

Office of Governor Schwarzenegger: Office of Constituent Affairs Winter 2008

Interning in the Governor's Constituent Affairs Office had its ups and downs. I spent most of my days sorting constituent mail, taking phone calls, directing constituent casework (Goldenrods), drafting letters signed either by our office or the Governor himself, and filling in wherever they needed throughout the administration. Overall, this experience was good exposure to the political world. With exception to the director of the office, all of the constituent affairs representatives were in their twenties, so being that it was a "young" office, the environment was fun, friendly, and energetic. I felt as if my tasks were easily manageable; even though I had somewhat of a demanding supervisor, each intern has their own supervisor and portfolio that they work with, so each experience will be unique. The most important thing that I kept in mind before beginning my internship was not to expect too much. Working in Constituent Affairs, you aren't directly in the Governor's office in the capitol, but are across the street. This wasn't so bad, although it does feel like you're missing the action. I did get to fill in and work in the "Horseshoe" in the capitol with the rest of the Governor's staff whenever they needed extra help. Don't expect to run into Arnold everyday, or draft important policies for California. I did however learn how California state agencies and departments works, did enjoy some privileges working for the Governor (VIP Christmas Tree Lighting seats, Governor staff Christmas party, free parking, etc.), and was always up to date with current events.

After the first couple of weeks, overcoming the learning curve, I finally found my rhythm and my internship days seemed to fly by. I wish that from the beginning, I knew to kind of sit back a little and enjoy the experience. Take initiative in introducing yourself, don't be afraid to be outgoing, and most importantly ask for help with *anything* and *everything*. I was lucky enough to use my Governor's office networks to score a meeting with one of the Governor's special advisors for one of the UCCS projects. It was an amazing experience to get to talk to him, especially since his main area of work was in the same industry as my policy papers. Overall, it was a great experience; however it is important to know that you may get a difficult supervisor (like I did) and you must be able to humble yourself to doing more tedious administrative work (especially in the beginning).