



A Program of

WIPPS

WISCONSIN INSTITUTE *for*
PUBLIC POLICY *and* SERVICE

2017 Report

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2017 Washington Seminar Program Participants

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Washington Seminar 2017 Report



I. Background

Declining trust in government, politicians, and political processes generally—combined with a growing body of evidence that traditional measures of civic knowledge among young people is waning—are an established part of today’s public narrative.¹ This does not mean young people are uninterested in politics or the future of their nation and government.² If anything, they are often discouraged because of a perceived inability to influence outcomes and by the absence of pathways to participation. The creation of the Washington Seminar by the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS), offered as a three-credit course through the UW Colleges’ Department of Political Science, is an effort to open windows and doors for college students by providing opportunities to engage with and learn from policymakers at the state and national levels.

II. Purpose and Goals

While students at UW-Madison are able to participate in Washington, D.C.-based learning programs semi-annually, tens of thousands of students at other colleges and universities in Wisconsin—both public and private—have no regular program of study in the nation’s capital.³ The Washington Seminar is designed as a study-away learning opportunity for students who do not normally enjoy structured learning experiences beyond their classroom or local community, let alone outside of Wisconsin. The program is open to all students in good standing, including promising students from at-risk backgrounds, such as first generation, low income, and minority college students. The broad goals of the Washington Seminar include:

1. Increase student knowledge about how institutions of government, interest groups, media and other forces influence decision makers and affect policy formation.
2. Motivate students to become more active participants in the civic life and leaders in their communities, state and nation.
3. Help students progress on their journey of self-development from a focus on the self to an understanding of their role in—and relationship to—a larger, more complex world.
4. Begin an exploration of career possibilities and the connection between career options and public policy.



¹ See, for example, Constance A. Flanagan, Peter Levine, “Civic Engagement and the Transition to Adulthood,” *The Future of Children*, Vol. 1, No. 20 (Spring 2010), 159-179.

² Constance A. Flanagan, Peter Levine and Richard Settersten, *Civic Engagement and the Changing Transition to Adulthood*, CIRCLE monograph, January 2009.

³ No public university in Wisconsin outside of UW-Madison offers regular learning experiences in Washington, D.C.

III. 2017 Course

A. Course Overview

The Washington Seminar public policy course is a hybrid learning experience. The course begins online with selected readings and assignments. Students then meet face-to-face in Madison and Washington, D.C. for traditional classroom activities as well as close interaction with policymakers. After returning home, students finish various assignments online.

B. Course Schedule

The schedule for 2017 occurred as follows:

- a. Course began online May 23 and ended July 10, 2017
- b. From May 30-June 3, students met face-to-face in Madison, Wisconsin
- c. From June 3-June 17, students met face-to-face in Washington, D.C.
- d. From June 17-July 10, the course resumed online

C. Course Assignments

Students were expected to complete the following assignments as part of the public policy course:

- a. Daily reading from a credible news source
- b. Additional assigned readings related to course topics
- c. Three short papers: an article review, a book review, and a guest lecture review
- d. A policy paper on a topic of student interest
- e. Daily original blog entries and response posts and a final reflective blog post

D. Course Instruction

The course was co-taught by the following instructors:



Eric Giordano, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Political Science
UW Colleges
Director, WIPPS



Paul Carver, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor of Political Science
UW Colleges
Senior Fellow, WIPPS



IV. Seminar Highlights

A. Landmark Site Visits

- Arlington National Cemetery
- Lincoln Memorial
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Monument
- Mount Vernon
- National Botanical Gardens
- National Korean War Memorial
- National Vietnam War Memorial
- National World War II Memorial
- Smithsonian
- Theodore Roosevelt Island
- Union Station
- U.S. Capitol & Visitors Center
- Washington, DC War Memorial
- Washington Monument
- Washington Nationals Stadium
- Watergate Building
- Wisconsin State Capitol



B. Policy Site visits

- American Association of Retired Persons
- American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- Congressional Management Foundation
- Corporation for National & Community Services
- Democratic National Committee
- Offices of Godfrey & Kahn
- Hart Senate Office Building
- Library of Congress
- Longworth Building
- National Cooperative Business Association
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- National Milk Producers Federation
- National Press Club
- NeighborWorks
- Office of the Governor of Wisconsin
- Public Citizen
- Rayburn Building
- Russell Building
- The Monocle – Wispolitics event
- U.S. House of Representatives Speaker's Office
- U.S. Institute of Peace
- U.S. Supreme Court
- Washington Post
- Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
- Wisconsin Supreme Court



V. Seminar Speakers/Panelists

Ray Allen Secretary Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development	Elise Bean Former Chief Counselor U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations	Tammy Baldwin U.S. Senator Wisconsin
Janet Bewley Wisconsin State Senator 29 th Senate District	Stephen Blakeley Director of Communications and Managing Editor Employee Benefit Research Institute	Ellis A. Brachman Chief Communications Officer National and International Outreach The Library of Congress
Ann Walsh Bradley Justice Wisconsin Supreme Court	Evan Bradtke Senior Policy Advisor Office of Governor Walker	Thomas J. Cassidy, Jr. Vice President Government Relations & Policy National Trust for Historic Preservation
Ann-Louise Colgan Director, Public Education U.S. Institute of Peace	Amy Coughenour Betancourt COO, International National Cooperative Business Association	Ray Cross President University of Wisconsin System
Jason Culotta Senior Director of Government Relations Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce	Andrew Evenson Legislative Liaison Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development	Miles Fernandez Director, Office of the Secretary Democratic National Committee
Bradford Fitch President & CEO Congressional Management Foundation	Mike Gallagher U.S. House of Representatives 8 th District of Wisconsin	Anne Gearan Diplomatic Correspondent The Washington Post
Timothy Gearan Senior Legislative Rep. Government Affairs AARP	Glen Grothman U.S. Congress 6 th District of Wisconsin	Tom Harnisch Dir. State Relations & Policy Analysis American Association of State Colleges and Universities
James Hohmann National Political Correspondent The Washington Post	Ryan Horton Fiscal Analyst Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau	Ron Johnson U.S. Senator Wisconsin
Kirsten T. Johnson-Obey Senior Vice President Public Policy & Leg. Affairs NeighborWorks America	Daniel Kelly Justice Wisconsin Supreme Court	Becky Kikkert Policy Advisor Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Ron Kind U.S. Congress 3 rd District of Wisconsin	Bryan Kirschbaum Exec. Policy & Budget Analyst WI Department of Administration	Debra Kolste Wisconsin State Representative 44 th District
Jeff Mayers President Wispolitics	Emily Meredith Chief of Staff National Milk Producers Federation	Kellen A. Moore Manager, Legislative Affairs Public Policy & Leg. Affairs NeighborWorks America
Jim Mulhern President & CEO National Milk Producers Federation	Bill Murat Chief of Staff Tammy Baldwin U.S. Senator, Wisconsin	Dave Obey Former Congressman 7 th district of Wisconsin
Doug O'Brien Executive VP for Programs National Business Cooperative Association	Jerry Petrowski Wisconsin State Senator 29 th District	Mark Pocan U.S. Congress 2 nd District of Wisconsin
Emily Pope Fiscal Analyst Legislative Fiscal Bureau Wisconsin State Legislature	Romaine Quinn Wisconsin State Representative 75 th Assembly District	Zach Ramirez Staff Attorney Wisconsin Legislative Council
Janis Ringhand Wisconsin State Senator 15 th District	Lon Roberts Commissioner Public Service Commission of Wisconsin	Brendan K. Rose Senior Legislative Rep. Government Affairs AARP
Matt Rothschild Executive Director Wisconsin Democracy Campaign	Anne Sappenfield Special Assistant. to the State Auditor WI Legislative Audit Bureau	Nathan Schwanz Office of John Nygren Wisconsin State Representative 89th Assembly District
Sandy Scott Sr. Advisor to the CEO State Commission Liaison Corporation for National & Community Services	James F. Sensenbrenner, Jr. U.S. Congress 5 th District of Wisconsin	Pat Snyder Wisconsin State Representative 85 th Assembly District
Will Stone Partner Capstone National Partners	Paul Strauss U.S. Senator District of Columbia	John Torres VP of PR & Communication National Cooperative Business Association
Sam Watters Legislative Assistant Congressman Sean Duffy 7 th District of Wisconsin	Zach Wyatt Legislative Attorney WI Legislative Reference Bureau	Lori Wallach Director Global Trade Watch Public Citizen



VI. Student Participants



Thornton Albertz

UW-Fond du Lac

Sophomore – Political Science (Pre-Law)

The Washington Seminar was . . . a life changing experience. It was my first time out of the Midwest. It was an amazing opportunity for me not only to learn from individuals with the drive and the know-how to make it into public service, but also to break out of my bubble that is my small town of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin and connect with others who have different life experiences than me but similar ambitions and values.

My biggest take away was a renewed sense of hope.

All of the processes and actors we encountered are way more sophisticated and teeming than what I had previously imagined. From how bills move through committees, to all the oversight safeguards, to staffer's workloads and clout. Corruption is rejected and our political processes are functional. Guest lecturers presented us with the data to back up these claims and expel many of the myths and falsehoods that I held to be true. Congressional members actually spend a minimum amount of time fundraising for reelection and do care about their constituent's needs and best interests. I also believed that with power comes luxury, thus people would cling to power for as long as they can. However, after meeting many of these representatives, seeing how painstakingly busy and principled they are, I do not find that to be the case.

On that similar note, some of Professor Paul Carver's first words stuck with me for the better, "Don't be cynical. It will do you no good. Be skeptical not cynical." That is the new approach I am going to use when looking at current events. It is too easily stay within a certain echo chamber, a certain viewpoint, or a certain party. I can only speak for myself when I say that I cannot live life

like that and I suspect many other Americans are also done with the resentment and partisanship that had not only overtaken the Capitol building, but across the country. Only cynicism makes fellow Americans fight each other in the streets over political differences. This is a reoccurring theme that we have frequently seen since the November 2016 election. There is little trust for each other or our institutions these days. If we do not trust our systems, our democracy then no matter who is in power cynicism prevails. Be skeptical of the drivers but trust the engine.

“My biggest take away was a renewed sense of hope. All the processes and actors we encountered are way more sophisticated and teeming than what I had previously imagined.”



Timothy Certain

UW-Barron County

Sophomore – History and Political Science

I had an unexpected “experience” sharing three weeks of my life with an eclectic group of millennials, who spanned the gamut of backgrounds and personalities. It is my experience that opportunities to interact with total strangers with a common goal for a limited time are rare and can be in some cases a transformative experience. In addition to the learning objectives listed in the syllabus, we discussed a variety of subjects that gave me a new perspective on the actual process of policymaking and the roles that comprise the process. One of the not so subtle characteristics of the program was the intentional



“Overall, money well spent for an experience of a lifetime.”

scheduling to try to emulate the hustle bustle and energy level of the capitol. From the moment I stepped out to get an early morning coffee on the first day, I could immediately feel a level of “energy” that permeated the air. Rush! Rush! Rush! Hurry! Hurry! This energy level was reflected in the culture of the city. One of the locals called it “Potomac Fever.” I believe several of

our young members, may have been bitten by this bug. It was fun to watch them realize, “Hey, I can do this!” Overall, money well spent for an experience of a lifetime. I have no doubt that someone from this group will make a significant difference in people’s lives in the future.



Qing Gong

UW-River Falls

Junior – Sociology

Because of my parents’ negative attitudes toward politics, I assumed that my peers and older generations did not care about politics. I blamed my government and the Chinese political system which separates people from their civic responsibilities and rights. After talking with people who work in government, it is true that people in China have more restraints compared to the U.S., but the will to get involved in politics is similar, especially among the younger generation. The Washington Seminar is very good opportunity for students from anywhere to understand how the government works. Meeting with congressional

members and their staffs helps give perspective on the policymaking process. But things do not appear the same in reality compared to what we have read in textbooks. Real situations are more complex. Students need more information and opportunities to express their ideas effectively. What I appreciated most was how each speaker told us about their personal backgrounds and experiences that helped them get to where they are today. I realized that politics is not what I see on TV every day—only people in high social stations who know the rules and play the game. I learned that politics actually works with people from various types of backgrounds and knowledge.

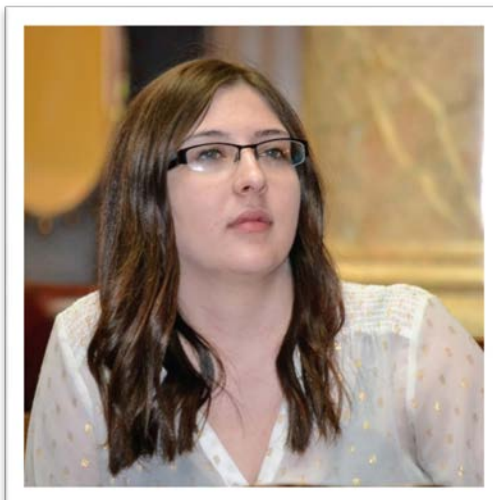


Miranda Hartje

Marquette University

Sophomore – Political Science

My main goal going into this experience was to see multiple sides of issues from educated sources. Meeting with both Democrats and Republicans, I pledged to keep an open mind and listen to what both parties had to say. In Madison, I witnessed a variety of mixed party panels. Although there was a little banter here and there, the speakers seemed to genuinely like one another and were quite respectful. They allowed one another to speak their piece and remained civil, even when they did not agree. In Washington D.C., the overall feel was different. I realized that a lot of groups are acting or voting strictly based on their ideological viewpoint and are not reflecting the broader view of constituents. But the meeting with my congressman, Jim Sensenbrenner, was an exception. Because he has been in office for many years, I thought he would be an old, die-hard, traditional conservative. I was surprised to find that he really seems to have his district in mind and follows what his constituents encourage. And he does not just vote the party line on every issue—he actually takes the time to hear both sides and votes for what he believes to be correct. I think that is what every politician should be doing. Overall, the meetings were incredibly insightful and instructive. Up until I went to D.C. I believed our system of government was highly corrupt. Although I learned our government is imperfect, I don't think the people who work in government get enough credit.



Keshawn Hereford

UW-Rock County

Freshman – Political Science

The Washington Seminar was an experience that I will never forget. The opportunity to speak with policymakers from wide-ranging perspectives was incredible. I was impressed that most of the people we talked with were interested in improving the human condition. To hear policy-makers debate their points without constantly shouting over and interrupting one another was refreshing. I also appreciated the opportunity to interact with policymakers and leaders such as UW System President Ray Cross and Jason Culotta from Wisconsin Manufacturing and Commerce. But the greatest highlight was the unlikely encounter I had with

Senator Bernie Sanders. For him to actually stop and speak with someone who wasn't even one of his constituents was unexpected. During our conversation, I asked for an opportunity to intern with him. Although he rarely accepts younger interns, he told me to come back to his office and speak with his intern coordinator. The next day I went to his office and was offered a paid internship.

“During our conversation, I asked for an opportunity to intern with [Bernie Sanders]. . . . The next day I went to his office and was offered a paid internship.”



Dylan Janssen

UW-Fox Valley

Sophomore – Political Science, Pre-Law

When I signed up for this course I was looking to learn about government. In hindsight, I underestimated how much more I would receive educationally and experientially. Meeting with state officials, Supreme Court judges, and lobbyists has inspired me to get involved in state politics. While in Madison I had the chance to really explore the city. I got to experience the local restaurants and see some of the local hangouts. Those small things really added to the trip and helped me get to know my classmates as well. In D.C. we met with most of the congressional delegation from Wisconsin, including my congressman, Mike Gallagher. I would not trade this experience for anything as I got to see behind the curtain and ask policymakers serious questions. I also enjoyed meeting with lobbyists, congressional committee members, and even representatives from different interest groups. These visits provided context and helped me understand there are more moving pieces to policymaking than I realized. One of



“ One of the big takeaways for me is that as a citizen I need to be involved with politics. I knew that beforehand but this course took it to a whole new level.”

the big takeaways for me is that as a citizen I need to be involved with politics. I knew that beforehand but this course took it to a whole new level. Overall, this is a great program that is conducted by great people. This truly was a once in a lifetime experience.

**Javana Villarreal**

UW-Rock County

Freshman – Business

My goal in coming on the Washington Seminar was to gain knowledge about political processes to enhance my business degree. I am particularly concerned about environmental issues and I was seeking to learn about policymaking generally so I can eventually open a business with an understanding of political challenges I may face. This course delivered on these goals and much more. One highlight of the trip was discovering that former FBI director James Comey would be testifying before the Senate Intelligence Committee regarding conversations he had with President

Trump. Several of us woke up early that morning and stood in line to attend the hearing. Although we ended up watching it in an overflow room of the Hart Building, the experience helped me see how politics can play out in a very public way. While exciting, the hearing revealed a dysfunctional relationship in our highest offices. All in all the hearing brought the good and bad aspects of politics to the forefront of my attention. Throughout the trip, we had the opportunity to meet with many people that influence policy, including members of the Wisconsin congressional delegation. I was impressed that Congressmen Mark Pocan and James Sensenbrenner, though political opposites, both agreed that the current political divide is caused as much by tensions within each party as it is between the two parties.



Yongha (Eric) Hwang

UW-Barron County

Sophomore – Industrial Engineering and Political Science

Before I participated in the Washington Seminar course, because of my experience in my home country of South Korea, I always believed that most policies are decided by government officials and law makers who have been corrupted and who only cooperate with each other for political gain. When I watched movies about politics in the United States, I often saw scenes where politicians received black money from major companies for opposing governmental regulation of corporate interests. So, one of my goals for participating in this course was to learn the laws and the political system in the U.S., as well as opportunities for political reform. I learned that there are many actors and factors that affect the policy-making process. However, I soon realized that the way to change the political world is not only to reform the laws and system but also to change the political culture.



During the trip, we learned about policymaking processes from guest speakers with a variety of perspectives including conservative, liberal and progressive views. For example, we talked about minimum wage, health care, increasing defense costs and climate change, handling each subject in all its aspects, and discussing them with a variety of professionals through group and one-on-one conversations. It was a great opportunity to better understand how policies are actually made. Before the trip I believed that most lobbyists were corrupt, using dark money as their political currency. However, in speaking with

“This trip is the best experience I have had in my 19 years of life. Every moment became part of my classroom because I was constantly sharing my opinions with my classmates who came from different places, represented different backgrounds and expressed different viewpoints.”

lobbyists during the class, I learned that most are fighting for clients who seek to make the system better or to enact political-cultural reform. During the trip I also came to conclude that young people should participate more in political processes in various ways. We can join a political party, support candidates for election, donate to one or the other camp and even run for office as a candidate. I realized that making our voice heard is the most effective way to share our thoughts and put those thoughts into actions.

This trip is the best experience I have had in my 19 years of life. Every moment became part of my classroom experience because I was constantly sharing my opinions with my classmates who came from different places, represented different backgrounds and expressed different viewpoints. We were constantly discussing matters around us and struggling to persuade each other with our point of view. I think that these conversations are an important part of the class. Through this experience, we learned how to respect other people's opinions and search for a better way. I really hope that other students have an opportunity to participate in this program regardless of their majors. It is not just a political science class. I guarantee that anyone who takes this class will learn more things than they expected.



Jessica Pacheco

UW-Rock County

Sophomore – Political Science, Pre-Law

Let me start by saying how thankful I am for this truly unbelievable experience. The knowledge I have received and the skills I have attained are priceless tools I will continue to utilize for the rest of my life. I have learned so much more about our government and its integral place in a functioning society because of WIPPS and the Washington Seminar. This hands-on learning approach to public policy has been the most beneficial course I have taken. Besides traditional scholarly knowledge, I have increased my confidence when it comes to my public speaking abilities and genuinely used this course as an opportunity for personal development. I

was apprehensive at first, being away from home/work for two weeks, but I really have fallen in love with D.C. and the energy of the city. I have found that what guest speaker Will Stone said is true: “The news is made in D.C.”

Starting our trip in Madison was an educational experience in state government. Meeting with members of the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly, and seeing them interact in their home environment, made a positive impression on me. My opinion of our legislators was at first very negative. I assumed they were all out of touch with their constituents. It was great to be able to meet with legislators such as Representatives Deb Kolste and Patrick Snyder who are truly passionate about public service. From our experiences in Madison my attitude going into the D.C. portion of the trip was more skeptical, but I made sure to be as nonpartisan as a progressive can be. I believe that is the best way to seek solutions. Bipartisanship and nonpartisanship were recurring themes in Madison and Washington. The overwhelming majority of the speakers we met with spoke of unifying parties for the common goal of our country’s well-being, and they all seemed to wish there was more cooperation in Congress. Democrats and Republicans alike are frustrated with the current administration and the “limbo” they are placed in, partially because of the budget impasse. Representative Glenn Grothman was one of the first speakers we met with to admit there are “a lot of problems at the national level.”

“The knowledge I have received and the skills I have attained are priceless tools I will continue to utilize for the rest of my life. . . . This hands-on learning approach to public policy has been the most beneficial course I have taken.”

During the trip I observed a disconnect between the people of Washington D.C. and the rest of the country. When you are surrounded by 24-hour television news and the small-town gossip that exists in the Midwest, it is difficult to ascertain truth from fiction. This leads to not only strong partisan divisions but the cultural/societal segmentation we are seeing across the country today. Washington seems to know the truth of the matter before it has a chance to be influenced by the media. But there is a major gap between what D.C. insiders know about our government and what Fox News/CNN portrays to the average rural citizen. Experiencing Capitol Hill and meeting with interest groups, lobbyists, and legislators really gave us an advantage in learning what is truly going on behind the scenes. I hope to bridge the gap (as much as possible) by sharing this learned experience with my peers and fellow citizens. I would recommend this course to anyone interested in public policy, public service, or American government in general. I want to extend my sincerest gratitude to all my fellow classmates and instructors. Thank you for the wonderful opportunity!

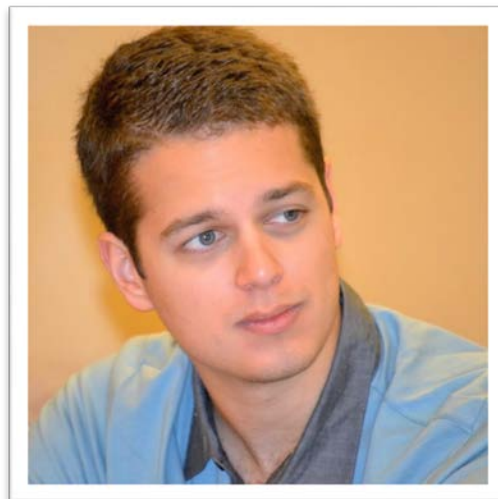


Royce Podeszwa

UW-Waukesha

Sophomore – Journalism

The WIPPS Washington Seminar program was the trip of a lifetime. I made some great new friends, got to explore our nation's historic capitol, and have an improved understanding and greater respect for how our government functions and those that make it work. I plan to use what I have learned on this trip to become more politically involved and to better my community back home. I cannot begin to express how great of an experience this class was, and I would highly recommend it to anyone even remotely interested in politics or history.

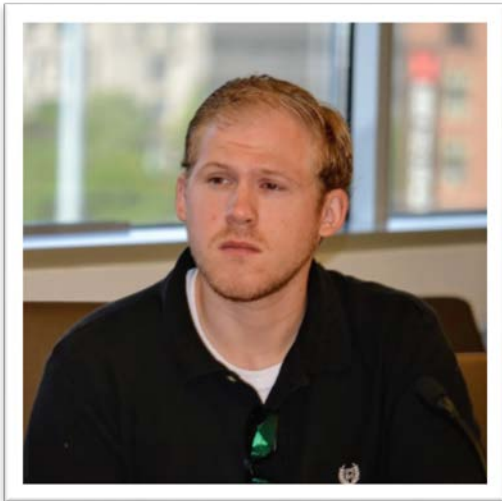


So what did I learn? Where do I even start? I learned a great many things on this trip. Not the least of which would be that those in government work are all just human beings like us. They aren't (usually) the buffoons or monsters they're portrayed to be during the campaign season. Government work is grueling and thankless. In many ways it reminds me of working back home at a bar. It takes a special kind of person to be able to serve the public. Even the politicians we met whom I disagree with, they still have logical explanations for why they take a particular stance on any issue. And at their core, they seem to believe they are doing what's right by the people they represent. Take lobbyists for example, I will admit that I knew very little about what it is they actually did before I took this trip. The Washington Seminar gave me the opportunity to actually meet with some of them, and to ask them about their jobs and career goals. While I'm sure there are some out there who are married to the greed of corporate interests, the ones we spoke to seemed human enough. Some of them were lifelong government workers who just needed some extra cash to put a kid through college. There's nothing demonizing about that. Nobody ever wants to be the villain in the story.

“This trip has opened up a whole new door of career opportunities for me that I scarcely could have imagined several months ago. To anyone considering going on this trip, sign up and sign up now.”

One of the greatest takeaways that I got out of the seminar is to become more politically active. I have always been a bit of a political junkie, but going on this trip has inspired me to take that interest to the next level. I have been and will continue to apply for internships both in D.C. and Madison. Before going on this trip, the thought of doing such a thing never even occurred to me. I had always assumed that in order to work in government, you would need a prestigious degree of some kind. After speaking with a great

number of staffers and representatives, I've learned that the most valuable asset of all on the Hill is hard work, which makes a lot of sense if you think about it. This trip has opened up a whole new door of career opportunities for me that I scarcely could have imagined several months ago. To anyone considering going on this trip, sign up and sign up now. You get to meet real policymakers and learn a great deal on our government and American history, all while exploring the wondrous city of D.C. You will make great new friendships and have memories that will last a lifetime. Not to mention the price of tuition is incredibly affordable for what you're getting. What's not to love? I just have one word of advice to any newcomers, bring some comfortable shoes.



Daniel Schlewitz

UW-Marathon County

Sophomore – Political Science, Pre-Law

I wasn't sure what to expect from the Washington Seminar course and was quite nervous about taking it. For the longest time I had wanted to be a police officer, but as a result of a sociology course on racism, I became interested in pursuing a career in public policy. There was a lot that intimidated me about making that choice. I was worried about my chances of being hired since I don't possess a 4.0 GPA. Also, I wasn't sure if I wanted to run for office or work in one and was nervous that without a law degree or successful background in business that I wouldn't be taken seriously as a political candidate someday. As a result of the

Washington Seminar, I know that none of these things are obstacles to a career in public service. You do not need to have a law degree, a 4.0, or a business background, you just need to be the hardest worker in the room. This was the consistently reinforced lesson about working in the public policy arena from all of the program speakers—the way you make it in politics is by giving it everything you have.

The Washington Seminar gave us otherwise unavailable opportunities not only to meet with lawmakers but also with their staff members. Furthermore, we got to meet with various non-governmental organization which allowed us to see what a career in public service might look like beyond government. Complementing all of this was a visit with several members of the media at the National Press Club. All combined, this gave us a very well-rounded view of policy-making at both the federal and state levels from multiple perspectives.

“I highly recommend the Washington Seminar for anyone contemplating a career in public service or related fields. . . . [This] program helped provide me with some very valuable connections and possible internship opportunities.”

I highly recommend the Washington Seminar program for anyone contemplating a career in public service or related fields. On top of the great opportunities to learn more about various careers in public service, the program helped provide me with some very valuable connections and possible internship opportunities. I'm currently working on getting an internship with Senator Tammy

Baldwin. This was only possible because I got to meet with and have a one-on-one conversation with her Chief of Staff at a private function organized by the program. My experience is not unique. Many students who participated in the Washington Seminar are also working on obtaining internships as a result of connections they made through the program.

The part that made me most nervous was being away from home for almost three weeks. Thankfully, I couldn't have asked for a better group of fellow student to share this experience with. Not only were they fantastic individuals but they were very diverse. We had liberals and conservatives, people from America, England, China, and South Korea, and on top of that we even had a much older and wiser nontraditional student. All of the meetings with policymakers made this a valuable experience, but getting to do it with this terrific group of people made it a truly priceless and life changing one.



Marino Taylor

UW-Marathon County

Sophomore – Political Science and Pre-Law

On the whole, the Washington Seminar has truly been an eye-opening experience on multiple accounts. For starters, this trip gave us access to important actors in both state and federal government that we would have otherwise not had. One of the most memorable moments at the state level was meeting with Justices Ann Walsh Bradley and Daniel Kelly. Both were excellent presenters and very articulate in portraying their judicial philosophy.

As the trip went on, I found it captivating listening to competing viewpoints on issues and realized that there were compelling and persuasive arguments to be had on both sides. I did not always agree with everything our guest speakers had to say, but I certainly gained a better understanding of how individuals have come to certain conclusions. Understanding opposing positions is almost, if not just as, important as understanding one's own. In a way, it even compels people to change or make alterations to their stance. That was perhaps one of the most beneficial components of the trip. We were exposed to unusually intelligent individuals who held different beliefs than ourselves. This proved to be an extraordinary opportunity, especially for those who properly took advantage of it. Too often people only expose themselves to content which reaffirms their already held beliefs, this is not only intellectually depreciating but possibly dangerous to society as a whole.

Another element of policy-making I knew little about before coming on this trip was lobbying. After meeting with several lobbyists, I have come away with the realization that the lobbying process is much more complicated than I originally anticipated, and in some cases even serves as a positive force. Lobbyists can help inform politicians in specific areas that they might not otherwise be aware of.

“I would highly advise any future students considering participating in this trip to do so. . . . Being in the midst of state and federal government gives one insight which can simply not be gained from reading a textbook.”

added so much to the trip and put so much time in preparation. I cannot thank them enough for all the work they have done to make this trip an extraordinary experience for everyone. On the whole, the people in this group were both inspiring and respectful, most disagreements carried out were done in a civil fashion and personal attacks seemed to be mostly avoided.



Lastly, I would highly advise any future students considering participating in this trip to do so. There were numerous “once in a lifetime” opportunities. Being in the midst of state and federal government gives one insight which can simply not be gained from reading a textbook. Even if one expresses little interest in politics, understanding the political process is as important as ever. Also, both professors



Monicca Winters

UW-Fox Valley

Sophomore – Elementary Education

A month ago, I perched myself at the kitchen table of my friend's house and asked her mother what she thought of the politics that have been consuming our daily lives. "I don't follow politics," she laughed it off, "it doesn't affect me." She didn't hesitate with her response, which I nearly envied. Perhaps life would be less stressful if I never thought twice about what the government did with my money, the laws or my rights. I could switch off the news, put down the book about politics, shred the newspaper and maybe, just maybe, I would never be concerned with how politics affects me.

When I hear people say that politics does not affect them, I wonder if they are avoiding truth. It's in the school systems that feed our minds, the food that's packaged in boxes and bags, the sidewalks I stomped in my dirty shoes across the streets of Washington D.C. It is no surprise that the same citizens who choose not to participate in politics are the same to turn around and complain when policies are not made in their favor. Our society has adopted the desire of instant gratification, with little motivation to work for the many things we want.

Stepping into Madison with a political lens gave me a unique perspective of the city. I noticed more men in suits, more women in heels and dresses, and the meetings we had in the Capitol gave the walls of the building a true meaning beyond the clichéd tourist feel I've had every other time I've stepped into the building. It was amazing to see the people behind all of the work; to get to know and speak with those who work so hard to accomplish goals for our state. Some of the people we met with I had never heard of. This made me realize that I am not doing my job as a Wisconsin citizen. I should be getting to know my representatives, sending them letters, and making my voice heard.

“The real game-changer was Washington, D.C. . . . Faces became names and names became inspirational people that each left their own mark on my thoughts and ideas.”

The real game-changer was Washington, D.C. With newspapers at every corner, politicians on every TV screen, and weaving through tourists to make the next meeting, I almost felt like I was tracing the steps of a politician. Faces became names and names became inspirational people that each left their own mark on my thoughts and ideas. Most policy-makers were passionate, devoted, and motivated. And though I highly disagreed with some of their opinions, I still

looked up to them for participating in work that they believe in. Their drive to accomplish tasks is extremely admirable. The group of people that we traveled with also helped make this trip exceptional. We were not all alike when it came to political ideology, which caused slight tension and disagreement, but we all had at least one thing in common: a passion for politics. We all had the desire to get an in-depth look at what happens in government.

After this program, I think about that conversation with my friend's mother. Sure, perhaps it would be easier to avoid politics altogether; to pretend it doesn't exist; to believe it doesn't affect me. But it is far too easy to turn a blind eye, and it is far too easy to complain when the government takes action I do not personally agree with. That is why it is important to be involved; to understand the government, to communicate with your representatives, to make your own voice heard. So, I will continue tune in to the news, I will keep the political book between my hands, and I will not send the newspaper through the shredder. After all, we are a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

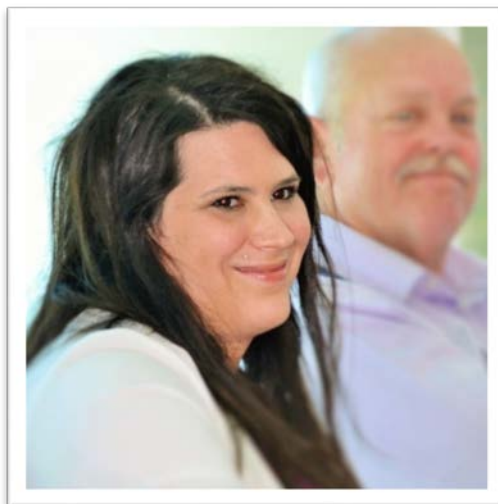


Courtney Zambon

UW-Green Bay

Senior – Political Science, Pre-Law

This has been an amazing experience for me. Spending two weeks living in Washington D.C., I learned far more than I have in all my other classes. I don't think that simply visiting D.C. on my own terms would have offered me the same experiences as attending the Washington Seminar. I am not merely talking about the special tours we were given. It is also about the amount of time we were in D.C. as well as the classes we had while we were there. I felt as though I was living in Washington for two weeks, as opposed to just being in D.C. on vacation. Seeing as I have almost finished the requirements for my Political Science major, I have spent a lot of time learning about politics over the last couple years, but I never realized exactly how much more I had to learn. After learning about politics and government in school, it was extremely helpful to put a spatial element to the things that I've learned.



“Spending two weeks living in Washington D.C., I learned far more than I have in all my other classes. . . . I never realized exactly how much more I had to learn.”

Going into the Washington Seminar, my career goals were to work on political campaigns for a few years, and then I would find work as a staffer at the Capitol in Madison. Originally, my goal was to work as a policy advisor and eventually become a legislator's chief of staff. I had never given much thought to the other ways I could influence policy in government, and I never thought that I would want to work anywhere but in Wisconsin politics. However, after the Washington Seminar, I have reevaluated my goals. I never realized how many other avenues I could take in politics that would offer me the same opportunities to influence policy. I learned, for example, that lobbying is another way to affect policy.

Also, lobbyists are not always how they are depicted in the media: making backroom deals and buying votes. More often, it is about giving a voice to people who believe in certain causes and policies but who do not necessarily have the time or the means to influence policy on their own. Given my interest in policy, I would like to explore the possibility of working as a lobbyist.

For anyone interested in politics and government, Washington D.C. is the center of the universe. The ways in which average citizens are able to engage in the political system are endless when they are stationed in the thick of it. When we were in Washington, I tried to take advantage of that as much as I could. I was surprised that anyone could walk into the Senate and House office buildings and speak to their representatives. Before, I never considered members of congress as people just like us; and seeing as they work for us, they actually want to hear what we have to say, regardless of partisanship.

I also took the opportunity to attend Pride Fest to witness the impact that a large group of like-minded individuals can have on a community. Although I have been to Pride events in the past, nothing else could even begin to compare to a demonstration like that. I thought it was amazing to be standing there on Constitution Avenue and witness people celebrating their constitutional right to love and marry whom they wish. The Capitol building was the perfect backdrop to such an emotional scene.

I am extremely grateful to have been given this experience. I think that every student who is interested in politics, especially those who are planning on making a career out of politics, should be given the opportunity to live, learn, and work in Washington D.C. at least once during their academic career.



VII. Student Demographics

2017	2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12 students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11 from two-year schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 from two-year schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 from four-year schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 from four-year schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 from UW schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 from UW schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 from private school Marquette	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 from private schools Mount Mary and BYU
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 females	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 females
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 males	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 males
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 Non-white 1 Hispanic, 1 African-Am., 2 Asian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Non-white 1 Hispanic, 1 Hmong-Am., 1 Asian
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 nontraditional Ages: 24, 26, 26, 63	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 nontraditional Ages: 32, 36, 45
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 international South Korea and China	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 international South Korea



VIII. Program Adjustments

A. To Grow or Not to Grow?

We increased the Washington Seminar's marketing presence this year by sending out more flyers and brochures earlier and more systematically to four-year and two-year colleges and universities, both public and private. This helped us increase our applicant pool by over 50%. At one point we had 20 students verbally committed to attend the Seminar.

This raised a potential logistical issue that we had not anticipated. On the one hand, growth is important to the program in order to sustain it into the future. When we reach our financial break-even point (somewhere around 10-12 students), every additional student provides WIPPS much-needed revenue. On the other hand, how do we handle 18-20 students in a program that is currently designed for about 12-15 students? What should be our participant cap?

Growth would force us to address two key challenges: 1) Find a new "base" of operations to hold classes and bring in occasional guest lecturers. Currently, we are fortunate to have use of Godfrey and Kahn's D.C. office. However, the conference room is designed for 10-12 people. If the program grows, we would need to find another meeting space, which can be costly. 2) Many of the congressional delegation member offices are unable to support a sit-down conversation with more than ten students. Losing this aspect of the course would seriously detract from the quality of the program as students would not have meaningful interaction with members of congress. In fact, even this year we had to split the group to accommodate a few of our meetings. We need to address this issue before we start our marketing campaign for 2018.

B. Teaching Assistant

With the growth of the number of program participants, we had the means and motive to pay for a teaching assistant to help us wrangle students while in Madison and Washington, D.C. This was an enormous help and will continue to be necessary and justified if the program grows. This year we paid for Matt Froom, A WIPPS Research Assistant (and attendee of last year's Seminar) to serve as the course teaching assistant. The total additional cost to WIPPS was \$2,500. This cost will have to be factored into the calculus of future trips as a teaching assistant will be absolutely necessary if we continue to grow the program.

C. Course Innovations

1. Course website

Last year we created a course website via Google Sites that students used to access the syllabus, assignments, and course announcements. Although we received positive feedback from students, the tool was rather clunky and difficult to use. This year Google updated Google Sites to be more user-friendly (<https://sites.google.com/view/washingtonseminar>).

2. Course blog

We continue to use a closed Facebook page as our blog space and require students to post 12 original blog messages as well as 12 response posts to other students' blogs. They also write a final blog from which we pull material for the Seminar year-end report. One "new" and unintended consequence of the Facebook group is that alumni from last year's program are still a part of the group. We encouraged them to interact with this year's cohort to share their insights and tips about making the trip more productive and valuable. Several did this and it created great peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities. We also realized that this is a wonderful way to keep track of former students and continue to "measure" the impact of the Seminar on their educational and career paths.

D. Course Assessment

Thanks to Washington Seminar supporter and organizer Jeff Buhrandt, we are also moving forward with a more formal mechanism to assess the processes and outcomes of the course. Working on his Ph.D. thesis, Jeff chose to use the Seminar as one of his case studies and has been working with WIPPS staff to help design a tool that we can use to assess the course on multiple levels. We will be implementing this tool in future course iterations.

E. Offering Additional Credit Options

Another unintended adjustment this year emerged from the desire expressed by two students to receive additional course credits. In one case, a student needed a second three-credit course in order to receive summer financial aid. To receive financial aid, students must be enrolled full time during the summer, which amounts to six enrolled credits. A second student found himself one credit short of obtaining an Associate's Degree. In both cases, we worked with the UW Colleges Political Science Department and Registrar's office to help meet these students' needs. We offered complementary Independent Study courses that allowed students to attend the Seminar while still accomplishing their academic goals. This kind of flexibility is going to continue to be important to maximize student participation.



IX. Program Costs

A. Keeping the Course Affordable

A major goal for program planners is to keep program costs as low as possible. It remains true that many qualified students face substantial financial barriers that preclude them from these types of learning experiences.⁴ This year we eliminated the \$500 charge for meals. Students are now completely on their own for meals with the exception of breakfasts in Madison (which are remarkably healthy and cheap and can be purchased by the program ahead of time) along with a few planned meal events. We did this in part to avoid having instructors serve as virtual ATM machines and eliminate the need to carry around dangerously large amounts of cash. This decision also lowers student tuition for the program to \$2,500 and gives them maximum flexibility on how to spend their own money on meals. In effect, however, the “real” costs of the program have not decreased and we were careful to explain to student the importance of budgeting extra for money meals.

Total Student Tuition and Fees: \$2,500

B. Maximizing Value

1. Included in the 2017 program cost were the following:
 - a. Tuition for a 3-credit Public Policy course (through UW Colleges)
 - b. Roundtrip airfare to Washington, D.C.
 - c. Roundtrip bus fare (Madison to Milwaukee airport and return)
 - d. D.C. Metro card with weekend fare (\$10 value)
 - e. Four breakfasts in Madison plus three additional free meals
 - f. Housing in Madison and Washington, D.C. for 18 nights
 - g. Potomac River Cruise and tour of Mt. Vernon
 - h. All other costs associated with course, ranging from marketing to materials
2. Not included in the 2017 program costs:
 - a. Books – overall, students were required to spend about \$25 for required readings.
 - b. Most meals
 - c. Roundtrip travel between their home and Madison

C. 2017 Revenue

Ultimately, the course enrolled 14 students in 2017, which is roughly 2-3 students above the break-even point for the course to run at the designated program fee of \$2,500 per student. This year’s Seminar included an additional \$2,500 cost for a teaching assistant which we did not employ last year. It is also important to note that co-instructor Paul Carver and others volunteered much of their time gratis, which reduced the overhead costs. For these reasons, the course achieved positive revenue balance of approximately \$6,800.

2017 Net Revenue = \$6,800

⁴ An excellent report on the barriers to entry to D.C. internships, for example, can be found here: <http://www.npr.org/2017/07/25/539334360/on-capitol-hill-most-summer-interns-still-go-unpaid>.



X. Program Sustainability

A. Scholarship Donors

1. Importance of Scholarships

Given the difficulty among the majority of interested students to self-fund the entirety of their Washington Seminar costs, it remains clear that the success of recruiting students and achieving sustainability depends on our ability to raise dollars for student scholarships.

2. Scholarship Donors

For 2017, WIPPS raised \$18,740 in scholarship support from several organizations:

- a. **Herb Kohl Educational Foundation**, based in Milwaukee, generously donated \$5,000.
- b. **Murco Foundation**, based in Wausau, generously donated \$5,000.
- c. **Wisconsin Academy of Global Education and Training**, generously donated \$4,740.
- d. **UW-Marathon County Foundation**, generously donated \$3,000.
- e. **Friends of Matt Zillig**, generously donated \$500.
- f. **UW-Barron County Foundation**, generously donated \$500

Total Donations (excluding in-kind) = \$18,740

3. Allocating Scholarships

Thanks to our generous funders we were able to help fund all students who requested financial aid in 2017, and none were turned away due to lack of funding (last year we turned away four students due to lack of funding).

B. Other Key Donors

1. In kind Donations

WIPPS is grateful to the law firm **Godfrey & Kahn** for generously donating their Washington office conference room for classes and guest lectures.

2. Other Donations

WIPPS is grateful to the following organizations for their generous contributions:

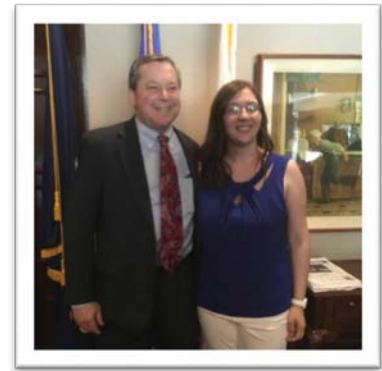
- a. **UW System Office of the President** hosted a student reception at Brittingham House.
- b. **WisPolitics** hosted a breakfast at The Monocle in Washington, D.C.
- c. **Mark Conrad**, Political Science Instructor at UW-Barron generously created a \$500 scholarship for one Barron County student.

3. Individual Contributions

We are grateful to the many individuals who generously gave their time to meet with the students as part of the course curriculum. A few individuals went the extra mile, spending many hours behind the scenes helping to organize and support the program:

- a. **Dave Anderson**, WIPPS Board
- b. **Dylan Bennett**, UW Colleges Political Science Department
- c. **Jeff Buhrandt**, UW System

- d. **Paul Carver**, WIPPS Senior Fellow
- e. **Jessica Cole**, UW Colleges Registrar
- f. **Steven Kuhn**, UW Colleges Controller
- g. **Will Stone**, WIPPS Board



*WIPPS Board member Will Stone
with student Miranda Hartje*

C. Program Sustainability

To sustain and grow the Washington Seminar program, WIPPS must continue to attract students and necessary funding. This will require a combination of strategies as follows:

1. Raise dollars for student scholarships

We will continue to seek out partner foundations to help augment student funding. This past year we surpassed our fundraising goal of \$15,000 and collected \$18,740. Our goal for 2018 is to raise \$20,000.

2. Attract students who can afford full freight

While we want to provide pathways to participation for low income students, we would benefit from attracting more students who can afford full tuition. Last year, only three of twelve students (25%) fit this category. Our goal for 2017 was to increase this percentage to 40%. In 2017, eight of fourteen students, or 57%, paid full tuition, which exceeded our goal.

3. Align with local foundations and businesses

There are opportunities to partner with local foundations, community clubs and businesses to help support our students. We set a goal to reach out to two- and four-year campus foundations and target local clubs and businesses to ask for matching funds where possible. Although we began this process in 2017 and managed to secure two scholarships, one each from the UW Marathon County and UW-Barron County Foundations, we definitely have more opportunities and work to do. We will expand our outreach efforts for 2018.

4. Improve marketing efforts

We did improve our marketing efforts for 2017—including getting materials to campuses by early October. However, our goal was to reach out to campuses by September. This year, we will try again to achieve our goal to get our marketing materials out to campuses by September.

5. Growing the Program

As discussed earlier in the report, we need to make some decisions on whether and to what extent to grow the program. We will analyze some scenarios to determine how large the program can become—or needs to become—to maintain cost-effectiveness and still remain logistically manageable. One option, for example, would be to cap the program at 15 students. Another option would be to grow the program to 20 students, provide some common programming where feasible—but in some cases (such as meeting with congressional figures or where large numbers are inappropriate) split the group in two. This would obviously require scheduling more meetings overall, which would take greater organization and person power on the ground—and more cost. We will need to determine if such an option is cost effective.



XI. Conclusion

We are pleased to report that WIPPS achieved or surpassed nearly all of its key goals in the second year of the Washington Seminar program:

A. Attract Students

1. We recruited fourteen participants for the program, exceeding the break-even point by three.
2. We were also able to attract diverse students from across the state, including from several different communities and institutions.

B. Institutional Backing

1. We continue to receive excellent service and support from the UW Colleges for the program. In particular, with new faces at the Controller's and Registrar's offices, service this year was amazingly helpful in term of enrollments and payment processing. We were pleased to partner with the UW Colleges Political Science Department, individual members of which went the extra mile to help recruit students to the program.
2. We were fortunate to receive support from the UW System in the form of planning assistance for our Madison portion of the trip as well as support for an opening reception for students.
3. We would like to see some direct support or other acknowledgement of the program from the UW Colleges and UW-Extension Chancellor's Office.

C. Funding and Sustainability

WIPPS raised scholarship funds and exceeded cost-revenue neutrality for the 2017 program.

D. Student Outcomes

Perhaps most important, the students again reported the experience as "life-changing."

