

CHAPTER 10

Faculty Perceptions and Compensation for Internships

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Given the lack of general information about how internships are institutionally supported across the academy, the purpose of this chapter is to examine political science faculty perceptions about internships and how faculty are compensated for their internship-related activities. Based on over 160 departmental survey responses, this chapter explores similarities and differences among institutions based on type, region, public or private institutional status, number of faculty in the department, and size of the undergraduate student population. Data suggest that about one-third of faculty are not compensated for their supervision of internships, and wide variation prevails among those who receive institutional support. The need to value internships through both compensation and recognition in promotion and tenure is clear.

Although institutions and students value internships, does that value translate into resources for faculty pay and resources for building sustainable internship programs? Faculty compensation and resources matter because they clearly demonstrate the priorities of an institution. Compensation and institutional support impact a department's ability to deliver high-quality internship mentoring. As supervisors of internships, faculty assume key responsibilities to make sure that internships fulfill their academic purpose and that students are undertaking a meaningful educational experience at every step.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pecorella (2007) encourages faculty in their roles as internship supervisors (or coordinators) to help students make connections between theory and practice. If faculty actively coordinate and oversee the internship at all stages, then the academic elements can be incorporated continually, such as through discussion and assignments that require students to read and reflect on their experience. Institutional barriers, including the lack of institutional investment in programs, impact student access to these

learning experiences and also the quality of their experiences (Hora et al. 2019a). On the other hand, when internships are an institutional priority, students can encounter a richer array of resources that take shape in support services such as “interview coaching and résumé audits” (Hora et al., 2019a, 5), which can be delivered by career center staff or faculty. In addition to other forms of support for student interns, Finley and McNair suggest that faculty advising and the time they dedicate to internship programming directly impact student participation in internships (2013, 5). By extension, lack of faculty attention constrains students’ ability to take full advantage of experiential learning, or to experience internships as a developmental process for acquiring, developing, and mastering new skills. Without guidance, students’ ability to recognize the value of challenges and problem-solving, explore career options, and build new knowledge and skills may be limited.

Faculty support for student interns is also strongly associated with student satisfaction with their internship experience. Hora et al. (2019b) find higher student satisfaction and perceived value of an internship when their supervisor acts as a mentor and when “the relationship between their internship and their academic program” is strong and clear (2019b, 13). Faculty mentors, and sometimes site supervisors, can offer the support and mentorship needed to clearly connect interns’ concrete learning goals and work to academic outcomes. However, in order to do so, faculty need time and resources to offer the kind of intense mentoring that produces high levels of student satisfaction and academic learning. To this point, mentors directly impact the developmental process, and this includes site supervisors who assume a mentoring role (McHugh 2016). Additionally, McHugh finds that being paid (or not) for an internship can also affect students’ satisfaction with their experience. Specifically, students who have paid internships reported “higher levels of perceived supervisor support, supervisor mentoring, and task goal clarity” (McHugh 2016, 374). Finally, McHugh finds that when an academic program requires students to participate in an internship in an unpaid capacity, they are less satisfied with the experience (375).

Against this backdrop, this chapter considers the compensation of political science internship coordinators, a condition that represents either an institutional investment in experiential learning, or, where absent or lacking, a potential barrier to it. Survey data are used to describe and evaluate compensation structures in US colleges and universities. In addition, faculty perceptions about the overall value of internships and internship needs on their campuses are explored.

STUDY DESIGN

Two waves of surveys were deployed to assess internships within the discipline, and the same questionnaire (with small adjustments) was administered to two groups in order to establish whether and how institutional differences might exist across internship programs (Van Vechten, Gentry, and Gelbman 2015; Van Vechten and Gentry 2017). The first target sample included a wide variety of four-year institution types ranging from R1’s with doctoral programs to small liberal arts colleges. The second was comprised of community colleges. A total of 121 participants responded to the first survey in 2015 and 51 responded to the second wave in 2017; for this file we had 166 viable cases. Response rates were 20.5% for the 2015 survey of four-year institutions, and 6.7% for the 2016 community colleges iteration. Community colleges from the West and with populations over 15,000 students were overrepresented among the respondents. The recruitment email was sent three times to department chairs or faculty in charge of internships.¹ Responses were pooled for analysis.

Our respondents were, by and large, faculty members with an “up close and personal” vantage point on students’ internship experiences. As such, their perceptions should not be taken as representative of political science faculty more generally. On the other hand, their close connection increases confidence in the accuracy of the information they provided about their departments’ internship programs. Furthermore, the respondents’ intimate knowledge and experience with undergraduate internships was likely responsible for the survey’s high item completion rates. For closed-ended questions, completion rates ranged from about 75% (91 responses) to 99% (120 responses). The open-ended questions unsurprisingly elicited somewhat lower completion rates, but most still garnered at least 100 responses.

The survey instrument contained a mix of 38 closed- and open-ended questions that collected information about internship practices in undergraduate political science programs at US colleges and universities, as well as gauged respondents’ perceptions and attitudes regarding the value of and challenges associated with internships at their institution. Rather than report on the survey results in their

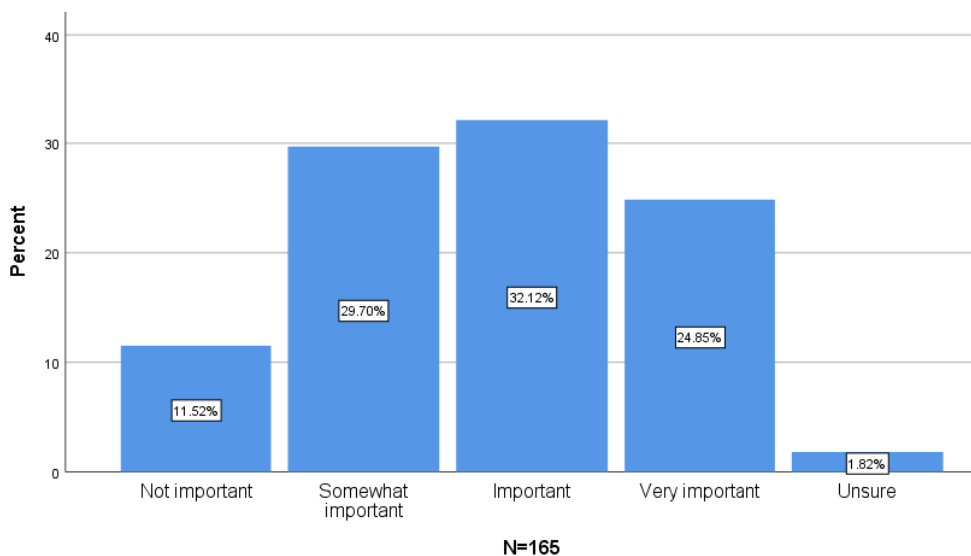
entirety, this study zeroes in on those items that most clearly elucidate respondents' sense of the role internships play in their department and their effects on students' academic and professional achievements. Table 1 lists the relevant survey questions and their corresponding completion rates.

Question	Number of Responses to selected questions (N)
If a faculty member in your department is responsible for coordinating or advising student internships, how is this person compensated? (open-ended)	166
Currently, Political Science majors benefit from a robust internship program on our campus. (T/F)	151
There is little or no effort to coordinate internships on our campus. (T/F)	145
Our department intends to expand internship offerings or create an internship program in the near future. (T/F)	92
We need more resources to adequately compensate faculty and/or staff for their current involvement in coordinating or overseeing internships. (T/F)	96
Internships tend to reinforce inequalities between students who are financially well-off and can afford to intern without pay, and those who cannot afford to work without pay. (T/F)	97

RESULTS

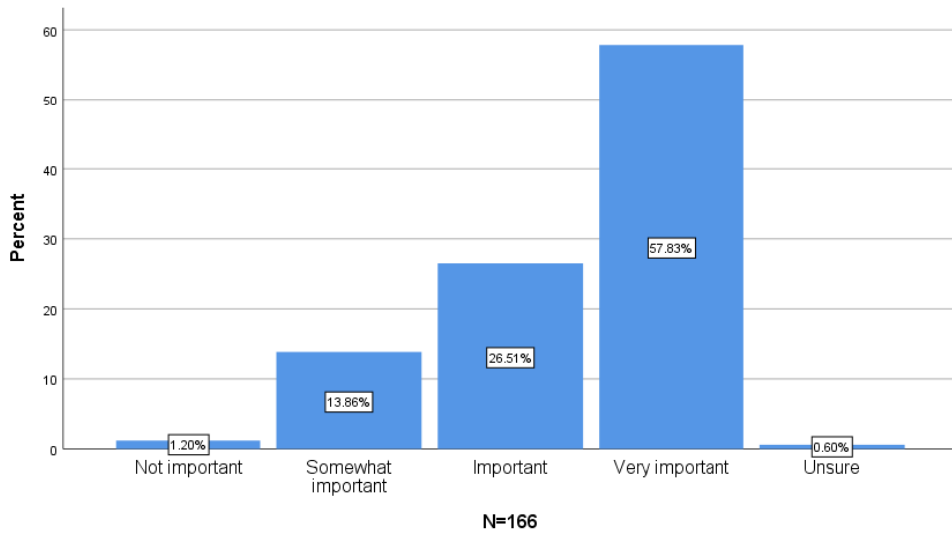
Among the more striking results that emerged were clear differences in perceptions about whether internships help students excel as political science majors. While over half of the respondents (59.9%, n=94) agreed that internships are an important part of excelling as a political science major, less than half (41.2%, n=68) thought internships were not important or somewhat important in this respect.

Figure 1. Faculty Perception of Internships As Important to Excelling as a Political Science Major



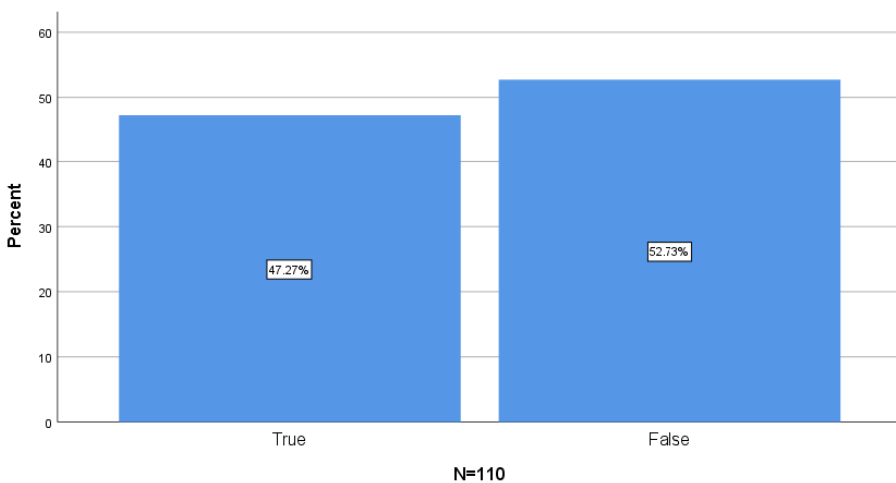
Faculty vary in their perceptions of how internships benefit students. More than three-quarters (84.3%, n=140) of faculty agreed that internships help students identify their career preferences. Only two participants responded that internships were not important in helping students identify their career preferences (1.2%). Overall, faculty see internships as a way for students to explore their career preferences before they leave the institution.

Figure 2. Faculty Perception of Internships as Helping Students Identify Career Preferences



A larger concern identified in the overarching literature on internships is unequal access for students of lower-income backgrounds who are not able to intern because of the need to earn money or for anyone who is a caregiver or has significant family obligations (Hora et al. 2019a; Hora et al. 2019b; Perlin 2011). A specific survey question about whether internships reinforce inequalities among students provided some puzzling results. Faculty were split on whether or not they regarded this statement as true or false: “Internships tend to reinforce inequalities between students who are financially well-off and can afford to intern without pay, and those who cannot afford to work without pay.” One in five respondents responded that they were unsure about this statement, which was the highest number of unsure responses in the dataset (20.4%, n=37). Overall, more faculty believed that internships do not reinforce inequalities (52.73%, n=58) than those who believed that they do reinforce inequalities (47.3%, 52), and there are no significant differences based on institution type.

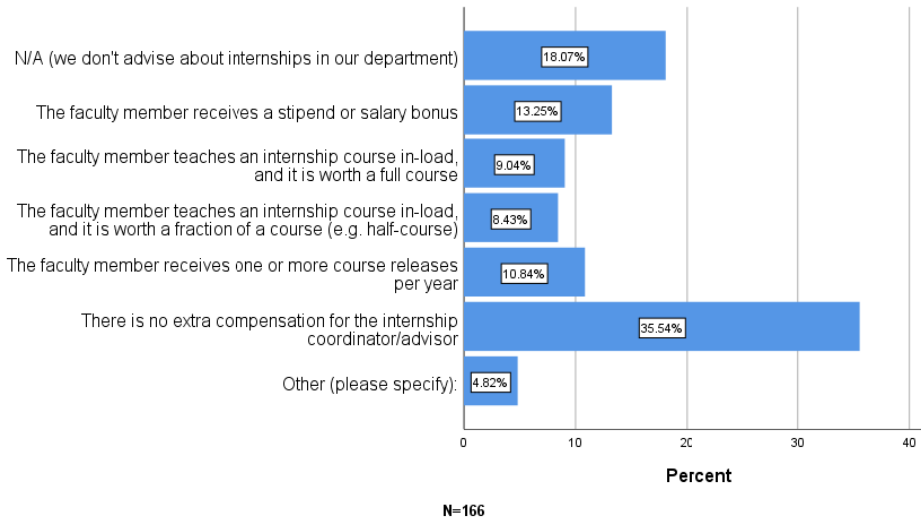
Figure 3. Faculty Perception that Internships Reinforce Inequalities



Level and type of faculty compensation for academic supervision of internships vary, and these variations can impact the time, resources, and energy that faculty prioritize for managing internships

over their other responsibilities. Fewer than half of political science programs compensate faculty in some way (46.4%); however, in over one-third of programs the faculty internship supervisors are not compensated. Among the types of compensation mentioned² are the ability to accrue credits towards a course release, extra financial compensation in the form of a bonus or stipend, or including internship-related duties specifically in a job description (e.g., chair position or faculty member). In some cases, administrative responsibilities such as coordinating internships are handled in other offices, such as a specific internship office or career services, but supervised by faculty.

Figure 4. Faculty Compensation for Internship Supervision



Overall, the most frequent response was that there is no extra compensation for those who coordinate internships (35.5%, n=59).³ Of the departments with internship programs, two-thirds provide additional compensation for faculty supervisors, and the most frequent choice is a stipend or salary bonus (13.3%, n=22). If the value of internships is not prioritized with institutional resources for faculty supervision, then this does not bode well for the sustainability of internship programs.

Compensation Type	Institution Type			
	Doctoral Program	MA-Granting	Liberal Arts	Community College
No Compensation	31.6% (6)	36.8% (14)	51.2% (21)	60% (18)
Course Release	10.5% (2)	26.3% (10)	9.8% (4)	6.7% (2)
Fraction of Course in Load	15.8% (3)	10.5% (4)	7.3% (3)	13.3% (4)
Full Course in Load	31.6% (6)	13.2% (5)	7.3% (3)	3.3% (1)
Stipend	10.5% (2)	13.2% (5)	24.4% (10)	16.7% (5)

As illustrated in table 2, stark differences exist among institutions with respect to compensation for coordinating or supervising internships (n=128). Many institutions (46.1%) offer no compensation. Doctoral programs are more likely to count an internship course as in-load. MA-granting institutions are more likely to allow a course release, whereas liberal arts institutions are most likely to provide a stipend to faculty, as are community colleges. Community college faculty are least likely to be compensated for their work (60% uncompensated), followed by liberal arts institution faculty (51.2% uncompensated). Departments with doctoral programs are more likely to compensate faculty in some way, but almost a third of them (31.6%) do not compensate faculty for supervising student interns. A few

of these differences among institutions are large, and significantly so. Overwhelmingly, faculty are not being compensated for their work on internships.⁴

Size of the department also matters. Overall, most departments do not compensate faculty (46.8%, n=59), and very few departments offer compensation as a fraction of a course in load (10.3%, n=13). For small departments of 1 to 3 faculty members and large departments with over 25 faculty, no compensation is the norm. There may be various reasons for this. For small departments, resources might not be available. For larger departments, there may be a dedicated internship program or staff member who oversees internship programming. However, departments above 11 members tend to compensate faculty with a course release (33.3%, n=5). For departments of 16 to 25 faculty members, a full course in-load is the most likely form (26.7%, n=4).

Table 3. Compensation Differences by Number of Faculty in the Department

Compensation Type	How Many Faculty are in Your Department?				
	1-3	4-10	11-15	16-25	Over 25
No Compensation	66.7% (10)	53% (35)	13.3% (2)	20% (3)	60% (9)
Course Release	6.7% (1)	10.6% (7)	33.3% (5)	20% (3)	13.3% (2)
Fraction of Course in Load	13.3% (2)	7.6% (5)	13.3% (2)	13.3% (2)	13.3% (2)
Full Course in Load	0%	6.1% (4)	26.7% (4)	26.7% (4)	13.3% (2)
Stipend	13.3% (2)	22.7% (15)	13.3% (2)	20% (3)	0%
N=126					

Department size does seem to impact compensation type. In departments considered small (1 to 3 faculty) and extremely large (over 25 faculty), 66% and 60% percent of programs, respectively, offer no compensation to faculty. More than half (53%) of medium-sized departments (4 to 10) do not compensate faculty. Interestingly, programs with 11 to 15 faculty offer a course release (33.3%) or a full course in-load (26.7%), whereas programs with 16 to 25 faculty are more likely to offer a full course in-load (26.7%), among other options. Department size might be related to available resources including faculty time to teach a course. For example, small departments might need faculty to teach courses within the curriculum and do not have the flexibility in their course rotation to offer an internship course.

Table 4. Faculty Compensation and Faculty Perception of Internship Program Robustness

Robust Internship Program	Compensation Type				
	No Compensation	Course Release	Fraction of Course	Full course in Load	Stipend
True	48.9% (22)	75% (12)	40% (4)	93.3% (14)	70.6% (12)
False	51.1% (45)	25% (4)	60% (6)	6.7% (1)	29.4% (5)
N=103; Chi Square=13.29; p=.010					

Faculty compensation does appear to be related to faculty perceptions about whether the internship program is robust on their campus. Overall, 62.1% (64) of faculty believe that they have a robust internship program. However, in programs with no compensation or only internship responsibilities count as a fraction of a course in-load, 51.1% (45) and 60% (6) respectively do not believe that their institution has a robust internship program. This result demonstrates that faculty who are compensated are more likely to regard their own programs more positively.

Table 5. Faculty Compensation and the Need for More Resources

Need More Resources to Compensate	Faculty Compensation				
	No Compensation	Course Release	Fraction of Course	Full course in Load	Stipend
True	79.1% (34)	54.5% (6)	42.9% (3)	38.5% (5)	38.5% (5)
False	20.9% (9)	45.5% (5)	57.1% (4)	61.5% (8)	61.5% (8)

N=87; Chi Square=12.61; p=.013

How faculty are compensated directly impacts their perception that more resources are needed for faculty compensation. Across the board, 60.9% of faculty surveyed believe that more resources are needed to compensate faculty and/or staff. Faculty in programs that already provide compensation by counting courses in-load or providing stipends are more likely to say that they do not need more resources. Not surprisingly, departments with internship programs that do not compensate faculty represent a large majority who say that more resources are needed (79.1%, n=34).

Table 6. Faculty Perception of Need for more Resources by Institution type

Number of Faculty in the Department	Institution Type				
	Need more resources to compensate?	Doctoral Program	MA-Granting	Liberal Arts	Community College
1-3	True	—	—	0% (0)	70.6% (12)
	False	—	—	100% (2)	29.4% (5)
4-10	True	100% (1)	71.4% (10)	59.3% (16)	100% (7)
	False	0% (0)	28.6% (4)	40.7% (11)	0%
11-15	True	50% (1)	71.4% (5)	0% (0)	100% (2)
	False	50% (1)	28.6% (2)	100% (5)	0% (0)
16-25	True	77.8% (7)	50% (1)	50% (1)	50% (2)
	False	22.2% (2)	50% (1)	50% (1)	50% (2)
Over 25	True	71.4% (5)	100% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)
	False	28.6% (2)	0% (0)	100% (1)	100% (1)

Controlling for the number of faculty, there is an interactive relationship between institution type and the need for more resources.⁵ Most respondents agree that more resources are needed to run internship programs. For instance, respondents at universities without a doctoral program agree that more resources are needed, including 71.4% (10) of programs with 4–10 faculty, 71.4% (5) of programs with 11–15 faculty, 50% (1) of programs with 16–25 faculty, and 100% (4) of programs with over 25 faculty. However, respondents at liberal arts institutions with small (1–3 faculty) and medium (11–15 faculty) believe that they do not need more resources to compensate faculty or staff in running internships.

While institution type does matter, location (Chi-Square=10.80, p= .546) and whether an institution is public or private are not statistically significant factors (Chi-Square=6.64, p=.156). How faculty are compensated has no statistical association with financial support for students (Chi-Square=1.65, p=.801) or faculty perceptions about whether or not internships reinforce economic inequalities (Chi-Square 9.47, p=.304). Lastly, faculty compensation is not associated with whether a department intends to expand its internship program in the future (Chi-Square=3.72, p=.881).

WAYS TO RETHINK INTERNSHIPS

Faculty can be compensated in a variety of ways, including a stipend, a course release, or accumulating a number of internships to count for a course in load. However, less than half of all programs compensate faculty for internship coordination or supervision. This lack of pay and lack of emphasis on the value

of internship work could manifest in lower amounts of time and energy that the faculty mentor invests in the internship. Although resources for internship opportunities can be coordinated by an internship or career services office, the academic nature of for-credit internships demands faculty oversight and sufficient compensation.

Because unequal access to internships endures, internships for which students pay tuition are neither affordable nor feasible. Yet, if we rethink internships to emphasize accessibility and do away with tuition for internships, then what does that mean for faculty compensation? Faculty mentor students throughout the process and oftentimes counsel many interns. One way to rethink compensation is for each internship to count towards a course in load, at least fractionally. One example would be to set the minimum number of students required for a course as the number of internships that counts for a course in load. For instance, if the minimum number of students is eight, then eight internships are needed to have a course count in load. Faculty would accrue these internship credits towards a course in load until they reached the required number for a course to run. This option is more workable for smaller institutions with fewer internships throughout the year, in comparison to large institutions with many interns that would potentially require more faculty resources and supervision; in that case, it would make sense to provide compensation for a position rather than as an add-on to current internship responsibilities.

Internship mentoring should also be included in faculty considerations for promotion and tenure. Whereas individual mentoring can count in the teaching elements of promotion packets, contributions for mentoring should be counted as service to the institution. Mentoring students requires connecting theory to practice, a teaching skill; and being a faculty mentor is a service to the institution because it increases retention, improves recruitment, and improves job prospects for new graduates (Hora et al. 2019b; Kuh 2008; McClellan et al. 2021; McHugh 2016).⁶

CONCLUSIONS

This research exploring how faculty perceive the relative value of political science internships and how they are compensated for their internship-related work sheds light on some of the similarities and differences among institutions. The results raise deeper questions and suggest several different directions for expanding this work.

Faculty receive compensation in many different ways, but over one-third of faculty are not compensated for their work with internships. Lack of compensation has the potential to negatively affect internship offerings, level of faculty oversight, connections with alumni, and new internship opportunities in the community. Community college faculty are especially interested in additional resources for delivering internship programs to their students to help them prepare for careers and connect their academic learning to experience.

Faculty across the board agree that more resources are needed to facilitate internships. Institutional investment in both support for students and compensation for faculty are impactful for student learning and perceived educational value (Hora et al. 2019b). There are opportunities to work with alumni relations to develop scholarships, community partnerships, and investments in career-related internships.⁷ Faculty should communicate the value of internships to administrators, who in turn can convey these priorities to prospective donors. Internships remain valuable to institutions of higher education because they shorten the time for recent graduates to find a job (Knouse and Fontenot 2008), are a long-term investment in soon-to-be-alumni, and are a high-impact practice that is a retention tool (Kuh 2008).

Apart from the faculty perceptions and compensation issues addressed here, constructing a more holistic picture of internships would require additional information about compensation levels, institutional initiatives, or possibly strategic planning for making major investments in experiential learning. Many faculty agree that adequate compensation would help ensure appropriate levels of internship supervision, which directly affects students' preparation for internship work (Hora et al. 2019a), student learning outcomes (McHugh 2016), and perception of the value of internships (Hora et al. 2019b). However, as our survey results show, although many in the political science profession believe that internships are an important learning experience for many students, about half do not acknowledge that internships reinforce inequalities among students. These perceptions will shape the future of internships in our discipline as much as others who recognize the potential for change will. The hope is that knowledge will better equip us to focus on student learning outcomes in academic internship experiences and create more equity for students and faculty.

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ENDNOTES

1. In the first survey, respondents were nearly evenly split between public and private institutions, with 50.9% from the former (n= 59) and 49.2% from the latter (n=57). A plurality (43.3%) identified their institution as a liberal arts college, another 35.8% PhD programs in political science, and two respondents (1.7%) were at two-year community colleges. All of the major geographic regions of the United States were represented, including 28.3% of respondents from the Midwest, 26.7% from the Northeast, 32.5% from the South, and 11.7% from the West. The overwhelming majority of respondents (87.4%) worked in standalone political science departments, with most of the remainder in combined or catch-all social science departments. More than half (57%) of their departments were small, with ten or fewer faculty members; at the other extreme, large departments of 25 or more faculty accounted for just 12.6% of the sample. One potential source of bias in our sample was department size, which (unsurprisingly) is strongly associated with the type of institution. All but seven of the private institutions represented in our survey had an undergraduate population of under 5,000 (87.7%, n=50), whereas almost all of the public institutions in our sample had populations over 5,000 (88.1%, n=52). In the second survey of community colleges, among the 38 respondents, the West (68.4%, n=26) was overrepresented, and equal numbers were from the Midwest, Northeast, and South (4 each, 10.5%). Community colleges with large populations also led our sample; 35% (n=13) numbered over 15,000 students. Another 27% had populations between 5,001 and 15,000, and 27% had between 2,501 and 5,000. Between these two indicators, we believe the geographic variable could be more problematic in terms of introducing bias, as educational practice is largely tied to state law (and we assume California respondents dominate our sample, given the state's out-sized presence with 114 campuses).
2. If they were compensated, respondents were asked to explain how in an open-ended, follow-up item.
3. Among the respondents, there are political science departments that do not have an internship program and therefore have no need to compensate faculty to run an internship program (18.1%, n=30).
4. Interestingly, institution type does not affect faculty perceptions of internships as reinforcing inequalities between students, even though institution type does affect inequalities among faculty.
5. While a relationship was present between institution type and need for more resources, it was not statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.
6. Internship programs that connect with their alumni network are also opportunities for alumni to give back and build a positive relationship with the institution.
7. Applications such as Alumni Fire or Handshake are new programs that institutions are using to connect to alumni, which can be leveraged by departments for internship purposes.