THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

Native American Political Leadership Program

www.naplp.gwu.edu

About the Program

NAPLP STUDENTS MEET WITH U.S. CONGRESSMAN TOM COLE (R-OK), MEMBER OF THE CHICKASAW NATION.

The Native American Political Leadership Program (NAPLP) is an academic scholarship program designed specifically for Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Funded by the AT&T Foundation and run concurrently with the George Washington University's Semester in Washington Politics program, NAPLP offers Native American college students from across the country the opportunity to study in Washington, DC, in order to learn how public policy decisions are made, how power is wielded, how government is run, and how democratic politics functions in a free society. The program involves rigorous coursework in applied politics, hands-on professional internships, development of relationships with mentors, and interaction with Washington's political and policy decision-makers and leaders in the Native American political community.

The objective of the program is to create a corps of trained, sophisticated, young Native American leaders with the skills, outlook, and contacts necessary to generate and sustain change both in Washington and in their local communities. NAPLP alumni have returned to their communities knowing what it takes to win elections, form coalitions, pass legislation, and influence public opinion. They leave the program better informed about how politics works and how to influence political processes. It is our belief that these future leaders will become highly successful in implementing the government-to-government consultation that is an integral part of the developing relationship between their power structures and the U.S. federal and state governments.

Students accepted to participate receive scholarships that cover tuition and fees for core coursework, on-campus housing, the cost of books, transportation to and from Washington, DC, and a stipend for living expenses. More than 100 students have completed the program to date. **They have come from 30 states and represent more than 50 Native American and Alaska Native tribes and communities, as well as Native Hawaiians.**

Our alumni are working in advocacy groups such as the National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Health Board, as staffers on Capitol Hill, and in law firms specializing in Native American issues. Several have gone on to graduate schools and law schools; two have completed graduate work at Harvard; one is enrolled at Yale; and a couple have run for state office.

Coursework

The program is built around two core courses for which students earn academic credit:

Electoral and Legislative Processes

This course explores how political decisions are made in the electoral and legislative arenas, and how advocates can successfully influence those decisions as they seek to elect people to public office, move public opinion, or implement a legislative agenda.

Practicum in Political Management and Community Organizing

This course offers a "current events" focus in which students work with a practicum leader drawn from the national professional community as they develop strategic plans for organizing around key issues.

Mentorships

NAPLP offers each incoming student a mentor, here in Washington, DC, who is not part of the teaching or administrative arms of the program. Drawn primarily from Native American professional circles (including the Native American Bar Association) and alumni of either Semester in Washington Politics or our sister program, the Graduate School of Political Management, these mentors serve as advisors and networking anchors for our students.

"The program opened many doors for me, I witnessed where Native representation is desperately needed, and I began picturing different career opportunities that would allow me to serve my tribal community and other Native people."

– Jessica Koski (Keweenaw Bay Indian, Michigan)

Internships

NAPLP students participate in a variety of internships. We have also made several other opportunities available to students who have the time and interest, including participating in the Annual Legislative Conference of the National Indian Education Association, the Native American Society Inaugural Ball, the Annual Meeting of the National Congress of American Indians, and the Annual State of Indian Nations Address.

CHARLAYNE HOLLIDAY, CLASS OF 2008, WITH THEN-U.S. SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (D-IL).

Past internships include:

American Foreign Policy Council
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Indian Education
Cherokee Nation Washington Office
Chickasaw Nation
Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement
Department of Transportation
Hillary Clinton for President
International Trade Administration
Meridian International Center
Middle East Institute
National American Indian Housing Council
National Congress of American Indians
National Council of Urban Indian Health
National Indian Education Association
National Indian Gaming Association
Office of Hawaiian Affairs
U.S. Congressman Dan Boren (D-OK)
U.S. Congressman Louie Gohmert (R-TX)
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
U.S. Senator Barack Obama (D-IL)
U.S. Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL)
U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI)
U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT)
U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO)
U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)
U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)
U.S. Senator Edward E. Kaufman (D-DE)
U.S. Senator Harry Reid (D-NV)
U.S. Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI)
U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
U.S. Senator Jon Tester (D-MT)
U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman (ID-CT)
U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
U.S. Senator Mark Udall (D-CO)
U.S. Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI)
U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA)
U.S. Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ)
U.S. Senator Tom Udall (D-NM)

Joint Senate Internship Program

The Native American Political Leadership Program (NAPLP) at the George Washington University and the office of U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) have developed a joint Senate internship program. Senator Reid's commitment to expanding educational opportunities and diversifying Senate staff is longstanding. His office reached out to NAPLP in the fall of 2007 to encourage young Native American leaders to consider careers in government, specifically on Capitol Hill.

Senator Reid's office has placed future Native leaders at internships in various offices and committees on Capitol Hill. As proof of the Senator's visionary leadership, many have begun the process of getting back in those offices full-time upon graduation, including one student who was hired to join Senator Reid's staff. The Native American Political Leadership Program is grateful for the support Senator Reid has shown to our program and the entire Native community. NAPLP looks forward to placing more students in the halls of Congress as this cooperative venture continues.

"I am so pleased with the success of the Native American Political Leadership Program. The participants of this program are some of our most promising young leaders who will combine the lessons they learn through this internship with their rich life experiences to help improve our country. We look forward to welcoming more Native leaders to Senate internships in the future."

– U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV)

Semester in Washington Politics

NAPLP is run in partnership with GW's Semester in Washington Politics program. Like NAPLP, SIWP provides educational experiences in political coursework, internships, and networking, but to a broader audience. Together, NAPLP and SIWP reach out across the world to educate and empower our emerging political leaders.

NAPLP STUDENTS MEET WITH U.S. SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI (R-AK).

Networking Events

A significant component of the program is a series of professional networking events held throughout the semester. The goal of these events is to literally introduce our students to the decision-makers and opinion leaders who make Washington work.

Past networking events include:

Antonin Scalia, Associate Justice, U.S. Supreme Court

Barry Jackson, Chief of Staff, Speaker of the House John Boehner

Canadian Embassy

Chuck Todd, NBC News, White House Correspondent and Political Director

Democratic National Committee Winter Meeting

Family Research Council

Human Rights Campaign

Mayor Adrian Fenty (Washington, DC)

Michael Toner, Former Chairman, Federal Election Commission

Microsoft

Mike Adams, Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel, Republican Governors Association

National Museum of the American Indian's Cultural Resources Center

POLITICO

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Associate Justice, U.S. Supreme Court

Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice, U.S. Supreme Court

The Pentagon

The White House

Tom Brooks, Vice President, AT&T

Tom McMahon, Executive Director, Democratic National Committee

U.S. Congressman Tom Cole (R-OK)

U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA)

U.S. Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI)

U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI)

U.S. Senator Mark Begich (D-AK)

U.S. Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS)

"Through my participation in SIWP's Native American Political Leadership Program, I not only became significantly more engaged in politics, but I also gained the confidence, knowledge, and skills that have helped me to become a more effective leader. The experience of being out of my comfort zone and the relationships I built with others from around the nation also contributed to the tremendous amount of professional and personal growth I experienced."

– Krislyn Mossman (Native Hawaiian, Hawaii)

NAPLP STUDENTS SHARE STORIES ABOUT THEIR DC EXPERIENCE WITH AT&T EXECUTIVES.

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