

INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Stephen Barton

Graduation Semester & Year: Spring 2024

Semester & Year of Internship: Summer 2023

Dual Major: Political Science & Public Policy

Minor: Philosophy

Hobbies: I enjoy playing music on my instruments and being in the outdoors

Campus Activities: Resident Hall activities

Future Plans/Career Goals: I plan on continuing my education after my time at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

Hometown:

Pittsburgh, PA



- **Internship (company/your title):**

Intern/Allegheny County Council

- **How did you find your internship?**

Councilman John Palmiere informed me of the opportunity while I was getting my hair cut, at his local barbershop. After discussing it with him, he had the County Council Chief of Staff reach out to me.

- **What were your duties?**

A big part of my job is acting as a middleman between the citizens of Allegheny County, and their respective council representatives. After gathering all the necessary information, it was my responsibility to make a written report that would be documented and given to the council's Chief of Staff. The other duty I had is making official documents such as proclamations, as well as informative documents, that can be printed and distributed to citizens. If needed, I also sometimes had to represent council members at community events.

- **How many hours per week were you at your internship site?**

At least 24 hours per week.

- **What did you enjoy most about your internship?**

I was lucky enough to work for county council during political and legal turmoil. Early in my internship, County Council voted to raise the minimum wage of county workers. By the end of the week, County Executive Rich Fitzgerald vetoed the wage increase, only to have it overridden in a subsequent vote. As a result of these events, my Office had found itself in a legal battle of the separation of powers within Allegheny County.

- **What was the most difficult aspect of the internship?**

For me, the most difficult part of my internship was interacting with incarcerated individuals within the county jail, as well as their families. The absolute horror stories I have been told from both male and female inmates were oftentimes difficult to put into words for a report. Even harder, were finding words to say to the inmate. How do you respond to an inmate detailing the frequent beatings from guards, or suffering from ailment caused by poor sanitation by staff (workers in the kitchen and bakery are prone to cellulitis).

- **How did your experience at UPG and in the Political Science & Public Policy Department prepare you for your internship?**

Because most of my time at Pitt-Greensburg has been spent studying politics and philosophy, I found the office environment new, however, as I spent more time there I found myself relating my experiences back to the classroom. Understanding the legal battle my office was in, as well as its causes was easy for me because of my studies pertaining to the structure of the United States government democracy. Furthermore, I found Dr. Wood's lectures on bureaucracies as well as the reading of John Dewey ideas on an "Ideal Bureaucracy".

(cont.)

- **How has your internship prepared you for a career?**

Simply put, it got me experience working in an office environment and my nose out of political philosophy textbooks. Through this internship, I have developed skills that will make me a better and more experienced employee once I enter the workforce.

- **What recommendations do you have for other students about doing an internship?**

Find an internship that interests you but don't be afraid to go outside of your comfort zone.

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