

Senator Darrell Steinberg

Fall 2008

During my time at UC Sacramento, I interned with Senator Darrell Steinberg. I was working in his district office in the Legislative Offices Building, across from the capitol. Senator Steinberg represents the city of Sacramento and some surrounding areas. His staff members in the office were welcoming, knowledgeable, and available if I needed to ask for help. They were also very appreciative of the skills I was able to bring to the environment.

The office is quite large and has a gorgeous view of the state capitol. There were about five other interns who would come in at various times throughout the week. It was nice to be in an atmosphere with other young people interested in pursuing political careers. We were all able to assist each other with our different tasks and discuss current events.

It was so great to be working for someone I believed in. Darrell Steinberg is a very intelligent, honest, real man who uses his political power for good. I was lucky enough to be working for him as he transitioned into his Senate President Pro Tem position. I was able to see him sworn in for the 2009-2010 session.

My main responsibility at my internship was writing response letters to constituents. I liked writing them and the staff was happy to have an intern with good writing skills. I liked writing the letters because it gave me a sense of accomplishment. I liked knowing that the constituents I was replying to were probably grateful to be receiving a response to the issues they had inquired about or addressed. In addition to the letters, I helped plan some events, worked on casework, and did occasional office work like copying and faxing.

My supervisor planned some intern lunches with a neighboring Senator's office and the supervisors and interns would go out to lunch together. I really enjoyed those days. They gave me the opportunity to have sophisticated conversation in a less professional setting. Being in Sacramento was a great opportunity to network and introduce myself to as many people as possible.

Being in Sacramento and working for a pretty liberal Senator during the election was really exciting. It was interesting to see how the California Propositions turned out. Many constituents were calling into the office to voice their opinions about the election. Darrell and his staff were thrilled that Obama is going to become our next president and November 4th was such an emotional day for everyone.

During the first week of my internship, I was lucky enough to attend the press conference that the Governor held to sign SB 375, a bill that Steinberg authored and had been working on for two years. This was the first time I got to see Arnold Schwarzenegger. Throughout the ten weeks, I attended different panel discussions, rallies, and press conferences. It all ended with the opening session of the Senate for the new legislative year. I was introduced to many important people, including the most recent mayor of Sacramento, Heather Fargo.

This experience has made me excited about a career in public service, however I did realize that I would probably enjoy working behind the scenes more than I would in the spotlight. Working in the office made me realize so much more how much patience it takes to work with people. Sadly, I was not born with a lot of patience and I am not sure that I would be up to working on casework and dealing with people as part of my future career. What I enjoy is the research.

My research skills were strengthened during my time at the internship. I needed to research in order to fully understand the subjects I was writing back to constituents about. I also learned a lot about the legislative process. I learned about how ideas become bills and bills become law and all of the efforts in between. I was very interested in finding out why certain bills were not passed or why supported them and why. Though California has unfortunately been stuck with a huge budget deficit, I got to study how exactly the project process works and California's economy functions.

I would most definitely recommend this internship to a future scholar intern. Working for Senator Steinberg, surrounded by welcoming and appreciative staff members could not have been any better. It is an advantage that Steinberg represents Sacramento, because district events are local. Now that Darrell Steinberg is the President Pro Tem, there will be plenty of things to do in the office. He is one of the most powerful bodies in the legislature for the next six years. Working for someone who is so down to earth and humble, yet still so passionate, was easy and enjoyable.

Going to events and introducing myself as a UC Center Sacramento intern, I found myself receiving warm responses. A lot of people were asking me how the program was going and what I plan on doing after I graduate. I think that there is a standard you need to live up to by being a UCCS intern because you reflect both the program as well as your home campus.

On my final day in the office, my supervisor, Senator Steinberg's district director said that at any time she would be more than willing to write a letter of recommendation

for me. It was hard to leave, the time had gone by so quickly. It was such a great experience though and I am so glad that I ended up in Senator Steinberg's office.