

Washington Semester



Overview

The Washington Semester program, offered by Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs, integrates professional and academic experiences in ways that foster effective learning. The program, located in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, across the Potomac River from the nation's capital, is open to upper level undergraduate students, regardless of major. It is of special relevance to students with career interests in law, politics, public management, public policy, nonprofit organization and management. Participants receive twelve hours of academic credit for the program.

The eleven-week program provides students the opportunity to acquire professional experience in a governmental agency or other relevant enterprise in the for-profit or nonprofit sectors. In addition to their internships, participants complete a seminar designed to help them better understand their field experience as an example of the types of challenges and issues they will likely encounter over their professional careers.

Relevance to STEM Majors

The Washington, D.C. region has a growing number of professional positions in the fields of science and technology.

According to a recent report, "Five sectors, consisting of multiple occupations, will account for 72.3 percent of Northern Virginia's net new jobs between 2010 and 2020. One sector—professional, scientific and technical services—alone is projected to account for 41 percent of all net new jobs, a greater percentage than the next four largest sources of workforce demand combined."¹

Table 1: Five Major Sector Sources of Net New Job Growth In Northern Virginia, 2010-2020

Sector	2010	2010-2020	% Change	% of All New Jobs
Prof., Scientific, Tech	316,175	124,157	39.2	40.
Health Care	107,377	32,113	30.0	10.6
Government	243,555	29,454	12.1	9.7
Admin Support	94,639	18,421	19.5	6.4
Real Estate Services	66,022	15,239	23.1	5.0
Total 5 Sector of All Jobs	827,768	219,384	26.5	72.3
Total All Jobs	1,509,110	1,812,383	20.1	

Many Virginia Tech STEM alums are working today in science and technology policy positions in the public sector and others have worked in policymaking positions as part of their professional experience at some time during their careers.

¹ Fuller, S. S. (2011). The Future of the Northern Virginia Economy. George Mason University. http://cra.gmu.edu/pdfs/research_reports/recent_reports/Future%20of%20NVA%20Economy.pdf. Accessed March 27, 2013. Chart source: EMSI and GMU Center for Regional Analysis. LQ = ratio of the local job share to its national sector.

Curriculum

Students enroll for all courses listed below for the 1st summer session. This 12-hour program is an overload for 1st summer session. Each student must get permission from his/her Dean's office in order to add the overload hours.

- PSCI 4314 Senior Seminar in Political Institutions
- PSCI or UAP 4624 The Washington Semester: Seminar in Politics and Public Policy
- PSCI or UAP 4644 The Washington Semester: Politics, Policy and Administration in a Democracy
- UAP 4964 - Field Study - OR - PSCI 4754 - Internship