



NEW YORK STATE SENATE UNDERGRADUATE SESSION ASSISTANTS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION — 2017

Sponsored by the New York State Senate since 1978

Thursday, January 12, 2017 through Wednesday, April 26, 2017

Enrollment is on-site at the New York State Senate in Albany, New York

The Senate Application Deadline is Friday, October 28, 2016

(Applicants should check with their Campus Liaison Officer (CLO) for their exact deadline date, as it may be earlier.)

Announcement of Selections - Mid-November 2016



■ **The Program** – The Senate Undergraduate Session Assistants Program offers approximately 30 undergraduate students an opportunity to experience state government and the legislative process through their participation in an on-site, academic enriching and career building work experience. **Typically, up to 15 credit hours** are awarded by most participating SUNY, CUNY, and independent colleges and universities, and students receive a **\$5,025 stipend**.

■ **Eligibility** – The Applicant must be a **United States citizen, and enrolled and matriculated in an accredited undergraduate degree program at a college or university located in New York State**. The program is designed for college juniors and seniors, though exceptional sophomores may occasionally be selected. **Freshmen are ineligible**. Students must be enrolled full-time in the previous spring and current fall semester/trimester, possess a **3.0 grade point average or better**, and meet their college/university requirements for off-campus study. A student's eligibility status must be certified by their **CLO, Academic Advisor, Chairman, Dean or other duly authorized campus personnel**. Majors in all accredited disciplines are accepted; pursuit of a degree in history or political science is neither a prerequisite nor an advantage to selection. Academic achievement, personal initiative and an avid interest in learning, along with maturity and a strong work ethic, are essential for success.

■ **Campus Rules and Responsibilities** – Each student applying for a Senate Assistantship must contact **their CLO, Academic Advisor, Chairman, Dean or other duly authorized campus personnel** to determine: the requirements for off-campus study; if they are eligible to participate in such a program; the amount of credit they may receive for such participation; and the identity of their on-campus evaluator.

■ **College Credit** – The Senate does not and cannot award credit. **To be eligible, each applicant must be able to earn campus-awarded credit for participation in the program**. Advisement, evaluation, grading and granting of credit are the responsibility of on-campus faculty. Such faculty is responsible for academic planning, tracking, and evaluation of student participation based upon the Director of Student Program's confidential written evaluation of the student's performance. Owing to the demands of the on-site program, the Senate imposes **a limit of six (6) additional classroom credits** pursued outside the program during enrollment.



Nicholas J. Parrella, M.A., Director
NYS Senate Office of Student Programs

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www.nysenate.gov/student-programs

How To Apply

Upon receipt of approval for off-campus study, the applicant must complete and submit an application along with required documents to their CLO, who will remit the approved application to the Senate Student Programs Office. An application consists of the following:

- ❑ **A completed Undergraduate Session Assistants Application Form;**
- ❑ **Official Transcripts of all collegiate work;**
- ❑ **A one-page resume;**
- ❑ **Three confidential letters of reference from persons familiar with the applicant's academic abilities and professional aptitude;**
- ❑ **A listing of three (3) legislative policy area preferences;**
- ❑ **A six to eight (6-8) page paper or essay;**
- ❑ **Two one-page memoranda (a policy proposal and rebuttal);**
- ❑ **Personal Statement;**
- ❑ **Certification of current coursework; and**
- ❑ **Signed Student Statement.**

Placement

Senate Undergraduate Session Assistants are assigned to a Senator's office and work full-time in these placements. Placements relate to the student's experience, abilities and interests to the extent that these are compatible with Senate needs. Every attempt is made to provide Session Assistants with their policy preference or with a comparable placement. Specific



work assignment responsibilities are assigned to each Session Assistant by their Placement Supervisor, and are reviewed by the Senate Student Programs Office. Such duties may include: short-term research; responding to constituent correspondence and other requests; tracking legislation; preparing bill memos; attending and reporting on committee meetings and public hearings; and attending meetings with lobbyists and other interest groups.

Stipend and Work Hours

The Senate awards a \$5,025 stipend to offset the costs of moving to and living in Albany. The stipend is paid in biweekly installments and is subject to payroll lag and other current payroll guidelines, including taxation. The stipend will be prorated through the last day of each individual enrollment.

Session Assistants are required to work a minimum of 35 hours per week or 70 hours per biweekly pay period. Due to the nature of legislative work, longer hours may sometimes be necessary and are to be expected during some portions of the Undergraduate Session Assistants Program. Additionally, Session Assistants must work through the last scheduled date of the Program in order to receive the full and timely payment of their final biweekly stipend check.

Housing

Arranging for personal housing in Albany is the responsibility of the student. The Senate does not provide for and is not responsible for identifying suitable housing. Following acceptance into the Senate Session Assistants Program, students are encouraged to utilize resources such as Capital District local newspapers (e.g. Times Union, Troy Record, Daily Gazette), online sources (e.g. Craigslist and area classified ads), local academic institutions (e.g. SUNY at Albany, and the College of St. Rose), and public libraries.

THE MARGARET J. HUGHES MEMORIAL FUND SCHOLARSHIP

Margaret J. “Maggie” Hughes served with distinction as deputy director of the Washington Office of the State of New York, as a special assistant to Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller, and with the Washington Office of the New York State Senate.

Those who knew Maggie remember her wise, patient, and caring attention to others, especially with youth. Interns and young staffers found in Maggie not just a knowledgeable resource, but also a friend whose guidance was unparalleled.

In Maggie’s honor, the New York State Senate is proud to continue The Margaret J. Hughes Memorial Scholarship Fund. Each year, one deserving Undergraduate Session Assistant will have the opportunity to win a \$1,000 scholarship award for upholding the values and commitment to public service for which Maggie was well known.

Candidates will be evaluated on overall internship performance, written communication skills, and their commitment to serving the public with integrity. Applications for the Margaret J. Hughes Memorial Fund Scholarship will be made available in early March, and one recipient will be chosen at the end of the Undergraduate Session Assistants Program in April.



Orientation and Program

Upon arrival, students participate in an orientation program that presents the rudiments of legislative purpose, procedure, and culture. All placements are arranged by the Office of Student Programs only.

Weekly seminars introduce focused procedural topics and key participants, and may include reading/writing/speaking assignments. A major paper may be expected.

Model Legislative Session allows students to experience, firsthand, the lawmaking process, including drafting, negotiating, and debating/voting on original student legislation. Historically, it is the culminating program activity.

Students must maintain frequent contact with their campus advisors throughout the program.



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