions. You also may feel stuck, perhaps with the direction or impact of your project. Remember— you have control over your attitude and your experience. If you have a bad day, see what you can do to make the next one better. If you are feeling stuck, talk it out with your supervisor or someone in the office. If you do not feel like you are making an impact, take your project in a different direction. If you feel like you can do more, do more, (but do not overwork yourself). Achievements are significant, even the little victories. Be sure to share them in class and take pride in the good work you are doing. In the end, you will remember the successes more than the struggles.

Good luck! I wish you the very best in your journey!
Madison Schiller

Dear Future Intern,

First of all, congratulations! Landing the position in this class is a huge deal! You will have so much fun, learn lots, make new friends, and gain valuable skills to use your whole life.

Right now, you're probably reading through these letters in that big ole' binder. Well, that's a fantastic idea, and exactly what I did in your place. You may be stressing about setting up interviews, going through with those interviews, and matching with an organization that you like. Well, first: breathe. You can handle this. You nailed the interview with Nina, and you can do it again! Before you set up interviews, make sure to look through the binder of past internship sites and take note of any you're interested in. Look not only for mission, position, and type of work needed, but also what kind of site it is—how large the org is, is there an office or is it more low-key, stuff like that. My org didn't have an official office—we just met at the Starbucks in the Target at Hilldale Mall. It worked for us, but maybe you like a more structured setting. Think about these things!

I was lucky enough to be offered a position at my very first interview. I ended up cancelling my other interviews because the first had been my top choice. Although I don't regret working for Lilada's Livingroom, I do wish I hadn't cancelled the interviews, because it really is great practice for the future, and it would've been interesting to hear more about the other sites. I would encourage you to attend all of your interviews, even if you're offered a position before they're completed. You can feel more secure in your decision, meet some great people, and learn more about the valuable work these sites are doing.

The interviews themselves can feel very nerve-wracking, and maybe you—like me—hadn't attended many interviews before this class. My advice is to be yourself, but smoother. And what I mean by that is just that you should practice routine interview-type questions (Why do you want to work here? What is important to you about the work? Tell me about yourself.) so that you come off as articulate and confident. Also, have questions for *them!* Interviewers will almost always ask "Do you have any questions for me?" at the end and I would highly encourage asking at least one. It makes you seem more engaged and thoughtful. This may be the time to ask about the org/office atmosphere, how the person interviewing you came to the org, etc. Relatedly, have confidence in yourself and your abilities! Don't be afraid to tell them about a project you led or a goal you accomplished, even if it doesn't seem directly related to the organization's work. *Make* it relate to their work, and explain how your skills could be useful for them. I was the only film student in my 660 class, and was worried I wouldn't find a match, but my videographer skills ended up being exactly what my supervisor was looking for! And don't worry if you don't find a match right away; Nina is amazing with coordinating matches between students and organizations.

After a relaxing break, spring semester will come and your internship and seminar class will begin. The seminar portion of the class is an amazing feminist space to be a part of, and you will become friendly with everyone in the class. After sharing about internship work every week, you will become familiar with where your classmates work and how they are using their skills to do feminist activism. At times, it will feel as if they're doing much more than you, but don't let these feelings bring you down. The work that you do—*any work*—is valuable to the organization and larger feminist activism, and for some it just takes a little longer to get their work going or get with the flow.

Pace yourself, make friends, be open to new experiences, and lean on Nina and your classmates. Nina is an invaluable resource to you—she is amazing with fostering communication between interns and organizations, and can vouch for you with tact if needed.

Take a deep breath and step forward. You won't regret it.

Alicia Shoberg
Media Intern, *Lilada's Livingroom*

Claire Steven
GWS660 Letter to Future Interns
Community Shares of Wisconsin
5/3/17

When I started the GWS internship program in the spring semester of 2017, I was bit apprehensive, and somewhat apathetic. As someone who had already held 3 internships already, I was eager to see what specific skills and reflections the program could offer me. Among the many benefits of the program that I will discuss further, the foremost takeaway from the GWS internship course has been reflection skills. Through every assignment, big and small, I was pushed to reflect on my own work, experiences, privileges, and how they relate to the work I am doing both at my internship and in academics.

First, I urge you to never lie to yourself about what you want or what you're feeling, and to always feel free to express it in whatever way you feel comfortable with. Whether this one-on-one with Nina, or in front of your whole class, seminar will always provide you with an honest and accepting space to discuss what you do and don't know about your internship, professional skills, and life in general. For example, this new mindset served me well as I began to think critically about my internship. I didn't like it all that much in the beginning. And that's ok! I picked Nina's brilliant and passionate brain and she suggested I simply make my supervisor aware of this, and brainstorm ways to improve the internship. So, by the end of the semester, I had brainstormed an entirely new internship program for Community Shares, one supervised by our Membership Director that catered perfectly to my interests as an extroverted people person, and, incredibly, that catered perfectly to my dear friend who was offered the internship for the following year.

This leads into my next point, which is that if you feel that networking, speaking your mind, or standing up for yourself is "scary," throw that patriarchal bull-sh*t out the window! We as women are socialized into thinking that we have to take up as little space as possible. This translates into even the strongest woman's professional life, and I hope that you remember that networking and making your voice heard are essential aspects of your internship and your career in general, and you should embrace this will full force, taking up as much space as you need in order to continue to advance and be successful.

Next, I wish that I had known that as students, often students on the verge of graduation as we are in GWS660, we have access to a vast array of career resources and advice. USE THEM. Once graduated, sadly, we are in many ways shot into the "real world," expected to navigate it essentially on our own. In college, we have access to resume workshops, an entire career center devoted to our professional development, and TAs, professors, and others that have been in our shoes and are open to guiding and mentoring you in your journey. However, you will learn in GWS660, as I certainly did, that beyond the resources we are afforded in college, our most important resources come into play once we leave. Using the networking and professional communication skills you learn in GWS660, be sure to reach out to folks in your community who you look at and think, "I want to be you." 9 times out of 10, those people are eager to sit down and chat with you. About anything. Travel, careers, families; make sure you find mentors that have your best interest in mind and will share their own wisdom and experiences to help guide you in the path that is right for you. And those folks will be there, ideally, for life. This includes your GWS660 friends, and, of course, Nina. Because, in the end, your

Claire Steven
GWS660 Letter to Future Interns
Community Shares of Wisconsin
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experiences in the community and at your internship, in “real-life” professional settings, will be the most valuable.

Lastly, as I mentioned at the beginning of this note, always, always remember to step back and take time to reflect. Why did I react in this way to that comment? Why do I love this project but can’t stand that one? What if my supervisor were not as friendly and accommodating, how would my internship be different? Taking time to reflect can be stressful and anxiety-inducing, but it is the single most important habit to ensure you are gaining the absolute most from your internship.

Best of luck,

Claire Steven

Gretta Strand
Letter to Future Intern

Dear future intern,

As the end of my internship is approaching quickly, I feel really sad having to leave such an incredible internship site, my incredible supervisors, and an incredible class full of the brightest Gender & Women's Studies students. The semester went by so quickly and I feel like I haven't really gotten a chance to reflect on my experience until just now.

The first word of advice I have for you is in regard to workplace structure. Be open to working in a variety of workplace settings because even if you think your organization is going to be one way, chances are it will be fairly different. For example, I expected the YWCA to be a pretty straightforward office job where I would do most of my work at a desk. I was excited about this because it was an environment that I was familiar with and new I would do pretty well in. Once I started, I realized that I was expected to work remotely most of the time, except for the many off-campus workshops and meetings I was invited to attend. Working remotely ended up being great for me! Not only was I able to do my work in whatever environment I needed that day, but I was also able to push my internship work back into the evenings or weekends if things became unpredictable during the week- as they often do senior year. The downside to working remotely is that no one is really holding you accountable for your hours each week and you need to put in extra effort to check in with your supervisor or receive feedback on your work.

Another bit of advice I have is to take advantage of all the workshops, meetings, and events your organization is doing. If you are invited to something- go! If you're not sure if you're invited or not, it's okay to ask. Your supervisor may have just assumed you weren't interested. For example, a lot of my work at the YWCA had to do with supporting the "Equitable Organizations" workshops that they provide for organizations in the Madison area. My supervisor was really great about inviting me to events and let me know every time they had a workshop scheduled so I could attend if I wanted. My schedule only allowed me to go to a few, but it was great to sit in on these workshops and see how all of my work was directly applied. Going to events like these is also a great networking tool!

My last bit of advice is to get to know your supervisor and how they got to the position they have currently. Having an understanding of their own educational and occupational backgrounds can help you understand what you need to do to have a position like this in the future. Also, the more I learned about my supervisors, the more comfortable I became with non-linear career paths. Neither of my supervisors expected to be doing their current work and neither of them had educational backgrounds that directly lead to this line of work. This truly goes to show that you can find value in every position you hold, even if the next step doesn't seem super obvious.

Good luck with your future endeavors and take advantage of all that comes your way!

Best,
Gretta Strand

Dear Future Intern,

Congrats to you on taking the first step toward one of the more enriching opportunities available to you through your Gender & Women's Studies Major/Certificate. As I have found thus far, this class and the internships attached to it provide one of the most concrete chances that you will have during your collegiate career to see the practical implication of so much of the theory you're already studying. It can be easy on campus to get lost in the theoretical discussions about institutional oppression and lose sense of hope or change for the future without seeing why those discussions and social justice framework matter. Both your internship and the class itself will give you what you put into it as far as growth and networking connections in addition to giving you a glimpse into potential answers to the inevitable question of, "Gender & Women's Studies? What are you going to do with that?!". Considering this, there are a couple of key pieces to success in this class and your internship that I advise you to keep in mind as you begin to look for internship sites and begin the class.

Although my shortest piece of advice, has potentially to be the most important, which is to engage! Engage in your internship, with the readings, and with your colleagues to foster a conversation in your section that doesn't take the better part of 8 weeks to get some momentum behind it. Step up in discussion to share yourself, and if you already have this skill locked down, think further about when to step back to allow others to take up the same space

I want to continue by imploring you to challenge yourself and reach for the opportunity that you are most excited, by or provides the largest opportunity for growth. To do this you need to recognize that the internship sites connected to the program do, in fact, see the value of your skillset you have developed in the GWS department and are actively seeking for someone like you. It can be hard to maintain the confidence in your skillset in a culture that undervalues it and discount yourself for opportunities that might be beneficial to you just because you don't think you're qualified. Given this, look through the binder of sites as carefully and critically as you can, and let yourself choose to apply to as many as excite you. Let the internship site be the one to decide for you if this is not the right fit at the right moment rather than decide for them. I experienced this first hand when looking through the binder. So many opportunities looked interesting but I didn't think I was qualified for the one that seemed the most worthwhile to me. Talking to Nina, she gave me the same advice that I should have already known, apply and take any qualifications or preferences as just that, preferences. Without this push, I wouldn't have applied for my internship that I knew was going to push me to grow and foster my professional and academic self and would have missed out on the purpose of the class.

Much of this class and your internship will be about finding the individual experience that creates the most mutually beneficial relationship between you, the class and your internship. Despite this very individualized experience will mean something different to each person, I universally suggest that you don't wait until the end of the semester reflection and project to ask yourself what this experience means to you. Be mindful of why it is that you are doing the work at your internship, remind yourself why you decided to take this class in the first place. Find your motives and write them down somewhere for the moments when everything is stressing you out and you just want to crawl under the covers and refuse to come out. Meditating on my motivation not only has kept my excitement about my work going but also has helped me to frame what I am benefitting from and further continue down those pathways of growth.

TLDR: be intentional about this experience your presence in it.

Best Wishes,

Laura

May 1, 2017

To a future intern,

You've made it! Congratulations! Getting to this point is truly a worthwhile achievement to address.

I interned with Beautiful World, a new non-profit based in Washington D.C. and as an executive board member with its new student organization affiliate, Beautiful World of UW-Madison. I had the privilege of sharing my internship with another student, Ashton, which at first caused me anxiety: would there be enough projects in this new internship for two students? Secondly, how would the internship unfold when we did not have an office space and our supervisor was states away? During the first week Ashton and I met up and just shared our anxieties with each other and it turned out that we had a lot in common and that we could rely on one another to work on projects together and to communicate our frustrations and nerves about being part of something so new. Furthermore, something that was beneficial in our internships were to play on each other's skills. I come from a background in queer theory and Ashton comes from a background in English so we could rely on each other's perspectives and studies to complete projects. Having someone in the internship class who understood the difficulty of being part of a new organization was extremely helpful, and probably the most important element of the internship process.

Other concerns I held going in was that coming from a theory background, how would doing "actual" work feel? What would it look like? How would it get done, especially when we were so new? Well, it turns out it's really difficult. Starting projects with a limited resource base as a new student organization, gathering new members, etc. is tough. So, we resolved to readjust our plans, plan smaller, fewer events, be more concrete and practical. And it turned out ok, we worked together, we communicated more, and we put some projects together.

The best advice I can pass along is, just like Nina says, trust the process. As someone with an anxiety disorder (if that has not been completely evident) I recognize the irony of the statement. So, by "trust the process" I mean connect with your peers in the class, have open communication with your supervisor and coworkers, talk with Nina, and most importantly practice self-advocacy. Practicing self-advocacy is perhaps the most important skill one might get out of this internship. As a non-binary trans person I frequently need(ed) to address trans-inclusive language and pronoun usage to ensure I was being respected, along with this I worked to ensure that disabled folks could be in spaces without ableist language, etc. it's important to recognize what you need to have a healthy learning experience because this internship program can be extremely beneficial for future skills.

The internship program is not easy; it is tough and takes a lot of work, but it is an amazing opportunity and I wish you the best of luck!

Best wishes,

Nick Tolson

(they/them)

May 3, 2017

Dear future intern,

I hope this letter finds you well! My name is Ashton Vicente, and as of writing this I am a graduating senior double majoring in English Literature and Gender & Women's Studies. (I graduate next week... I'm so nervous and excited!) Both of my majors are very open-ended, and this internship program has helped me mull over and seek out future opportunities for my career path. In addition, through this class I've learned to better articulate my skills to the many people who ask, "What do you even do in GWS anyway?" The answer to that question, of course, is everything: learn to critically analyze social issues and writing, think and listen actively and empathetically, communicate effectively, and self-analyze to name a few! This program is great because it allows you to draw on your strengths to see how they can make a difference in the field as well as experience new things you may (or may not) also be very good at and enjoy. Regardless, it's a great experience in not only helping others but in self-exploration.

My biggest piece of advice regarding the whole internship process is to really focus on communication. My internship was split between UW-Madison and Washington, D.C. (where my supervisor was), so communication was key for this internship to work. Never feel embarrassed to ask questions or ask for clarification, and if you feel you aren't getting the information and feedback you need it's absolutely okay to push a bit and ask for it. I realized throughout the semester, especially when working with partners, that if you want something to get done you really need to take the initiative and stay on whoever you're talking to in order to get replies—people are busy, but you deserve your voice to be heard as long as you do so in a polite manner.

Additionally, really soak in the discussion time you get in class; the experiences and words of your classmates are invaluable. I've learned so much just by listening to my fellow interns talk about the inspiring work they've done in addition to their struggles. Also, remember that to have an internship is a privilege—many people can not afford to work for free to gain this valuable experience, so really dig deep and use it to help others.

Finally, although some weeks are going to seem like they last forever the semester is going to really fly by. I can't believe I'm practically done already! I know you're probably anxious about the future and graduating as I am, but really try to savor the moment. These internships are not only great opportunities for experience but can lead to great things in the future, so make sure you put your all into it and stay focused. It's amazing seeing all the great things my peers have done over the semester—your feminism, no matter how small it seems to you, will really make an impact.

I wish you the best in your endeavors and am excited for the feminists of the future! Rock on!

Best,
Ashton Vicente

Jessica Yuill

Letter to a Future Intern

Hi! My name is Jessica Yuill, and I was an intern at Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin in the education department during the spring of 2017. If you're reading this, you probably are thinking about or have already made the choice to take the Gender and Women's Studies internship course. In which case, congratulations! Taking the internship course was a wonderful decision, and it really made an important impact on my final semester at UW-Madison, and hopefully on my future after graduation. When I signed up for this course, I wasn't exactly sure what to expect, and I was pretty nervous. So here's some advice and wisdom that I gained during my time as an intern.

First things first, the interviews feel like a really nerve-wracking and scary time, but always remember that things are going to work out either way, even if they don't work out in the way that you originally expected. For me, I interviewed at three different places, and each one of them decided to go with a different intern. At the time, that felt really tough to be rejected, and it was hard to have my original plans altered. However, I then had to make some new plans, and an opportunity opened up at Planned Parenthood. In the end this ended up being really beneficial for me, and a great experience. All I can say is that Nina is right when she says to "trust the process," because even if your plans change, it's going to work out in the end.

At your internship, don't be afraid to advocate for work that interests you and that you're passionate about. Most internship supervisors really like to hear ideas from their interns, and want the experience to be mutually beneficial. If you aren't enjoying whatever project you're working on, don't be afraid to advocate for yourself and receive another project that interests you more. On the other hand, try to be open to new experiences and projects as well. At Planned Parenthood my project was to create a community needs assessment, which involved a lot of research and data entry. This isn't something that I would have originally been excited about, but in the end it gave me a ton of useful transferrable skills, and it taught me so much about the state of reproductive health in Wisconsin and in the United States.

Over the course of your internship and the seminar, really try to utilize the people that you come in contact with, whether it's your supervisor, your classmates, or community members that you meet along the way. All connections are valuable in creating a network, and it's really nice to know people that can help you in the future. If there's one thing that I wish I would have done better during my internship, it would be networking at the different events that I attended with Planned Parenthood. It seems awkward at the time, but even just introducing yourself to some new people and telling them about your interests can really go a long way. In seminar your classmates can be an excellent resource to bounce ideas off of, and they can be a big help when you're feeling stuck. Everyone does really different work at their internship agencies, so everyone will have different connections and ideas that can help you out.

Overall, just make the most of your time in the internship course, and try to learn as much as you can. I know that when I'm out in the real world I'll be able to use the skills that I learned at Planned Parenthood and in seminar, and I'm so grateful that this class gave me the chance to get that experience. Good luck!

-Jessica Yuill (Class of 2017)