Welcome to the ninth year of a unique international exchange between Americans and Australians taking place in the United States Congress!

History

In 1999, an unprecedented educational and professional internship opportunity was designed and created in Washington, DC exclusively for Australian university students. Personalized experiences and attention in the Nation’s Capital have been hallmarks of this exchange from that modest beginning in which a handful of student applicants received through a single Australian institution were matched for mostly congressional internships. By 2003, the demand in Washington, DC for expansion, diversity and depth of field led to the further evolution of this effort into the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Programme, which currently includes 7 participating Australian universities. The practice since 2003 has been to match 12 students annually and exclusively to individual congressional offices.

Principles and Achievement

The core principle of the Programme is to match good people with good people in good places. A total of 68 students have been successfully matched across the first 8 years, which includes the single-uni years; 12 students are to be matched for the 2008 program. Internship prospects are offered in Democratic and Republican offices; personal offices and committee staffs; the House and the Senate. Matched students are now drawn from many academic disciplines including international relations, politics, commerce, law, political communications, economics, science, and American studies. From the beginning, the substantial success of the Programme has been owed to innumerable individual commitments towards enhancing American-Australian relationships. In the last 8 years, 12 statements in the Congressional Record along with publicity in both countries have confirmed the importance and value of this concept. In 2006, two speeches in the Australian Parliament – one in the House; one in the Senate – extended this official recognition to Hansard.

Leadership

This effort was created in Washington, DC by Eric K. Federing, who directs and manages UCWIP pro bono. Federing was a senior congressional advisor for a dozen years, serving as communications director for Rep. Norm Mineta of California, the House Transportation Committee, and Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut. Federing is now Director, Business Public Policy, Government Affairs for KPMG LLP, the global audit, tax and advisory services firm. In 2004, Federing received a KPMG Chairman’s Award for Excellence in Volunteerism in Washington, DC in recognition of UCWIP. While still a congressional staffer, Federing lectured on American government, politics and news media at numerous universities, business groups, and think tanks across Australia from 1992 to 1998, inclusive. In the U.S., he is a Board member of the National Conference on Citizenship, a congressionally-chartered non-profit organization.

Practices

UCWIP interns are accorded unique access to the US political system and institutions across their eight-week, full-time internships in January/February. In-office experiences and training will vary widely according to the needs of the congressional hosts. Administrative functions, constituent liaison, and legislative research and support have been among the touchstones of past internships. Offices typically encourage interns to attend hearings, briefings and press conferences both on and off Capitol Hill. UCWIP has also organized briefings at the US State Department and the Australian Embassy; roundtable discussions with National Journal’s senior congressional reporter; access to political dinners, evening events; a day-trip to Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania; and a day-trip to the origins of the American republic in Philadelphia’s Independence Hall, Congress Hall and the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. In 2005, UCWIP became a charter member of the National Center on Citizenship, a service and civic engagement network in the United States.

For the 2008 Programme, 17 congressional offices have been confirmed as prospective hosts:

- Rep. Mike Castle (Republican of Delaware)
- Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (Democrat of Missouri)
- Rep. James Clyburn (Democrat of South Carolina)/House Majority Whip’s office
- Rep. Joe Courtney (Democrat of Connecticut)
- Sen. Mike Crapo (Republican of Idaho)
- Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart (Republican of Florida)
- Sen. Christopher Dodd (Democrat of Connecticut)
- Rep. Philip English (Republican of Pennsylvania)

16 March 2007
Hallmarks of the Programme include highly individualized attention to students before, during and after their internships. Contact has been sought and maintained across the years by Federing and by alumni for continued assistance and career development. Partnering in these efforts is Daphne Clones Federing, herself a congressional committee staff veteran and Federing’s wife.

Notable measures of intern success have included numerous letters of recommendation from congressional hosts; Floor recognition for legislative work; extended internships; a Member request to recruit a student for an American summer internship; and at least a half-dozen congressional job offers, with one accepted. Alumni later pursuing other work in the public sector have attained positions in the Prime Minister’s office, in a variety of federal departments and agencies in Canberra, at the Australian Consulate in New York, and at the World Bank in Washington, DC.

Applications and Preparations

Each participating university determines administrative and application procedures in conjunction with UCWIP and university policies. Internships are unpaid and must be conducted for university course credit. Deadlines are uniform and set by UCWIP. Annual costs are affected by the US and Australian dollar exchange rate. Planning a personal budget and fundraising cannot be overemphasized. Air travel, accommodations, commuting, food, visa, etc. are estimated to be A$9,000+. Many recent student interns report and recommend an overall budget of A$15,000. These figures assume a US$.75 = A$1 exchange rate.

UCWIP is competitive and seeks mature, engaging, articulate students who will serve as ambassadors for themselves, their universities, and Australia. There have been 60+ applications in each of the 2005, 2006 and 2007 program years. There are no quotas of any sort applied by the Programme. Applicants should demonstrate an understanding for and an appreciation of the American political process. Students should aspire to benefit from the experience academically, professionally, and personally. Academic study is only one of many factors considered. Paid and voluntary work experiences are also important. Sophisticated interpersonal skills, resourcefulness and knowledge are exceptionally important. Critical selection factors include a free-style essay explaining why this opportunity is of interest. Applications then ask students to choose up to 4 of the listed congressional offices and explain why each is of interest. UCWIP works to find the best ‘match’ taking all these factors into account.

UCWIP respects interns as young professionals. Resources offered include upmarket sharehouse arrangements in northern Virginia; counsel towards the US Government-required J1 visa; and continual on-the-ground guidance. The J1 visa is obtained by each successfully matched student through US consulates (typically Sydney, Melbourne and Perth) and in direct conjunction with their congressional hosts, a process enabled for the last 5 years by the Council for International Educational Exchanges. All internships evolve into direct relationships between congressional host and student, the accommodations provider and student, etc. UCWIP is the organizer, facilitator, advisor, quality controller and risk mitigator. Only Australian students enrolled within the participating universities are eligible to apply and should do so through:

**Deakin University** ([www.deakin.edu.au](http://www.deakin.edu.au))

Jo Sarah, Experiential Learning Officer, Faculty of Arts, Jo.Sarah@deakin.edu.au

**Griffith University** ([www.griffith.edu.au](http://www.griffith.edu.au))

Heidi Piper, Manager, Study Abroad & Exchange, Griffith International, h.piper@griffith.edu.au

**University of Canberra** ([www.canberra.edu.au](http://www.canberra.edu.au))

Simon J Hoy, Director – International, Division of Development and International, Simon.Hoy@canberra.edu.au

Martin Wilson (study abroad and exchange advisor), Martin.Wilson@canberra.edu.au

Dr. Trish Payne, Convenor, Postgraduate Research, School of Professional Communication, trish.payne@canberra.edu.au

**University of Melbourne** ([www.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.unimelb.edu.au))

Miranda Stewart, Faculty of Law, m.stewart@unimelb.edu.au

Thomas Davis, Department of Political Science, t.davis@unimelb.edu.au

**University of Queensland** ([www.uq.edu.au](http://www.uq.edu.au))

Majella Todd, International Development Manager, Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, mtodd@uq.edu.au

**University of Western Australia** ([www.uwa.edu.au](http://www.uwa.edu.au))

Karen Hall, Arts Practicum Coordinator, Discipline of English and Cultural Studies, karenh@cyllene.uwa.edu.au

**University of Wollongong** ([www.uow.edu.au](http://www.uow.edu.au))

Trish Tindall, Manager Study Abroad Program, trish@uow.edu.au or studyabroad@uow.edu.au
“Instead of surfing and tanning, 12 Australian university students are spending their summer breaks in a cold and wintry Washington, D.C., to learn about the Congressional process and U.S.-Australian relations. The students are participating in the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship program, which selects undergraduates from seven of its participating Australian colleges and universities to come to Washington and partake in the political feast better known as Washington politics.

“Ryan Conroy and Jessica Gurevich said that they have both come to enjoy their time in Washington for the [eight]-week internship program. Gurevich, who interns in Rep. Mike Castle's (R-Del.) office, said that she could not have passed up the opportunity to work in Congress. She also described her colleagues as a "family," in which she and her co-workers have taken a mutual liking for one another and have been able to learn of the cultural and political similarities and differences….

“[Director and founder Eric] Federing likened the program to the Fulbright Scholar Program "with a twist" (Fulbright, sponsored by the State Department, allows students and other scholars to study in different sections of the world). However, he said that the Uni-Capitol program is unlike any other program because of its focus on the students as individuals.

“The application process is key in pairing a student up with a host office, Federing said. Conroy, an international relations major with a focus on law and the arts, interns in the office of Rep. Sam Farr (D-Calif.), who serves on the Appropriations subcommittee on Agriculture, rural development, Food and Drug Administration and related agencies, which has congressional oversight of the Health and Human Services Department. Conroy said that he is interested in both international and domestic policies and health issues ….. Conroy added that working in Farr's has afforded him the opportunity to attend briefings on such issues as a United Nations response fund to assist developing countries.”

"AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AS AMBASSADORS TO AND FROM CONGRESS"

SPEECH OF HON. JERROLD NADLER OF NEW YORK IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEBRUARY 4, 2004

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, there is a long list of people and institutions that have helped our nation flourish through our nearly 228 years of independence. One of our greatest traditions as Americans is to welcome friends from around the world into our lives--sometimes professionally and sometimes personally.

Most congressional offices host American college students, to help our nation's future leaders understand the political complexities affecting our constituents and our jobs as their representatives. Now, thanks to the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program, some of Australia's best and brightest university students have had the opportunity to participate in six-week, full-time internships in House and Senate offices. These internships have proved to be an invaluable learning experience, both for the students and for their hosts.

"IN HONOR OF THE UNI-CAPITOL WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM"

SPEECH OF HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE OF DELAWARE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEBRUARY 15, 2005

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, each year America hosts thousands of foreign students from around the globe. For those of us who develop a professional or personal relationship with any of these individuals, we are truly enriched by their different perspective on the world.…. For over 100 years, Australia and the United States have enjoyed a unique partnership that has endured world wars, economic malaise, and our current battle with terrorism. This tradition continues through the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program, which provides Australian students with the opportunity to experience American democracy first-hand through internships with Congressional offices.
Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, each year congressional offices host American college students as interns, to help our future leaders learn about public service and see how their Government works firsthand. Today, I would like to let you know about a program that gives Australian students the opportunity to experience our democratic and legislative process. It's called the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program…. Twelve of Australia's brightest are here, pursuing knowledge and understanding. In so doing, we are all finding new reasons to like an old friend….

The selection process for the students is competitive and intellectually rigorous, ensuring the highest quality applicant. All participating students are comprehensively matched with a congressional office and corresponding position. They come from a wide range of academic disciplines and bring as much knowledge and understanding to our offices as they take away…. Australia continues to be one of America's strongest allies. Our greatest gift is the friendship born of shared values. I thank the Uni-Capitol Program and these Australian interns for their hard work, and I wish the program continued success.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program, an international internship program that was highlighted in a Roll Call article last week. I have been a proud participant in the program since its inception seven years ago…. The Uni-Capitol Program selects undergraduates from 7 universities by matching the applicants with Members and Senators who share their views. The students who are selected come from a variety of academic disciplines, but all have an interest in learning about and promoting the U.S.-Australia relationship. The Program facilitates this by enabling the formation of genuine friendships and the exchange of views and ideas between the Australian interns and their respective offices. I have often enjoyed the interaction that has occurred between my Australian and American interns. This, my colleagues, is how we build relationships which will ensure that the U.S. and Australia remain friends and allies for years to come….

I am proud that my office is part of this program, as I believe it provides a unique and important bridge between the United States of America and Australia. The program has been, and will continue to be, an extremely beneficial experience for all involved. I implore my colleagues to participate in this worthwhile program in the coming years.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, as modern communication makes our world increasingly smaller, linking global societies at unprecedented business, government and social levels, it is critical that America and other democracies worldwide engage in a process of ongoing co-education about the efforts and work of democratic governments. This educational exchange is best facilitated by hands-on learning and personal experience. A terrific example of this effort is the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Programme, in which outstanding college students from seven of Australia's top universities compete for the opportunity to serve as interns for Members of the U.S. Congress…. I am fortunate to be able to participate this year. Charis Tierney from Brisbane, Queensland, has been a wonderful addition to my office this winter. She says of this opportunity:

The UCWIP has been a once in a lifetime to not only observe but participate in the work of the U.S. Congress. Working within Senator Crapo's office has given me the kind of unique appreciation for the United States Senate's work that can only be gained from behind the scenes. My daily interaction with the fantastic staff of the Senator's office has only enhanced the experience. …

This valuable program bridges the 9,000 miles that separate the United States and Australia with the friendship of shared experiences and realization and application of common goals and interests.
Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, as we listen to our constituents, grapple with their needs, speak out, legislate, and otherwise work to improve their lives and the life of our Nation, we take great pride in the ability of Congress and our system of government to inspire the world beyond our borders. But just as important as this inspiration is the recognition of what we all can learn from that world, from people who want to study, visit or otherwise immerse themselves in this great institution as a means towards better understanding the United States.

For the last 8 years, a unique international exchange has taken place here in Congress. Future leaders of Australia have participated in what's known as the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program. Through this program each year, one dozen of Australia's best and brightest university students have been carefully matched to House and Senate offices for two-month full-time internships. These internships have enabled me and many of my colleagues to share our pride in the American republic while at the same time learning more firsthand about the Australian commonwealth, its people, its ideas, and our numerous shared values.

It is an understatement to say that Australia and the United States are close allies globally or that we merely have such similarities as vibrant democracies, free-enterprise economies, and diverse societies. We are in many ways close cousins with complex national histories. That is what these young Australians get to learn as they are welcomed here, and how we profit by their all-too-brief presence among us.

This year, it has been my pleasure to participate in this program for the third time and host Sylvia Gaston from the University of Melbourne. Her kindness, can-do spirit, eagerness to learn, and willingness to share her views with me and my staff have made her an exceptional ambassador for her university and for her country. During her time with us, the closeness of the Australian and American peoples is clearly evident, just as it is evident that this exchange is not merely an academic exercise or even confined to Congress. It is about building for tomorrow, about personal and professional growth, and about lasting international friendships….

Madam Speaker, many of my colleagues have recognized this effort over the years. I did so myself 4 years ago when the annual intern group was much smaller and drawn from only a single Australian university. It is heartening to see how much this program has grown, thrived, and how tribute has been paid not just here but in the Australian Parliament….

My great hope is not only that this program continues, but that others will be founded in its spirit and focused towards as many peoples and places as possible in our world.

Senator Concetta FIERRAVANTI-WELLS (New South Wales) (12.47 p.m.)—I rise today to speak about a very interesting and important program for young Australians. University students from across Australia are being given an opportunity to intern in the United States Congress in Washington, DC through a program now known as the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program…. The success and growth of the program has been in large part due to the manner in which these young Australians have acquitted themselves in the US Congress. We should be proud of the way these students have served as ambassadors for themselves, for their universities and for Australia…. They have done this nation and the Australian people numerous proud acts of public service, which I hope will continue for many years to come….

There are so many common values between our two countries and yet there is such a huge physical distance between us which means that contacts between individuals can be very difficult to achieve. We see in our Prime Minister and President Bush the value of a solid professional and personal relationship. The relationships these students are developing are important, particularly because the future strength of the alliance between our two countries is not going to be just about economic and military relationships but is going to very much depend on the people to people strengths that will develop in us an understanding of each other. I congratulate the students who have already acted as ambassadors for our country and ensured the growth of this program. I would encourage future university students to utilise opportunities like this when they are made available to them.
Mr. Warren SNOWDON (Lingiari, Northern Territory) (4.49 p.m.)—Every year for the past seven years, students from around Australia have undertaken a journey, travelling halfway around the world, often at their own expense, in order to learn about another culture, to witness another system of government and to work as part of the United States Congress. The students undertake this journey as part of the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program, a program which offers university students around Australia the chance to undertake an eight-week internship in a congressional office in Capitol Hill, Washington DC.…

The Program facilitates this by enabling the formation of genuine friendships and the exchange of views and ideas between the Australian interns and their respective offices. I have often enjoyed the interaction that has occurred between my Australian and American interns. This, my colleagues, is how we build relationships which will ensure that the U.S. and Australia remain friends and allies for years to come.…

Programs like this give young Australians a once in a lifetime opportunity. This program provides students with a strong interest in civics and in progressing and developing our nation further through new ideas and new policies with an avenue through which to gain invaluable skills, knowledge and understanding and experience that will help them achieve their goals and, in turn, make their own contribution for the benefit of others.

Young Australians will go on to work all around the globe in a variety of fields and careers, as we know. It is important, however, that we have programs that offer dedicated students who have an interest in public service and public office places where they can come to learn and experience. We need to continue to foster such educational and employment opportunities so that we can continue to have a strong and vibrant pool of individuals who are equipped to represent and work for the Australian public.

I commend the many people who have made such a program possible—the congressional hosts, the variety of people and organisations that have taken time to meet and help the students during their stay, the universities involved in the program and the program coordinators who make this possible. Without their help and the help of many others, this opportunity would not be available to our students.…