

Jackie Kretchmer
GWS Internship
Nina Valeo Cooke
May 2, 2018

Dear Future Intern,

I am so excited that you are considering applying to this internship class! I absolutely loved this course; it was by far my favorite course of the semester due to the combination of having an internship and still getting to regroup once a week with my peers. Going to my internship two days each week (for a total of 10-12 hours per week) was the refreshing break from class that I needed while still doing work at the internship that was productive and held a lot of meaning to me. During seminar, I appreciated the balance between being able to talk about my work at my internship but also discussing the readings on the syllabus that brought everything back to perspective about what it means to be a feminist activist.

I did my internship at End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin under the supervision of Sara Krall, the Homicide Prevention Program Director. My main task was working on the 2017 Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report that End Abuse releases every year. I researched, did the data entry, and wrote narratives for each case of domestic violence-related homicide, and I also wrote a piece for the report that discusses cold cases of domestic violence-related homicides. The report will be published in September of 2018, so I am excited to see my name in the credits!

As you can probably imagine, this internship revolved around heavy, difficult topics, which was emotionally laborious at times. Because of this, I would say that interning at End Abuse is not for everyone. However, Sara, my internship supervisor, was sensitive to the emotional difficulty of working on the homicide report and was extremely supportive the entire time. She frequently checked in on me to make sure that I was taking care of myself, and gave me other smaller projects throughout the internship so that I did not get burned out from the depressing work. Since I interned in the Homicide *Prevention* Department, there is a lot of work to be done that is more uplifting than simply reporting homicides. Sometimes I helped Sara with projects regarding domestic violence homicide prevention work throughout the state, and seeing the progress with those programs we were implementing was extremely rewarding. Although the content of my work was sad at times, I felt extremely lucky to have the opportunity to do impactful and important work.

If you apply for this course (which you absolutely should), I recommend interviewing for internships that involve work for which you have passion and involve developing a new skill. This way, you know that you will not hate the subject but will have a lot of room to learn. Meeting with Nina prior to making your final decision is always a great option, especially if you are on the edge about multiple internships. You will do great things, even if there are a few bumps along the way. Taking this class was the best way to end my undergraduate education, and I hope you can enjoy it as much as I did.

Best of luck,
Jackie Kretchmer

Sonja Liljegren

Letter to Future Interns

2 May 2018

Dear Future GWS 660 Interns,

My name is Sonja Liljegren and I am a senior majoring in Gender in Women's Studies with a certificate in LGBTQ+ Studies. The majority of my college experience was spent being a Division I Student Athlete. Participating in athletics is a major component of my identity, however it took up a large allotment of my time. Furthermore, I wasn't able to take part in work or internship opportunities outside of the University due to athletic conflicts. However, I was pleased to know that the Gender and Women's Studies department offered an internship opportunity that works towards degree credit. I interned with the *Wisconsin Women's Network* as a Communication and Fundraising Intern. The mission of the WWN is to promote the advancement of women and girls in Wisconsin through education, communication and advocacy. It was an amazing experience because I've always wanted to see what it is like to work for a non-profit organization. I've been involved with the WWN prior to my internship and I was overjoyed to continue learning about the organization as well as contribute my knowledge and skills. I was project manager for the WWN's biggest fundraising event, The Big Share. Since the WWN receives most of their funds from this fundraising event, I was dedicated to creating awareness of the event through outreach, daily social media posts and personal connection. My internship allowed me to see the grassroots of what is entailed, in order to successfully run a non-profit. My goal from my internship was the continue growing awareness and accessibility of the WWN, and I believe I accomplished that from increased engagement from followers and donors. What I took the most away from my internship experience was you only get out what you put into it. Starting off, I thought my internship was supposed to be prominently focused on my work for the fundraising event. However, I started reaching out to my mentors for personal as well as professional advice, which I greatly appreciated. Since, I will be graduating, I wanted to hear about their career path and their advice for networking, job interviews, and how they set milestones for themselves. As individuals, we tend to get wrapped up in our busy schedules, don't have time to reflect and set intentions. Each week, I set intentions for myself, so I could get the most out of my week as well as my internship. For example, I had a couple job interviews in a couple weeks. I reached out to my mentors and they offered anecdotes from their experiences with their best advice. With the help from them, I went into those interviews with new perspectives that I will continue to use in the future. Additionally, we rarely talk about how we set milestones for ourselves, once we leave the educational sphere. I utilized my mentors' advice for how they navigate their career while reflecting on their experiences, and how they plan to move forward. What I greatly appreciated about this internship experience was that it placed me in uncomfortable situations, that are now my new comfortable. My advice would be to take risks and challenge yourself. Before my internship, I did not like public speaking. However, my internship forced me in slow increments to get out of my comfort zone. With the help from attending the WWN's Board Meetings, pitching new perspectives, offering new ideas, I feel

more comfortable with using my voice and contributing to the conversation. I hope my internship experience and advice will find you, well.

Sincerely,
Sonja Liljegen

Dear Future Intern,

My spring semester at Literacy Network was an amazing opportunity. I truly enjoyed planning lessons and supervising my students & tutors. If you are someone interested in helping communities that primarily consist of lower income folk, this is an awesome opportunity. As a first-generation college student and a child of immigrant parents, I know what it's like to grow up in a family with family members who do not understand the language. I learned English as a child, but my first language was Spanish. By the age of 3, I could understand everything I heard and hold a conversation, I did, however, have an accent. As I got older my English improved, and it became my job to translate for my mom. Both my parents understand and speak English, but my mom is not an independent woman. She's very self-conscious of her accent and when she gets nervous she can't understand what people tell her. Knowing my mom's struggle to understand English helped me see my students' perspectives. Learning an entirely new language is not easy. It's even more difficult the older you get.

These students have so much diligence and it's so motivating to see someone work so hard. My job at the Literacy Network consisted of work 10-12 hours a week planning individual lessons and working on my independent project for the course. This semester I took 16 credits, worked 25-30 hours per week plus worked at my internship 10-12 hours. I **WOULD NOT RECOMMEND DOING THIS**. Classes are important, work is important, but your well-being and mental health are also important. Please do not forget to take care of yourself. I'd suggest taking no more than 12 credits while working at an internship. What I did wasn't easy, but it was worth it. I felt I made a difference in my students' lives. I saw a difference in the way my students spoke and understood English conversation. It is the best feeling ever.

This internship was great practice for me because I plan on getting certified to teach English and go abroad. I think it's a job I can enjoy and make a difference in someone's life. I hope you decide to give this agency a chance and work your butt off. I have no regrets and neither will you.

Best regards,

Ivette Mendoza

Ivette Mendoza
April 29th, 2018
GWS Major- Class of 2018

To future interns,

My biggest piece of advice for this internship class is to keep an open mind. It is a time commitment, you're going to hear that a lot, but if you fully immerse yourself into your internship experience, you will not regret it. I was lucky enough to intern with NARAL Pro-Choice WI and it was the perfect combination of non-profit work and my own personal project melded into one. They worked off each other and I genuinely enjoyed the time and effort I ended up putting in. Going back to having an open mind, it will probably be different than what you're expecting right now. Whether in a good or rather challenging sense, we all had to adapt to be as helpful and relevant as we could for our different organizations. Like every other part of your college career, it isn't going to be a linear path. There will be struggles, hardships, unknowns and it will push you out of your comfort zone. But that's what the two-hour seminar part of the class is for.

Take advantage of such a small class size and get to know the people going through this crazy ride of an internship with you. All of your internships and projects will be completely different and unique, but you are in the class to be there for each other. There was nothing better than hearing everyone else's success stories with what they have been able to do with their orgs, and to bounce ideas off one another. This class is so unique and even though it is a pretty big time commitment, it's almost a space to take a breather from the everyday mundane routine you have probably fallen into by now. You still have your friend groups, the usual people you sit by in class, other organizations are clubs you're a part of, but this internship will give you an insight into a wonderful local non-profit you probably wouldn't have worked with otherwise.

Your classmates and professor are there to help you. My next piece of advice would be to invest what you can, but always know self-care comes before anything else. Don't spread yourself too thin, that's not what this class and internship are meant for. We all know that life happens, and this class understands as well. You really do get out of it what you put in, lame analogy I know, but relevant I swear. The semester flies, as you've probably noticed, every semester just keeps getting quicker. Do what you can, accept what they throw at you, and make the best out of this experience. No matter where you end up, you'll be amazed with all the new skills you will walk away with. Hell, you might even have the chance to continue the internship if that's what you're interested in. If not, it will always be a great reference and something a little out of your comfort zone.

Don't sweat it! I wouldn't say GWS 660 is an easy time, but it is meant to help you more than anything else. It's a change of pace and I know I appreciated it for my new found non-profit and communications experience along with everything else. It is a space for your ideas and interests to be heard and valued. It is nice to sit around a table during the seminar portion with other people interested in Gender and Women's studies who are genuinely interested in the work you do and what they can do to help. The comradery can't be beat. It is a time to feel vulnerable, and to ask questions, to speak up and to help one another with the new internship. It's an exciting new chapter and one I couldn't see my college career without.

So good luck, though you won't need it.

ENJOY YOURSELF! Learn something new, meet new people and have fun!

Daisy Patterson
660 Engagement Assignment
Letter to Future Intern
5/2/18

Dear Future Student Intern,

In the beginning of this internship program, I really had no idea what to expect. While I anticipated doing work for a feminist organization in Madison and hopefully learning and acquiring skills that would allow me to progress in my career track, it was still unclear exactly what was going to come out of it in terms of where it was going to take me next. Instead of trusting the experience and staying in the present, I was more concerned that my story of the beginning my career would not be as amazing as the past student interns, who came in to speak about their experiences in the program. Do not worry about this. It sounds so much easier and effortless coming from people who have already gone through the transition from school to real work. They are most likely still feeling unaccomplished or satisfied with what they have already experienced. It truly is all about trusting the present and the experience, putting in the work, and learning from the experience no matter what direction it might take you. If it is not a successful experience, you can always learn something from it and that will then take you to a better place, hopefully. The most important part is taking advantage of the opportunity to learn new skills that you could potentially apply to in almost anything you do next. This can bring a lot of satisfaction! While the work you might complete and do for the internship may or may not have anything to do with what you do in the future, you still learn how to communicate with people, work with others, and get a sense of a certain type of work environment. Anything can be turned into a learning experience. This is the whole point of internships.

I think it is really easy for people to believe that an internship means you already know how to do a job, you have tons of experience, and you have nothing new to learn. I have a tendency to think this way during the interview process when people ask about previous experience in a certain field and what previous achievements. This is frightening and can make one feel inadequate. But remember, the point of internships is to learn. It is an opportunity to gain experience in a field of work, not just pointlessly do something you have done in the past.

The last thing that I have seemed to really take away from this program and working at a nonprofit, feminist organization in Madison is always take advantage of connections. It is extremely easy to build connections here and they can be really beneficial when it comes to figuring out where you might want to work next, or just to find someone to use a mentor for support and guidance. I also have learned a ton about various careers from just meeting and hearing from people at events and through the work I did at NARAL WI. Make connections and don't be afraid to reach out and listen to others!

Best,
Daisy Patterson

Dear Future GWS 660 Student,

I am so excited that you are looking at this opportunity, it means you are likely a go-getter and are prepared to make the most out of your education! I am proud of you for reading this letter and taking this step, it was a step I was very nervous to take.

I should start by saying I am not a typical participant in this class; I am not a Gender and Women's Studies major, nor am I a senior. The class is typically reserved for senior students finishing a GWS major. I am a sophomore studying Nursing, with neither of the main qualifications, so when I applied to take the class it was a bit of a hail mary, more of an exercise in writing applications than anything else. But I politely explained my circumstances; with Nursing school approaching I only had one more semester available to fit GWS 660 into my schedule. I expressed my passion for providing quality, intersectional care to all people as a future women's health nurse, and explained how the GWS 660 experience would help me do that. In my interview I expressed that I was ready to grow, and to face whatever challenges were ahead, and lo and behold, I was accepted into the class! Thus, even if you think this class might not be meant for you, if you are passionate enough about gaining the real-life experience it can offer, and flexible enough to handle whatever the class might throw your way, it is still worth pursuing GWS 660 as a course option.

I thought getting into the class would be the toughest part, however interviews came quicker than I expected. A word of advice, spend some time looking at the internship options once they are posted, read all the materials to find all of the requirements and get a feel for what the site may have to offer you. After preparing tirelessly for an interview with Girls Inc. at the Goodman Community Center, I finally sat down with their staff to talk about where I would fit into the programming. A few days later I was invited to intern there! The interview process may feel overwhelming and hectic, but in the end, you will certainly find a site that suits you, and nobody will be left without an internship.

Settling in to my internship site took quite a while. Due to some changes in Girls Inc. programming my assignment changed drastically in the first few weeks of the semester. I began as a facilitator working with high school girls after school at East High, researching violence between girls and planning events. Three weeks later I was at a desk, being assigned administrative tasks, something I had specifically chosen Girls Inc. to avoid. The rapid transition was tumultuous, I wasn't sure where I stood with my co-workers, I saw new faces everyday and didn't feel like there were any constants. However, I communicated very clearly with my supervisors about how I was feeling, and despite my hesitance to do administrative work, I accepted each task gracefully and did my best to complete each one in a timely manner. This attitude is, I think, what salvaged my internship, along with the flexibility and support of my Girls Inc. supervisors and teammates. Now, at the end of the semester I have completed several projects that are meaningful to me, including creating a promotional video for Girls Inc. I have gotten to know the Girls Inc. crew, the folks at Goodman, and the wonderful girls in Girls Inc.'s programming. I hope that by sharing this, I can give you a more concrete example of one of the many possibilities this internship has to offer. Best of luck!

Katherine Reinemann

Dear Future Intern,

I think it is important to note that taking on an internship course, such as GWS 660, can initially feel extremely intimidating and time consuming, especially if you are wrapping up your time here at UW or if you have other commitments, but the experiences, connections, skills and learning you encounter throughout the semester is invaluable. GWS 660 has easily been the most beneficial course I have taken at UW because it not only provides you with the very privileged opportunity to take on an internship at an agency of your choosing, but it also provides an environment where you can learn, ask and grow as a student and professional through helpful tools, workshopping and problem-solving that we take on together in the seminar. Our weekly seminar meetings became a place of comfort and learning where I was constantly challenged on my perspectives in a way that allowed me to evolve into a more attuned feminist activist and carve my own path within the Gender and Women's Studies field. GWS 660 helped me learn something new every day about myself, my classmates, my organization and this field as a whole and I cannot emphasize enough how valuable these experiences have been in molding my passions and future career aspirations to fit the kind of activist I want to be.

Although there are no wrong ways to go about your internship, there are definitely some words of wisdom I wish that I had taken to heart much more when I began this course. For one, this internship course provides you with the unique opportunity to dictate your experiences. You are given the freedom to take on an independent project that starts and ends with you – that is so rare! To maximize the benefits of this opportunity, utilize the resources that are available to you to their fullest extent. You are here to learn and it's your job to follow through with that by asking questions without hesitancy and inviting yourself to opportunities that you may benefit from experiencing. It is important to remain respectful and courteous when asking those questions, but you shouldn't let intimidation or fear hold you back from learning valuable skills and knowledge. Another piece of advice I will offer is that you should keep in mind how short a semester really can be. It's important to stay on top of your hours consistently from the start because it becomes a lot harder to make up for them later on down the road when midterms, finals, papers and projects from other courses get in the way. In the same way, you should also stay on top of your project and the work necessary to complete it throughout the semester. It may take a few weeks to settle on the focus and goals of your project, so try your best to come up with ideas early and start putting it in action as soon as you can. If you do stay on top of it all, you will realize how beneficial this entire experience is without letting it become tainted by approaching deadlines and all-nighters. The whole semester goes by so much quicker than you think, and you want to get the most out of all of it.

Deciding to take GWS 660 was one of the greatest decisions I have made in my four years at UW, and I hope you are aware of the fortunate opportunities and the doors it opens for you in your pursuit of a career in the field of Gender and Women's Studies. The connections you make, the relationships you build, the skills you acquire and the work you accomplish all set you up amazingly well in both your personal professional lives, and that's not always easy to find in a college course.

Sincerely,

Annamaria say

Dear Future Intern,

I am trying to remember what it was like for me looking at this giant binder of letters: What was I thinking and feeling? What was I hoping for, and what was I worried about? I think I had a lot of apprehension, but also excitement. I really wanted to experience interning at a location that fit my passions and would give me a look into what working at a community-based nonprofit may be like.

Well, things didn't really work out that way for me. I went in looking specifically for a community-based LGBTQ+ organization, and while I did find one, it did not fit my needs in ways that I had hoped. For one, the organization location was too far for me as someone who did not have a car. Second, another, much closer location offered me pay while this one did not. I would advise not to expect to receive pay at any internship locations, but in my case I was lucky. I was offered a position at the Gender and Women's Studies Librarian's Office here on campus for \$9.50/hr, and I took it. I did not pick it solely because of the pay, though, of course.

So let me back up a bit. I went in vaguely knowing that I wanted a community-based LGBTQ+ nonprofit, but I wasn't sure of how I was going to go about it. I had some difficulties as the binder of potential internship sites were mostly focused on (presumably cisgender) women and in general non-LGBTQ+ specific organizations. While all of these organizations are extremely important, I as someone who is not a woman did not feel comfortable entering some of these organizations, particularly as many specifically requested/expected female applicants. In addition to this, I wanted to ensure that I was at an organization that was either LGBTQ+ focused, or explicitly inclusive and centering of LGBTQ+ (particularly trans) issues. The lack of organizations that appeared to do this ended up making my search a bit more cumbersome.

Thankfully, though, Nina was extremely helpful in contacting people and searching for sites for me. All in all, I interviewed at a total of four places (totally not necessary, sticking to three is fine). The first place was the LGBT OutReach Center, a community-based LGBTQ+ nonprofit that does extremely important work for the community in Madison. After that I interviewed with the Trans Research Lab, the Gender and Women's Studies Librarian's Office, and the LGBT Campus Center, all on campus. Through a mixture of what I guess is luck, understaffing at certain locations, and honesty about my passions at each interview, I was accepted at all four sites. While all of them were appealing, they all provided a number of pros and cons. The OutReach Center had clear goals for me, but was too far location-wise. The Trans Research Lab and the LGBT Campus Center had less structure, both in terms of work and schedule. The GWS Librarian's Office had clear goals that fit my interests, scheduling, and pay. Thus, I picked the latter.

Though the GWS Librarian's Office was not what I had initially gone in looking for, it provided a welcoming environment that allowed me to implement my interests into their projects. I was given large responsibility over one of their publications, *Feminist Periodicals*, in which I invested time and effort into transforming it into a more accessible resource with a variety of LGBTQ+ focused materials.

So, returning to the question of what I was feeling at the beginning of this process, I would like to give some advice to you, a potential future intern. Don't fret about finding the perfect fit, because in most cases there will not be one. This does not mean that you will not find a satisfying or fulfilling internship; it means that it is extremely important to weigh your pros and cons, and be honest with yourself about your needs going into this. Since many of you will most likely be taking other classes at the same time, ensuring that your internship is something that

you can fit into your schedule is also very important. Next, if possible, be explicit about what sorts of things you want to get out of your internship. In my case, I wanted something trans-specific; while my organization is not trans centered, they were clear about wanting me to focus on trans and LGBTQ+ specific elements in my work. Following this, be honest and yourself at interviews. It may be nerve wracking, especially at first, but being upfront about your skills and interests is the best way to land you a well-fitting internship. Lastly, it's going to be okay! Even if you don't find an ideal location or things start off rough, there is always room for maneuver and change. Nina will help you with each step of the process.

To end, I would like to give some advice to those who may be in a similar boat that I was in: looking for an LGBTQ+ specific organization or for an organization of a particular focus that may be harder to find. I am also giving this advice from the point of view of someone who is a nonbinary person of color in a department dominated by white cisgender women. Though it may be difficult to find an organization that fits your interests, I recommend doing your best not to compromise your values and needs. Consult Nina if searching becomes difficult, and if any issues arise both in class or at your internship site, Nina is there to help. At the end of the day, there will be an organization out there for you.

All in all, I wish you luck!

Mizuki