

MIW Fall 2019 Cohort Internships and Bios



William Babka

National History Center; UC-Merced Political Violence Lab; Holocaust Museum

My name is William Babka. I am currently a senior at the University of Michigan, studying for a political science major and history minor. My particular interests in these two fields would be international politics and European history, respectively. While in Washington I hope to intern somewhere that pertains to these studies, such as museums like the Smithsonian or the Library of Congress. Outside of my studies I have great interest in astronomy, natural history, and psychology. I love helping out the community, and have spent numerous hours volunteering at the Catholic Charities of Flint and Owosso and Woodhaven Senior Community in Flint Township. In my free time I enjoy taking walks, developing my photography skills, drawing, and watching documentaries. I have been a huge motorsports fan since I was just two years old, and have closely followed racing series like NASCAR, IndyCar, and Formula 1 over the years. On most Sundays you can find me watching the day's races cheering on my favorite drivers.



Samantha Bickety

Office of Senator Gary Peters

Samantha Bickety is a passionate seeker of criminal justice reform and aspiring federal public defender. She is a rising junior at the University of Michigan with a major in political science and minor in African American studies. Samantha was born in Nairobi, Kenya then raised in southwest Alaska and Grand Rapids, MI. On campus, Samantha is involved in pre-law sorority Delta Gamma Phi, intramural soccer, and the Black Student Union. This summer she will be interning for the assistant district attorney in Grand Rapids and studying abroad at the London School of Economics. In her rare times of procrastination, Samantha can be found trying to catch up on Game of Thrones or listening to Beyoncé and all things R&B.



Azia Bishop
Office of Rep. Jose Serrano

Azia Bishop is an undergraduate at the University of Michigan where she is pursuing a bachelor of arts in political science. After graduation, she plans to take a gap year as a paralegal before attending law school. She is specifically interested in the public policy subfield because it consists of social welfare. Her passion lies in helping people make a viable living, as well as making opportunities accessible and affordable. This interest solidified during her freshman year after conducting research at the Center for the Study of Black Youth in Context, where she is investigating the experiences of black undergraduates attending predominantly white institutions. More recently, she is on the Peer Committee for Michigan's Black Undergraduate Law Association, and a member of Michigan's only pre-law sorority, Delta Gamma Phi. She has also been accepted to the Michigan in Washington program, where she will live, intern and take classes in DC for one semester. While there, she hopes to secure an internship involving education policy and gain meaningful experience for her future in law.



Jaylen Bradley
Office of Senator Debbie Stabenow

Jaylen Bradley is a rising and enthusiastic College of LSA junior studying political science and sociology - as a double major. He will be working on his honors thesis coursework in sociology once he returns to Michigan in Winter 2020. As a Michigan native who currently lives in the Detroit Metro area, Jaylen brings to the Michigan in Washington program his diverse skill-set. He served as a fellow for NextGen America (an environmental advocacy nonprofit and political action committee). He also served as a legislative intern during the summer of 2018 in the Michigan House of Representatives in Lansing (serving under his hometown's state representative). In addition, Jaylen will gain a wealth of knowledge from his experiences from both the House of Commons of Canada political internship (serving under the assistant deputy speaker in Ottawa, Ontario) this Spring 2019. Also, in the Summer of 2019, he plans to work within the City of Detroit's Mayor Internship Program serving in the Department of Neighborhoods. // Outside of this

experience, Jaylen is a very compassionate individual who really values diversity, equity, and inclusion. He continues in upholding what he feels is his civic duty and responsibility - giving back to his community. In his free time, Jaylen enjoys volunteering in the community, spending time with family and friends, traveling, exploring different types of food and music, and advocating for various causes related to human rights, criminal justice, and education. On campus, Jaylen serves as the rising Co-Vice President of the Black Undergraduate Law Association, is a member of the Undergraduate Political Science Association, the Residential College, CSP Bridge Scholars Plus, the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and the Black Student Union. In his freshmen year, he even created and spearheaded the Residential College's Diversity and Politics Forum (called the D.A.P. Forum) where students engage weekly in political and social justice related dialogue for elective credit- and it still is going strong. He is a Resident Advisor who also has found time to work with many other administrative advisory boards/organizations on campus – all while maintaining an honorable grade point average. Ultimately, Jaylen lives by the motto of “Dream big. Set goals. Take action,” and wishes to be a positive agent of change while working diligently as a civil rights and international law attorney. Ultimately, he wishes to later pursue a career working in public service as an elected (state or federal) government official.



Suzanna Duba
Kenan Institute at the Wilson Center

Suzanna Duba is a junior in International Studies and the School of Information. Although she is quite terrible at learning languages, she is also studying Russian and Ukrainian, so she speaks some bad Surzhyk. She spent last summer as a Public Affairs intern at the US Embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine, and will be interning with Ernst & Young's Strategy team in Moscow, Russia, this summer. On campus she is the Events Coordinator for Students for Life, works at the Language Resource Center, and has conducted research under Dr. Anthony Marcum. Broadly, some academic interests include the media & disinformation, privacy & security, and the impact of big tech on geopolitics. // Originally from Grand Rapids, Michigan, Suzanna lived and worked around the country as a professional ballet dancer for four years, before deciding to transfer to UM. However, she loves big cities, and so is very excited to get back to the east coast! In her limited free time, she likes to eat Cherry Republic salsa, listen to select podcasts, go running or to the gym, and squander all her savings on traveling. She is a news junkie and daily coffee consumer, and genuinely appreciates thoughtful conversation with just about anyone.



Jay Hopelain
Office of Rep. Colin Allred

I am a senior from Mill Valley, a small town just north of San Francisco, majoring in political science with a keen interest in politics and public policy. Last summer I was selected to be a full-time summer fellow and worked on then-candidate Colin Allred's congressional campaign for the 32nd District in Texas. My courses at University of Michigan and working with Congressman Allred, a former civil rights attorney, have given me a strong interest in civil rights law, particularly voting rights and pursuing a career in protecting the right to vote. Both of these experiences have convinced me of the need to strengthen the Voting Rights Act, and I hope to be able to work to do so for my internship and beyond. Having worked on a successful campaign, I am eager to learn about government and policy-making, especially policy regarding voting rights by working in Washington, D.C.. I have a strong belief in public service and a love for travel and have spent two summers in Ecuador working for a reforestation organization and another summer in Thailand teaching English. I plan to continue to combine my belief in public service and love of travel in the form of more trips in the future. In my free-time, when not planning my next trip, I love to watch my hometown teams when I can, despite the east coast time-zone, and I love to go outdoors and play sports myself.



Cece Huddleston
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation

Priscilla Cece Huddleston is a Senior at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor studying Sociology with a subplan in Law, Justice, and Social Change. Cece, a proud Detroit native, served as an Urban Government Intern at the Dept. of Elections, under Detroit City Clerk Janice Winfrey. In this position, she worked to interpret the election code into training sessions for local Detroit precinct workers, directly working with both the Dept. of Elections Administrative team and citizens of Detroit. While on campus, Cece participated in a number of community service and activism organizations. She served as the Political Action Chair of Michigan's Chapter of NAACP, initiating the My ___ Vote Matters campaign, challenging student of color

organizations to promote and increase voter participation in their communities. She was elected and served as a Central Student Government (CSG) Representative for the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and was Chair of the International Awareness and Involvement Committee of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. – Nu Chapter. She most recently served as Campaign Manager of the CSG Campaign Party, Engage Michigan. Though she served her term limits within the organization, Cece wanted to ensure that the next generation CSG continued and pioneered initiatives to better student life. As Campaign Manager, Engage Michigan’s Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates and thirty-three out of thirty-five eligible Representatives were all elected. Included in these are twenty Representatives of Color, seating the most culturally diverse CSG Assembly to date. She was also a member of the University of Michigan Varsity Cheerleading Team, winning two NCA National Champion titles with the team.



Jessica Jamaica
Office of Senator Tammy Duckworth

Hello my name is Jessica Jamaica a current junior of political science and women’s studies. I am from Chicago, Illinois. During my free time I love to go swimming, go to concerts, read books, and write fictional stories. I love Mexican food and try to eat it /cook it as often as possible. I also happen to be a very social person and will try to explore DC as much as possible during my free time. In my professional career I have worked alongside many non-profit organizations especially those that focus on women's issues. I am very excited to be in MIW this fall semester and look forward to experiencing DC.



Lawrence Jia
Department of Justice, Consumer Protection Branch

My name is Larry Jia, a current sophomore studying political science and communications. I’m currently working at Bivouac, a retailer on State Street, and in my free time, I like to ski at Mt. Brighton and hang out at WCBN, the student-run radio station. Some academic interests of mine focus around political theory, human

rights, the prison-industrial complex, and political communication. From these interests, I'm mainly interested in working in public interest or public policy, helping marginalized and underserved people. For the past year, I have volunteered at Peace Neighborhood Center, a non-profit organization, as an after-school tutor. In addition to this, last summer I worked as a research assistant, working with survey data related to political protests and advocacy. I am excited to pursue my interests and gain valuable experience in D.C.



Josie Junkin
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

My name is Josie Junkin, and I am from Madison Heights, MI. I will be a senior in the fall, studying political science and communications. Over the past few summers, I worked at a public school district in substitute teaching and administrative work. From that experience, I realized that I want to eventually pursue a career in lobbying for education policy. On campus, I am involved in Michigan Active Citizens: Alternative Spring Break and its social justice work. I participated on a trip to the International Rescue Committee, where we worked with refugees and taught ESOL classes. The following year, I then led a trip to Junior Achievement where we taught elementary schoolers career exploration, financial literacy, and the importance of voting. These experiences also had a huge impact on my decision to pursue politics and education policy. Outside of that, I'm an avid sports fan (go Lions!), and I love to read. I also really love distance running, so I'm excited to explore DC while practicing.



Jianwei Kapp
Office of Senator Gary Peters

My name is Jianwei Kapp, but everyone calls me Weiwei. I am a junior at the University of Michigan double majoring in political science and economics. I am passionate about legal advocacy and I would like to use my time in Washington to learn more about how to effectively communicate and work with others to create definitive progress towards accomplishing long term goals, such as advancing women's rights and

representation, reforming the criminal justice system, and establishing universal pre-kindergarten. Outside of my internship, I look forward to exploring the city and bonding with my cohort. In my free time I enjoy reading, painting, and playing soccer. Going to Washington has always been a dream for me, and I look forward to spending a whole semester living and working there.



Madison Lazarek
Office of Inspector General within Office of Personnel Management

Madison Lazarek is a junior studying philosophy with minors in Judaic studies and political science. She is interested in pursuing a law degree and hopes to practice corporate law one day. While she has had experience working at the state level of government when she interned for the Attorney General of Michigan, she aspires to have an internship at the federal level. Currently, she works as a substitute teacher. When she is not working or studying, she can be found reading books about politics or history. She also enjoys playing tennis and basketball. She's very excited to live in a big city and explore all it has to offer.



Kaila McCormack
Office of Rep. Debbie Dingell

My name is Kaila McCormack and I am a second-year student studying international studies with a sub-plan in international security, norms and cooperation. My plan is to also obtain a minor in sociology, concentrating in the Program on Law, Justice and Social Change. I am interested in law, public policy, and international relations and how they intersect. In the future, I plan on applying for law school and the end goal is to run for a federal office. Last year, I interned with the Abdul for Michigan gubernatorial campaign as a field intern, which provided me with a wonderful learning experience on a grassroots campaign. I am also an active member of a few groups on campus, such as the College Democrats' women's interest committee and Girl Up. In my free time, I enjoy horseback riding. I have owned my horse, Indy, for 8 years and compete him in

dressage shows during the summer. I also like to play tennis, read, spend time with my family, and travel. This summer, I will be studying abroad in Stockholm, Sweden and taking a course on understanding terrorism. During my time in D.C., I hope to learn more about the ins and outs of working on The Hill, develop my writing skills, and create a network of contacts in the nation's capital. I cannot wait to live, learn and work in Washington D.C. this fall!



Manuel Melendez
The Eisenhower School of National Security & Resource Strategy

Manuel Melendez is a senior at Michigan, double majoring in political science and Middle East studies with a focus in Arabic. I've served in the Marine Corps since 2011, which prompted my interest in international policy and the role of our military overseas. Our semester in DC will be my last before graduating and returning to active duty. I'm looking forward to MIW as an opportunity to learn more about the importance and limitations of our government from another perspective. I'd like to spend my time in DC working with our representatives on policy, in the Department of Defense, or the Department of State. Outside of school I enjoy spending time with my kids, reading non-fiction, working on anything with an engine, and spending entirely too much time at the gym.



Kaitlen Sawyer
Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs, Mexico/Central America Team

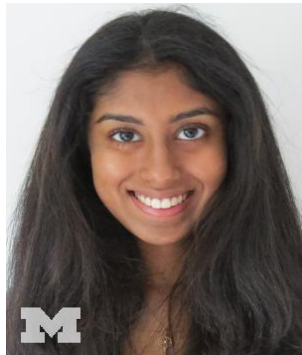
My name is Kaitlen Sawyer, a junior at the University of Michigan, where I study international studies, Spanish, Chinese, and translation. Twice a week, I tutor for PALMA, a student org dedicated to serving Ann Arbor's Latino migrant population. I'm passionate about foreign language, and in my free time you can find me reading classic Spanish literature, watching Japanese anime or listening to Vava on Spotify. I also love to

travel and experience new things, rather it's a trip to the local farmer's market on a Saturday morning, or a summer study abroad in Nanjing, China. I'm excited about the possibility of combining my language skills with my passion for justice and human rights advocacy. Within my major, my coursework is concentrated in the realm of international security, norms and cooperation and I'm interested in collaboration between states and the intersection between international crimes like human trafficking and international law. Sometimes, I dream about being a Foreign Service Officer or working for a Federal Agency like the FBI, but I'm really open to the idea of a career in any field that would allow me to utilize my language and interpersonal skills. I'm hoping that during my time in DC I will be able to put those skills to use in a professional setting. I'm also super excited to live in an internationally diverse environment where I can meet new people, experience DC culture and eat SO much good food!



Zach Vega
Office of Senator Pat Toomey

Zach Vega is a junior studying political science and history at the University of Michigan. He is passionate about economic history and how it shapes current policy. In his free time, he enjoys playing simulation games and following election results and data. After graduation, he would like to further study financial regulation and law.



Arsha Venkat
Office of Senator Chuck Schumer

Arsha R. Venkat is a junior studying political science with a minor in biochemistry. After graduating she plans to attend medical school to work on healthcare access policy both in the United States and abroad. For many families, treatment and medication costs have to be weighed against food and basic needs and families feel immense guilt while simply trying to help everyone. Arsha plans use her time in Washington D.C. to get started in her path to help alleviate the pain many Americans go through. Her biggest passion is people and

how their life stories shape their perspectives. To that end she's spent time both in a children's hospital and a veterans' hospital to see how different their care is. In her free time, Arsha reads World War II war strategy books, watches awful teen tv shows and loves to try new foods.



Caitlyn (Scott) Webster
Human Rights Campaign- Board & Executive Team

Caitlyn is a junior at the University of Michigan pursuing an honors degree in general studies, an individualized interdisciplinary degree. Through the Honors in Engaged Liberal Arts program, she will examine group conflict generated from denial of basic social rights to evaluate the future of preventative policy in international human rights law. Caitlyn wants to continue her studies in policy evaluation and international and comparative law. Her areas of interest are the history of art, international studies, and social theory and practice. Caitlyn transferred from Oakland Community College, where she studied after getting her GED at 16. She just finished working at the office of Member of Parliament Robert Oliphant and studying at the University of Ottawa. In her spare time, Caitlyn enjoys painting, hiking, and ceramics. Her artistic inspirations are Frederic Leighton, Kehinde Wiley, Whyn Lewis, and Frida Kahlo. She also enjoys visiting museums and cultural sights, which are one of the many things she is excited to experience in D.C.