“I feel like the mother of interns!” says Marie Gladbach, a 1972 alumna who was the first Truman student to participate in a new internship program that the University had just established when she was attending college in the early ’70s. Today, the Missouri Government Internship Program, often referred to as the Jefferson City Internship Program, is flourishing at Truman providing juniors and seniors from a variety of disciplines who are interested in working with a legislator, a public official or a state agency. The interns, who live and work in Jefferson City, Mo., for a semester, get an inside look at state government and the political process.

Over the last 3 1/2 decades, more than 400 students have participated in the Missouri Government Internship Program at Truman, a learning experience that complements classroom theory with hands-on experience.
THE MISSOURI GOVERNMENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM at Truman dates back to 1972 when Darrell Krueger, an assistant professor of political science, first developed the program. Krueger had attended a conference in Washington, D.C., which called for the implementation of such programs at colleges and universities, and Gilbert Kohlenberg, then head of the Division of Social Science, called upon Krueger to establish a program at Truman.

KRUEGER’S GOAL WAS TO DEVELOP a program that would provide students with skills that they could not obtain within the structure of the college curriculum. In 1972, Gladbach, the first student to take advantage of the program, interned for Charles McClain, who was serving as president of the University at the time. Although Gladbach did not live and work in Jefferson City, Mo., for a semester like today’s participants, she conducted research for McClain and followed legislative issues that had an impact on the University.

“I’M PROUD AND HONORED to have been the first Missouri Government intern at what was then Northeast Missouri State College,” says Gladbach. “I’m especially proud to have been a participant in a program that has developed into one of the best, if not the best, in my opinion.” Her internship experience led to a career involving politics and government, and after graduating from the University, Gladbach taught political science, worked in politics statewide, and then went to work in the Missouri State Capitol. “I have served in some of the most interesting positions in state government while working for a governor, secretary of state, and a prominent state senator,” says Gladbach, who now works as a legislative assistant in the Missouri House of Representatives.

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, the program has helped students like Gladbach and those who followed in her footsteps gain hands-on experience in politics and government. Stuart Vorkink, a professor of political science who is now retired, became involved in the internship program shortly after its inception when he first came to Truman in 1973 and says they operated under the assumption that the student-interns were to serve as full-time staff assistants to the legislators. “The interns were expected to be part of the team, to act as professionals, not students; if the legislator and legislative staff stayed late, the interns were expected to stay late,” says Vorkink. “We wanted the legislators to benefit as well as the students.”
IN 1989-1990 WHILE ON SABBATICAL, Candy Young, a political science professor, was spending time in Jefferson City in the Missouri State Capitol. Through her interactions with the Truman students who were interning in the Capitol, Young became aware of an opportunity that would allow the interns to get a handle on the entire legislative process during their time in Jefferson City.

UP TO THAT TIME, the interns had stayed close to the office to which they had been assigned. Young proposed a system in which Truman could have a class in the Capitol on Monday mornings – a time when legislators were not in the building. The class would provide an opportunity for the students to expand their awareness of what was going on in the building for that session and enhance their understanding of the relationships between the House and the Senate.

YOUNG HELPED PUT TOGETHER a team-taught course, and with strong support from Jim Lyons, then head of the Social Science Division at Truman, the first class started in 1991. “I think giving the interns the opportunity for discussion in the classroom has been very helpful,” says Young. “They are able to hear other students’ views of legislative issues as well as the views of the guests we invite to speak to the class.” Student interns are also able to meet a number of former Truman interns who now work in professional positions in the Capitol and Jefferson City. For example, Supreme Court Justice Mary (Rhodes) Russell (‘80) hosts interns at the Missouri Supreme Court; Paul Wagner (‘93), associate commissioner of the Missouri Department of Higher Education, helps student interns understand the state budget and education funding formulas; and Brian Schmidt (‘04), the analyst for the Joint Committee on Tax Policy, shows students how proposed legislation will alter property tax reassessments.
IN ADDITION TO FORMER TRUMAN INTERNS, the class also affords students the opportunity to hear from other influential people in Missouri state politics. One of the speakers students have enjoyed over the years is John Britton, a highly regarded lobbyist who has worked in the Capitol for 50 years. For one of his talks, Britton began by quoting one of Shakespeare’s soliloquies, however, he started in the middle of it rather than at the beginning. When he asked the class if anyone knew the source of his quote, several of the interns said yes. Then Britton asked if anyone knew the beginning of the soliloquy and Adam Aderton (’01), one of the interns, began reciting the soliloquy from the beginning. Britton, who graduated from Harvard with a degree in philosophy, nodded approvingly and responded, “Ahh, a liberal arts college.” “It couldn’t have been a better advertisement for Truman,” says Young.

SERVING AS A SUPERVISOR for the Missouri Government Internship Program, Young discovered that in addition to benefiting students, the program also serves as a faculty development opportunity. Although she does not get to sit in on as many hearings in Jefferson City as she would like, Young says that what she is able to pick up by osmosis from the interns provides tremendous examples for concepts she is trying to communicate to students sitting in her classrooms back on campus.

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FORMER INTERNS CELEBRATE PROGRAM’S 35TH ANNIVERSARY

More than 400 Truman students have participated in the Missouri Government Internship Program since its inception in 1972. In January 2007 at the annual Mid-Missouri Alumni and Legislative Reception held in Jefferson City, Mo., the University celebrated the 35th anniversary of Truman’s Missouri Government Internship Program.

Several former interns attended the event and posed for the photo below. Front row, left to right: Curt Dwyer (’92), Erica (Wille) Bredehoft (’03), Vanessa Crawford (’05), Erin Wood (’02), Mary (Rhodes) Russell (’80), Randa Rawlins (’79), Joy (Jackson) Concannon (’01), and Joe Bredehoft (’05). Middle row, left to right: Professor of Political Science Candy Young, David Clithero (’83), Ellen (Hoelscher) McLain (’87), Marie Gladbach (’72), Stephanie (Amick) Bell (’05), Susan (Torrillo) Masi (’92), Ken Hussey (’01), and David Bonner (’07). Back row, left to right: Scott Zajac (’85), Marty Romitti (’90), Evan Montgomery (’05), Mike DuBois (’01), Ryan Brennan (’95), Zach Monroe (’07), and Ryan Hart (’07).
Expanding Opportunities for Students

EMILY KIDDOO (‘08) was among the group of Truman students who interned in Jefferson City this past spring. Kiddoo, who was assigned to work with Senate President Pro Tem Mike Gibbons, said one of her primary responsibilities involved working with the Senator’s correspondence. “It was a challenge to answer the concerns of every person who writes or calls in, but it was rewarding to know that you were able to help someone with their issue and at the same time help the Senator more fully understand the demands of his constituents,” says Kiddoo.

KIDDOO WAS ALSO RESPONSIBLE for attending all of the meetings for the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Conservation, Parks and Natural Resources; Commerce, Energy and the Environment; and Education. “It was exciting to hear testimony by people interested in a bill and see how legislation was written and changed before it came to the Senate floor,” says Kiddoo. “I have learned the importance of clear communication and argument, something I do not think you can learn sitting in the classroom or writing papers.” She also faced her fear of heights and learned how to take people to the Whispering Gallery and the top of the Capitol dome.

WHILE STUDENTS LIKE KIDDOO receive course credit for the Missouri Government Internship, they must make arrangements for housing and other living expenses, and former participants have demonstrated strong support for the program. In 2006, the Missouri Government Internship Endowment was established with a $40,000 gift from Advantage Capital Partners; two of the firm’s partners, Scott Zajac (‘85) and Ryan Brennan (‘95), had served as interns while at Truman. The endowment was created through the Truman State University Foundation to provide a permanent source of revenue to support and
expand the Missouri Government Internship Program at Truman. Earnings from the Missouri Government Internship Endowment support stipends for the interns to help defray the cost of living and working in Jefferson City for a semester. A year after the endowment was established, Randa Rawlins (’79), a former president of Truman’s Board of Governors and general counsel for Shelter Insurance in Columbia, Mo., designated a $25,000 gift for the endowment. Rawlins served as an intern in 1979.

THE ENDOWMENT WILL ALLOW even more students to participate in the Missouri Government Internship Program, an experience that students often describe as “life-changing.”

If you would like to support the Missouri Government Internship Endowment, contact the Office of Advancement, (800) 452-6678 or (660) 785-4133 or visit http://giving.truman.edu.

Igniting a Passion for Public Service

Marty Romitti (’90) talks about the rewarding experience he had working as an intern for then State Representative Phil Tate 18 years ago. Romitti went on to pursue a career in public service and now serves as director of the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center, Department of Economic Development, State of Missouri.

My participation in the Missouri Government Internship Program as a senior at Truman State University in 1990 stands out as one of the most valuable educational experiences I have had, and it certainly benefited my career after graduation. For me, the internship was successful because the state representative I worked for, Phil Tate, really took the time and made the effort to inform me about the legislative process and to involve me with important projects. It was also fun. I made great friends with the other student interns and staff at the Capitol during my time in Jefferson City.

Most directly, the internship confirmed my interest in pursuing a career in public service. I went on to graduate school in public administration and public policy after leaving Kirksville. Later, the internship became an important related experience in landing a job with the State of Missouri. I have worked for the state for the past 11 years, and it has been very satisfying.

— MARTY ROMITTI, Class of 1990