California’s Capital Fellows Programs

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A brief history

• Internship programs have existed in the California State Legislature since the 1940s.

• The fellowship program in its current form began in the 1970s, when both houses added certain elements to their internship programs
  • Increased the pay.
  • Added an academic seminar component.
  • More deliberate about teaching fellows about the legislative process

• Moved from the Legislature to CSU Sacramento in the 1980s.
Structure

• Fellowship program is 11 months, beginning in October

• Assembly and Senate Fellowship Programs each managed by a director, who works for CSU Sacramento (Center for CA Studies)

• 18 fellows selected per year, per house (Assembly and Senate)

• Assembly and Senate offices submit applications for fellows, and interview them.

• Program director determines placements.

• Placements divided between Democrat and Republican offices based on representation in each house.
Mentorship

• Program directors serve as primary contacts and mentors for their 18 fellows.

• Legislative staff serve as *formal mentors* in each placement office. They work closely with the program director in supervising and mentoring fellows.

• Fellows are encouraged from day one to network with legislative and executive branch staff, and seek out *informal mentors*.

• Because the fellows programs are established and well-known*, many legislative staff offer to mentor fellows on an informal basis.

*Many former fellows have gone on to become local and statewide elected officials.*
Supervision and Human Resources for fellows

• Fellows are enrolled graduate students AND employees of CSU Sacramento.
• They are supervised and mentored by both the Center staff (all CSU employees) and legislative staff.
• Fellows work under both sets of HR rules and policies, which are governed by state and federal employment laws.
• If there is a sexual harassment incident, or misconduct toward the fellow, the fellow is supposed to communicate with their program director or the university’s Title IX compliance officer. The university’s Title IX office investigates the incident.