

Hartman Center Civic Interns

by Jean Everage, DePauw University Bonner Scholars Program Co-Coordinator

Purpose

- Provides a select group of students with leadership and training opportunities that enrich the quality of student service in the community.
- Promotes the creation of a lifelong service ethic by offering workshops and seminars on community partnership, leadership development, civic engagement, and character development.

Background

The Hartman Center was established in the fall of 1995 through the vision of DePauw student Chad Mayer. The program has institutionalized community service and service-learning by creating a central location for volunteer programs, leadership development, and civic education. The Civic Internship program began in 1995 with two interns and has grown to involve more than 30 students.

How It Works

Hartman Center

The Hartman Center for Civic Education and Leadership is home to the volunteer service and leadership development program at DePauw. The center was named in honor of DePauw distinguished alumnus Grover L. Hartman, whose life exemplified the ideals of a civic leader through his tireless advocacy for a multitude of social, political, and economic causes. The Hartman Center is grounded in the belief that direct contact with community problems provides students with the experience to begin reflecting critically on the world around them.

Civic Interns

Each spring, more than 30 student leaders are selected to serve as civic interns for the upcoming school year. Interns learn valuable leadership skills while assisting Hartman Center staff in planning and implementing volunteer service and leadership development programs. Civic interns serve as project officers for many long-term projects and special events, including National Youth Service Day and Make a Difference Day.

Selection and Supervision

Students are selected each spring for the upcoming school year through an application and interview process. One senior intern is selected as head intern and serves as the student leader of the program. Once selected, students are given their program assignment and matched with a staff supervisor who acts as an advisor and mentor. Interns meet individually with their supervisors on a weekly basis, and their performance is evaluated each semester. Students are also given an opportunity to evaluate their supervisors so that there is open discussion and opportunity for growth and improvement on both sides.

Orientation

Before classes begin in the fall, civic interns attend an overnight retreat where they are oriented by staff to the operations of the Hartman Center. This retreat is also a time for reflection and team bonding. Throughout the school year, civic interns attend a two-hour intern seminar each week. During this seminar, the interns share progress reports on their projects over lunch. The second hour of each seminar is focused on developing leadership skills, such as strategic planning, teamwork, and time management. The head intern organizes the seminar.

Job Descriptions

Interns volunteer to work six to eight hours per week throughout the school year planning and implementing the Hartman Center's programs and special projects. The internship is strictly

voluntary—interns receive no financial compensation for their work at the Hartman Center. Students gain practical, hands-on experience in all aspects of program planning, ranging from recruiting and supervising volunteers to fund-raising and publicity for events and activities.

The Hartman Center civic interns are grouped into four basic categories:

Winter Term in Service

Interns assist in the planning and implementation of DePauw's Winter Term in Service Program. During the month of January, this unique program sends students, faculty and professional volunteers to communities around the world. These teams work with international partners on construction projects, provide public health education, operate medical and dental clinics, and create global relationships fostering mutual understanding.

Leadership Academy

The Hartman Center offers a variety of opportunities for leadership development and inquiry into social concerns through service-learning courses, seminars, and workshops. These programs are planned and implemented by the Leadership Academy interns in conjunction with the Leadership Academy director.

Community Outreach

These interns plan and implement a variety of special events centered on direct service and community leadership. Programs include Make a Difference Day, National Youth Service Day, Civic Education Convocations, and Alternative Break trips.

Heads of Programs

This group of interns includes leaders from DePauw's various community service programs, including the Bonner Scholars Program, Civic Fellows, DePauw Community Service, Indiana Reading Corps, and College Mentors for Kids. By participating in the civic intern program, these leaders gain valuable training while maintaining a connection with other Hartman Center programs, which facilitates collaboration.

What Makes The Project Unique

Civic interns have a great deal of responsibility and are treated as an extension of the Hartman Center staff with the primary responsibility of managing and implementing their assigned programs.

Benefits

Opportunities for student growth and development in this program are tremendous. Interns develop leadership skills and gain valuable experience in event planning, volunteer management and recruitment, public relations, and more. They graduate with the kind of hands-on experience usually unavailable to students. In addition, the Hartman Center strives to create the kind of programming that promotes the creation of a lifelong service ethic.

By utilizing its interns to plan and implement the numerous programs of the Hartman Center, the University provides its students with outstanding leadership opportunities and practical work experience. The University has been able to create award-winning programs with a significant impact on the community.

Timeline

Late February

Information sessions.

Early March

Applications due. First round of interviews with current civic interns.

Early April

Second round of interviews with Hartman Center staff. Interns for the following year are selected and

introduced.

Mid-April
Transition meetings.

Resources And Partners

DePauw University

- Operating within the Office of Student Services, the Hartman Center has received substantial funding from the University as well as from alumni, foundations, and private donors.

Community Partners

- More than thirty local nonprofit organizations and the surrounding area serve as community partners for Hartman Center programs, such as the Bonner Scholars Program and DePauw Community Service.

Overcoming Challenges

The program has struggled with “quality-versus-quantity” issues and a concern about the adequacy of the paid staff-to-intern ratio. A solution under consideration is to decrease the number of interns or programs to provide the level of staff mentoring that the students need and desire.

Evidence of Success

For a school of 2,200 students in a community of 12,000, the impact of Hartman Center programs is tremendous. Examples include:

- DePauw’s oldest and largest community service program, DePauw Community Service, recruits 400 to 600 students each semester who participate in direct service at more than 35 community agencies.
- Twice a month, two civic interns recruit DePauw student volunteers to organize games and activities for local children on the DePauw campus for the sports night program.
- Each semester, approximately 40 students tutor K-5 students reading below grade level as Indiana Reading Corps coaches.
- More than 100 students and faculty members serve in developing communities at domestic and international sites for the January winter term in service program.

The civic intern program and the Hartman Center programs that are organized have brought DePauw a great deal of recognition in recent years. *The Princeton Review* ranks DePauw among the top ten schools where students can make a difference. The Hartman Center was also recognized in *The Templeton Guide: Colleges that Encourage Character Development* for an outstanding record of commitment to inspiring students to lead ethical and civic-minded lives.