

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CERTIFICATE IN PRACTICAL POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

1. What are “public sector” careers?

There are many professional pathways in the public sector. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, federal, state and local governments employ 17 percent of the U.S. workforce. Nonprofit organizations represent more than 10 percent of all jobs in the U.S.

Government careers include:

- International affairs: diplomacy, international development
- Domestic and foreign policy analysis
- Legislative and communications staff for elected officials, government committees, councils, and agencies
- Public service law: prosecutor, public defender, legal aid
- Criminal justice: law enforcement, juvenile and probation services, judicial administration
- Public health, education, and community service agencies

Non-governmental public sector careers include:

- Interest group advocacy and lobbying
- Electoral campaigning: public and media relations, political strategists, campaign managers and consultants, pollsters and political consultants
- Community or labor organizing
- Nonprofit administrators – marketing, event planners, fundraisers, etc.

2. What skills do public sector employers look for?

In a recent survey, executives and hiring managers were asked to rate how important it is for recent college graduates they are hiring to demonstrate proficiency in a list of 15 skills and knowledge areas.

The skill and knowledge areas of greatest importance when hiring were **oral communication**, critical thinking, ethical judgment, **working effectively in teams**, **working independently**, **self-motivation**, written communication, and **real-world application of skills and knowledge**

- **Participation in applied and project-based learning experiences—particularly internships or apprenticeships—gives recent college graduates an edge.**

3. *What is the Public Service Internship?* <https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/catholic-institute-for-lasallian-social-action/public-service-internship-program-psi>

The **Public Service Internship Program (PSI)** is a credit-bearing learning experience coordinated by the Catholic Institute for Lasallian Social Action (CILSA) in collaboration with the Politics Department. PSI students are unpaid interns (8-10 hours/week for one semester) at Bay Area non-profits big and small, city governments, and any type of entity that would fall under the notion of "public service."

The internship also includes an academic component during which PSI interns explore together topics related to each student's field of study.

PSI interns earn community engagement (CE) credit, receive an upper-division course credit (POL 195), and receive a \$1,000 Educational Leadership Scholarship upon completion. For more information, contact **Samantha Coon, Coordinator for Civic Leadership** (smc6@stmarys-ca.edu) **(925) 631-8168**

4. *Which faculty member should supervise my POL 195, 197/192 internships?*

You may approach any member of the Politics Department about supervising your internships.

5. *Should the four Democracy Lab courses be taken consecutively?*

Not necessarily. Students leading a campaign are advised to take them consecutively in order to maintain momentum on the campaign. Students doing voter registration/turnout activities should take them when spring primaries and/or fall elections happen. Consult with your faculty advisor.

6. May students who are not pursuing the Certificate enroll in these courses?

Yes, these courses are open to qualified students. The upper-division courses presume completion of POL 2, Introduction to American Politics.