



West Virginia Legislature

Walter Rollins Scholars Program & Robert W. Burk, Jr. Student Internship Program

Application Packet - 2024 Regular Session

Legislative Internship Committee

<https://www.wvlegislature.gov/educational/internship.cfm>

**The Walter Rollins Scholars Program
&
The Robert W. Burk, Jr., Student Internship Program**

The Walter Rollins Scholars Program and the Robert W. Burk, Jr., Student Internship Program, offered by the West Virginia Legislature, provide exceptional educational experiences to graduate students attending West Virginia's colleges and universities. Through these programs, graduate students suited for placement in legislative offices gain an understanding of the state Legislature and its role in the making of public policy.

Each year, the Walter Rollins Scholars Program selects up to two graduate students to serve as legislative interns. Rollins Scholars study and work with those officials of the Senate and House of Delegates in the highest positions of leadership. Throughout their placement in these leader's offices, Rollins Scholars participate in the development of legislation affecting West Virginia's citizenry, conduct independent research within or about the legislative process and assist leaders with decision-making preparations during the legislative session.

The Robert W. Burk, Jr., Student Internship Program selects up to four graduate students each year for placement in the offices of committee chairpersons and other leaders in the Senate and House of Delegates. Burk Interns observe the making of public policy, analyze policy considerations, conduct research pertinent to the issues of the session, study how legislative structure bears upon the manner in which decisions are made and gain insight into the inner workings of the political process.

These two educational programs, the Walter Rollins Scholars Program and the Robert W. Burk, Jr., Student Internship Program, are the Legislature's most prestigious internships.

Graduate students honored by the successful completion of these programs will receive a unique insight into West Virginia's state government - an insight few people ever have the opportunity to acquire. Undeniably, this understanding will help shape each participant's personal future - and perhaps the future of the State of West Virginia.

Eligible Applicants

The Walter Rollins Scholars Program and the Robert W. Burk, Jr., Student Intern Program are open to students accepted to and currently enrolled in graduate degree programs at accredited public or private West Virginia colleges and universities. Applicants must be in good standing. No specific major or prerequisite course work is required, but applicants should be interested in state government, legal research and/or policy analysis. Interested students in all academic disciplines are encouraged to apply.

Available Positions

Up to two Rollins positions and up to four Burk positions are filled each year.

Length of Program

Both programs run from January to mid-April.

Stipend

Each Rollins Scholar receives a stipend of \$1,400 per month (\$5,600 total).

Each Burk Intern receives a stipend of \$1,400 per month (\$5,600 total).

Tuition and Fees

Payment of tuition and fees for the academic term is the responsibility of the student. (Please note: In past years, some colleges and universities have made tuition waivers available to certain legislative interns. For more information about the possibility of obtaining a tuition waiver, please contact your graduate dean.)

Academic Credit Hours

Upon successful completion of either of the legislative internship programs, each graduate student will receive at least six (6) credit hours toward his or her degree. Rollins Scholars and Burk Interns are prohibited from enrolling in any additional classes during the semester of the internship unless the classes do not interfere with the successful completion of the internship in any way. (For example, while independent study courses, readings courses and courses of that nature are allowed, attendance at classes that meet even as infrequently as one evening per week is prohibited due to the scheduling flexibility required of interns during the legislative session).

Orientation

Each year, Rollins Scholars and Burk Interns participate in a comprehensive legislative orientation at the start of the internship.

Some orientation activities are general in nature and therefore have been combined for legislative interns participating in all of the Legislature's internship programs. Basic activities include tours of the Capitol and legislative offices, meetings with legislative staff, introductions to bill drafting, the committee system, the Code of State Laws, legislative research, parliamentary procedure, the legislative computer system, etc.

Additional orientation activities are geared specifically toward graduate students and are provided to Rollins Scholars and Burk Interns only. Upon completion of the orientation, graduate student interns report to their assigned placements for the remainder of the internship program.

Legislative Placement

Rollins Scholars may be placed with the President or the Majority Leader in the Senate, the Speaker or the Majority Leader in the House of Delegates, the Chairperson of one of the four major standing committees in the Senate or House (Finance, Judiciary, Government Organization, Education) or other high-ranking leaders in the Senate or House.

Burk Intern placements in the Senate or the House may include: Chairperson of a major standing committee (listed above), Chairperson of a minor standing committee (Health & Human Resources, Banking & Insurance, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Veteran's Affairs, etc.) or other legislative leader.

Please note: If an intern has significant background expertise in or expresses particularly strong educational interest in a specific issue area OR if the Legislature is in need of extra assistance for a specific legislative leader or committee, an intern's placement may be tailored accordingly.

Daily Schedules

Graduate student interns are required to keep daily schedules per the instruction of the legislative leader to whom they are assigned. Please note: Historically, during the first several weeks of the session, typical days run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. However, during the mid-to-latter weeks of the session, interns may be required to report to the Capitol early in the mornings, to stay late into the evenings and/or to work weekends. The pace increases dramatically as the session nears completion. While certain absences may be unavoidable and therefore are excused, frequent missed work hours may result in removal from the internship program.

Weekly Academic Seminar

Rollins Scholars and Burk Interns are required to participate in academic seminars held one day per week at the State Capitol. These seminars are led by the internship academic director (a professor at an area university). During these seminars, graduate student interns meet to discuss legislative process, their research papers, and other related topics.

Research Paper

Each graduate student intern is required to submit a completed research paper at the end of the internship program. The topic is to be agreed upon by the intern, the intern's academic advisor at his/her college or university and the internship academic director by no later than the 30th day of the 60-day regular session. Upon completion, each intern must provide copies of the paper to his/her academic advisor on campus and to the internship academic director. Please note: Often, this research paper (which the Legislature's Internship Committee requires) will fulfill the credit requirements set forth by the intern's college or university. However, in the event the completion of this research paper does not fulfill the colleges or university's requirements for credit, the colleges or university's requirements for credit must be completed in addition to the research paper.

Accommodations and Transportation

Housing, meals and daily transportation to and from the State Capitol are the responsibilities of the graduate student interns.

Please note: Furnished and unfurnished apartments usually are available for short-term rental in the "Historic East End" of Charleston, located within walking distance of the Capitol. Should an intern so desire, the committee will make available to him or her a list of other legislative interns who are seeking "roommates" with whom to share an apartment during their stay in Charleston.

(In past years, many legislative interns have roomed together and managed to cut down on their living expenses quite successfully.) Charleston maintains frequent bus service for those without automobiles who choose to reside in areas of the city not within walking distance of the Capitol. Also, in past years, interns have developed among themselves an informal "intern carpool" system. As for food, the Capitol maintains a cafeteria (open for breakfast and lunch) and a few vending machines. Housing, meals, and daily transportation to and from the State Capitol are the responsibilities of the graduate student interns.

Application & Selection For the Graduate Student Internship Programs

Students interested in the Walter Rollins Scholars Program and the Robert W. Burk, Jr., Student Intern Program first should discuss the internships with their academic advisors on campus to ensure that potential participation will fit into their graduate education plans and complement their future career goals.

To apply to the programs, students must submit to the Legislature's Intern Committee the following:

- Application form
- Application checklist
- All items listed on the "detailed application requirements" page of this booklet.

ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE

NOVEMBER 1, 2023

Late or incomplete applications will NOT be considered.

The Legislature's Intern Committee will interview applicants at the State Capitol in Charleston, West Virginia after this date. Applicants will be notified of the specific time and location of interviews. Virtual options may be available upon request.

Detailed Application Requirements

1. Please enclose a copy of your resume. Your resume should include your current (and permanent, if different from current) address and telephone number(s) and your e-mail address. Your resume also should include your educational history, employment history, extracurricular activities and any other relevant information you care to provide.
2. Please enclose a brief personal statement – no more than one page in length – communicating the reasons you wish to become a graduate student intern with the West Virginia Legislature. (You may want to include how the internship may complement your educational or career goals, skills you possess that may be helpful to a legislator or committee and/or any other information you believe to be relevant.)
3. Please enclose three letters of reference – two academic references and one character reference. (The academic letters of reference should be obtained from faculty who know your academic work, while the character letter of reference should be obtained from someone outside academia. You may wish to ask those writing for you to explain briefly in what capacity they have come to know you; to evaluate your academic skills, interpersonal skills, professional skills, strengths and/or weaknesses; and/or assess how they believe you would perform in an office setting with state leaders.) Letters from incumbent Legislators and members of the Legislature’s Intern Committee are prohibited.
4. Please enclose one copy of a recent research paper (or project, or published article or the like) that you believe best displays your writing skills, research abilities, and thought process. This paper does not need to be government related – it may be on any topic. Also, please attach a brief statement of not more than one page explaining why you chose to submit this document to the committee and if it was an independent project or assigned topic for a class.
5. Please enclose copies of your graduate and undergraduate academic transcripts from each institution of higher education you have attended. (Note: If you are in your first semester of graduate study and do not yet have a graduate transcript, please enclose a note from each instructor from whom you are currently taking a course that states your current grade or standing in the instructor’s course.)
6. Please mail the complete packet of your application materials in one envelope to:

**Casey Long
West Virginia State Senate
Legislative Internship Committee
Building 1, Room 227M
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, West Virginia 25305**

All application materials must be submitted together and received by the committee at the address above by no later than **November 1, 2023**.

Applicants may alternatively email all documents to intern@wvlegislature.gov. Please place “Rollins-Burk Program” in the subject line.

Application Check List

As an applicant for the West Virginia Legislature's Rollins and Burk Internships, on the following list I have placed a check mark beside each document that I have obtained and am placing into one envelope to mail to the Legislative Intern Committee.

(If I have not placed a check mark beside an item on the list, I have written in the margin an explanation of why that particular document is not included in the envelope.)

___ Completed two-page application form

___ Resume

___ Statement on my interest in becoming a graduate student intern with the Legislature

___ Two academic letters of reference

___ From (name & institution): _____

___ From (name & institution): _____

___ One character letter of reference

___ From (name): _____

___ Copy of a research paper (or writing sample, project, article or the like)

___ Brief explanation of why you submitted this research paper, etc., and if it was an independent or assigned topic

___ Copy of graduate transcript(s)

___ Copy of undergraduate transcript(s)

___ (If applicable: If this is the first semester of graduate study, letters from instructors stating applicant's standing in each course.)

___ This signed check list

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Additional Information

1. Should you have any questions about the application procedure or other issues related to the Rollins or Burk internships, please feel free to contact Ms. Casey Long, legislative staff to the Legislative Intern Committee.

Casey Long
West Virginia State Senate
Legislative Internship Committee
Building 1, Room 227M
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, West Virginia 25305
Phone: (304) 357-7952
Email: Casey.Long@wvsenate.gov

For general information about the West Virginia Legislature (including information about all five of the Legislature's internship programs), we invite you to visit the Legislature's official Web site at <https://www.wvlegislature.gov>

2. Applicants are advised to keep copies of their application materials, as the Legislature is not responsible for applications lost, damaged in the mail, etc.
3. Applicants are trusted to use the honor system in providing information to the Legislature; all information provided is expected to be accurate.
4. All materials submitted are for the confidential use of the West Virginia Legislature and its Legislative Intern Committee. Application materials will not be returned.
5. The Legislature seeks to attract a diverse pool of applicants for the Walter Rollins Scholars Program and the Robert W. Burk, Jr., Student Internship Program.
No applicant will be discriminated against because of race, gender, age, physical disability, political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation or ethnic/national origin.

**Thank you for your interest in the
West Virginia Legislature's**

Walter Rollins Scholars Program
&
Robert W. Burk, Jr., Student Internship Program

Best of luck to you in your educational endeavors.

