

The Washington Center

Cordova & Fernós
Congressional
Internship Program

Washington, D.C.



The TWC Experience

The Washington Center's Internship Program is designed to complement the academic experience of the traditional higher education institution by providing a professional semester or summer.

The structure of our program requires students to immerse themselves into a quality internship experience, participate in relevant career readiness and a relevant course and learn from one of our professors of practice in our academic course.

In our end-of-semester survey that we've conducted over the past four years, TWC interns give their internship an average of 4.5 out of 5 stars.



The Internship

We help students connect and apply their academic learning to the professional world through personalized internship placement and career development training. Students gain hard skills through the work they perform at their internships, develop critical soft skills—including adaptability, global/intercultural fluency, communication and teamwork—and build professional networks. Our internships are unique because we:

- Vet all our internship sites and ensure supervisors have been trained in internship best practices and are prepared to offer one-to-one mentorship and support to their students.
- Conduct regular check-ins to assess each student's progress and well-being.
- Offer conflict-resolution and support services for the workplace if students need them.
- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation at the end of each experience that identifies a student's strengths and improvement areas based on competencies employers value.

“

When I applied to TWC, I had no idea what I wanted to do as an intern, let alone what organizations were available. I am a double major in business and healthcare, so I knew I had a broad range of options ahead of me. Fortunately, TWC helped me narrow things down to specifics.

Morganne Blazejak, a double major in healthcare administration and healthcare science at Alvernia University (PA).



91%

of TWC's internship sites would consider hiring their intern full-time if a position became available.

SkillSurvey data from TWC internship sites

The Internship Placement Process

Our internship matching process is designed to help students understand how searching for and applying to jobs in the real world works. At the same time, our advisors guide students through the process, helping them to connect their career goals and interests to secure an internship that is the best fit for them.

Student Growth and Success That's Driven by Data

TWC has partnered with the [SkillSurvey Career Readiness Project™](#), to assess each student's skills following their internship experience. This tool uses 360-evaluations from the student, their supervisor, and their colleagues to measure expertise in eight core competencies that employers value in applicants. The report enables students to reflect on their internship experiences in a tangible and data-driven way—and it provides them with action steps for further growth.

Recently updated, each competency has a set of sample behaviors associated with it. These were validated through research that the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) conducted in partnership with [SkillSurvey](#). The 2.5-year project involved 36,000+ interns, 60,000 supervisors & co-workers at 10,000+ employing organizations, and more than 150 colleges and The Washington Center. This work aims to play a important role in developing career-ready graduates and a successful workforce.

The Career Readiness Report measures expertise in essential competencies employers demand today:

1. Career and Self-Development
2. Communication
3. Critical Thinking
4. Equity and Inclusion (new)
5. Leadership
6. Professionalism
7. Teamwork
8. Technology

To review the list of competencies and sample behaviors visit [NACE's website](#)

67%

of companies expect work-from-home to be permanent or long-lasting.



Get to Know The Team Behind Our Internships

Our Office of Pre-Arrival and Employer Relations is led by a Director of Internships and assigns its staff to two focus areas that work hand-in-hand through the internship matching process. One side of the team is responsible for working with students through their internship matching journey and the other side of the team is responsible for managing employer relations. Both teams work together to find the right experience and fit for each student.

A shift to virtual internships during the pandemic offered students a preview to the future of work

The public health crisis has permanently transformed the workplace, and knowing how to navigate the workplace in-person **and** virtually will be an important differentiator for young professionals.

In 2020, in response to the pandemic and the unavailability of in-person internships in Washington, TWC shifted its experiential learning model by offering virtual internships as an alternative for students who wished to continue with their plans to advance their careers, but didn't have the option of traveling. After matching more than 500 students with virtual internships over the past two years, we know that these experiences have value because that's where work is happening today and where the workforce is heading tomorrow. We are proud to know that all of our students will be better prepared to enter the workforce in spite of the challenges they faced over the two years.

Aside from the essential core competencies that can be developed through an in-person internship, there are skills acquired through a virtual or hybrid internship that will matter when your students seek their first job, such as

- Working autonomously
- Time management
- Digital literacy
- Initiative and self-awareness

TWC has worked with its internship site hosts to ensure all students receive a quality experience regardless of internship format (in-person, hybrid or virtual).



Additional Resources
[Sample Internships](#)



The Academic Course

Our goal is to provide students with an integrated workplace and academic experience, and the academic course is key to creating this experience. Cordova and Fernós students take a **14-week course on Project Development**. The goal of the course is to provide students with tools and methods for designing development projects. Students learn essential concepts in project management and are exposed to diverse issues that arise in the creation and implementation of a project management framework.

Our courses are appropriate for credit as upper-level electives or sometimes for degree requirements in the major.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students are able to:

Knowledge

- Describe key concepts of project management, including problem identification, root cause analysis, logic frameworks, budgeting, cost estimation, team composition, timetable creation and effective communication tactics.
- Explain in depth a pressing political, economic or social challenge affecting Puerto Rico, including the needs and perspectives of multiple stakeholders.
- Analyze Puerto Rico competitive advantages and explore how Puerto Rico can become a stakeholder between the US and Latin America relations.

Skills

- Demonstrate skills of analysis and critical thinking as key components to solving social problems.
- Draw upon and evaluate multiple sources of information and expertise to illuminate challenges and
- research the viability of potential solutions to social and economic problems.
- Persuasively present their project proposals, explaining concisely a pressing need and compellingly the strategic value of possible solutions.

Civic Learning

- Describe the code of conduct and professional ethics for PMP professionals.
- Articulate how their projects demonstrate the five dimensions of social responsibility: (a) the knowledge and support of democratic values, systems and processes, (b) the desire to act beneficially in community and for its members, (c) use of knowledge and skills for the benefit of society, (d) appreciation and interest in the difference of oneself, and (e) personal responsibility.



“

The professional development sessions gave me the language, strategies and skills to effectively communicate my own strengths. As a result, I'm better positioned to determine what I'm looking for in a career and how to market myself as an asset to prospective employers.

Ryan Wells, from Elon University (NC), interned with Amnesty International.



Career Readiness Course

The Career Readiness Course is an essential component of the TWC experience. It allows students to enhance or refine their professional development skills, explore various career paths and industries, and expand their social capital by networking with professionals working in their career of interest. TWC's Career Readiness Course is unique because it helps students:

- Develop the professionalism, communication skills and self-awareness necessary to excel in an in-person or virtual work environment.
- Create, expand and define their professional network.
- Define their career goals by participating in curated career exploration and networking activities.
- Design a personalized plan to prepare for and launch their career, post-graduation.

Students take part in a selection of hands-on career development workshops, panel discussions with experts in their field and networking events. Each session is designed to help students step back from their work week and reflect on their professional interests, where they excel in the workplace, and what they want to learn more of as they pursue a career.

Considering students' desire for greater flexibility in our programming options, we've also begun offering select workshops as asynchronous learning opportunities that students can complete at their own pace.

Our Career Readiness Course has three main components:

1



Professional development, career exploration and networking modules

2



One-on-one career advising

3



Program Assignments

“

When I had a problem or challenge at my internship, I would ask my [Career Advisor]. It's a great resource to help you through anything that may come up during your internship.

Josette John, from the University of the Virgin Islands, interned at the National Cancer Registrars Association.



90%

of students agreed or strongly agreed that their Career Advisors were a valuable resource.

End of program survey results of summer 2020 interns



1

Professional development, career exploration and networking modules.

Students attend a minimum of 10 sessions in a semester or 8 in the summer, from among 30-40 that are typically offered. This mix of hands-on workshops, networking events and workplace simulations is designed to help students optimize their strengths, make lasting connections and prepare to navigate the job market.

- **Professional Development Workshops** teach students the essential professional tools, competencies, skills, and strategies needed to effectively enter the workforce. These sessions cover LinkedIn, salary negotiation techniques, informational interviews, federal resumes and much more.
- **Career Exploration Sessions** allow students to explore specific industries, sectors and organizations that relate to their career goals. These events will give students the opportunity to connect with industry experts and leading professionals in their field, interact with them and ask questions, and of course, engage with other interns from around the country.
- **Networking Events** introduce students to professionals that can help them launch their careers. Networking events will cover a host of specific industries and will likely involve TWC alumni, internship site supervisors and other professionals around the Washington, D.C. and national landscape.

2

One-on-one career advising

Each student is assigned a Career Advisor whose job is to guide and support students during their professional journey. Career Advisors grade assignments and answer questions students have about the program. In addition, they are available for personalized advising sessions covering issues ranging from interviewing skills, to resume construction, to career planning and much more. Career Advisors also arrange weekly touch-points (open office hours) available to all students interested in further developing their professional skills sets and expanding their networks.

3 Career Readiness Program Assignments

Professional ePortfolio

To help students document and reflect upon the learning and experiences during their internship, they will construct an ePortfolio including a wide range of assignments, activities, and accomplishments. This ePortfolio is shared with the campus liaison and it could include work students might use in their applications for future jobs or graduate school applications. As students complete various tasks, assignments, and projects during the semester they upload them onto their ePortfolio. For a sample e-portfolio, [click here](#).

Informational Interviews

Informational interviews are excellent networking tools for job seekers. They allow students to gain practical insight into what it takes to be successful in a particular position or profession. They also allow students to build confidence in their ability to interact with professionals in a chosen field. This gives students the chance to practice strategic outreach and connect with like minded professionals that will help them in the future. Students will need to identify and interview three individuals and complete an informational interview report for each. Students then upload all three reports onto their ePortfolio.

Capstone Reflection

The Capstone Reflection is a chance for students to reflect holistically on their experiences over the semester, what they have learned, and their plans for the future. This culminating reflective assignment requires them to think critically about their internship and how it impacted their career goals, their strengths and areas of improvement, and key insights generated during their semester or summer. Students upload their Capstone Reflection onto their ePortfolio.

Discussion Posts

At specific intervals throughout the semester, Career Advisors pose challenging and thought-provoking questions via Canvas, TWC's learning management system. These questions are aimed at helping students think critically about their professional growth and milestones, impressions about their career, important insights, and much more.



Get to Know The Team Behind Our Career Readiness Course

The Academic Internship Program (AIP) team includes the Chief Academic Officer who oversees all of TWC's programs and the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Career Readiness who sets direction for AIP and ensures the quality of the program. Our Director of AIP manages the day-to-day operation of the program and supervises a team of Career Advisors who create and execute the career readiness curriculum. The Career Advisors work directly with the students during the semester by providing career guidance and serve as the main point of contact while in the program.



“

This experience gave me the confidence needed to believe in myself and make me see that I can be somebody, despite my background and being a first-generation college student.

Tevin Ali, Florida Atlantic University, interned at STEM Connector.



Orientation

The Washington Center's Academic Internship Program orientation combines the best of self-directed learning and live sessions to prepare students for their Washington, D.C. experience. First, each student completes an orientation module in Canvas, our Learning Management System. Later, they meet with their Career Advisor, to begin developing a rapport with the person who will help them optimize their experience.

The self-directed orientation module each student completes includes the following topics:

- Welcome to The Washington Center
- Review of TWC Program Components
 - Component Quiz
- Review of Program Goals & The NACE Career Readiness Competencies
- NACE Competencies Survey
 - Competencies Quiz
- Review of your TWC Support Network
- Career Advisors
- Pre-Advising Survey: tell us a bit about yourself

The live orientation session has a dual focus. For the first hour, students will establish a connection with their Career Advisor and meet other interns through engaged activities. In the second hour, TWC's Career Advisors will provide an overview of key components of the Career Readiness Program and discuss important TWC policies and expectations, including the following:

- Program Components, Program Learning Goals & Learn at Your Own Pace
- Assignments
- Advising
- Expectations & Rules
- Grading, Attendance & Participation
- Important Policies (e.g. internship issues, harassment)

Grading, Policies and Procedures

We provide an academically sound and creditworthy program for students. While our hundreds of institutional partners in the U.S. and abroad approach credit differently, we have found that most will assign 12-16 credit hours for the total experience in the fall and spring semesters and 6-12 credit hours for the summer. Hours of participation or seat time can vary for students in the internship or career readiness course, but we recommend 15 credits for the fall/spring semester and 9 credits in the summer term. Using the Carnegie credit standard, we breakdown recommendations in the following way:

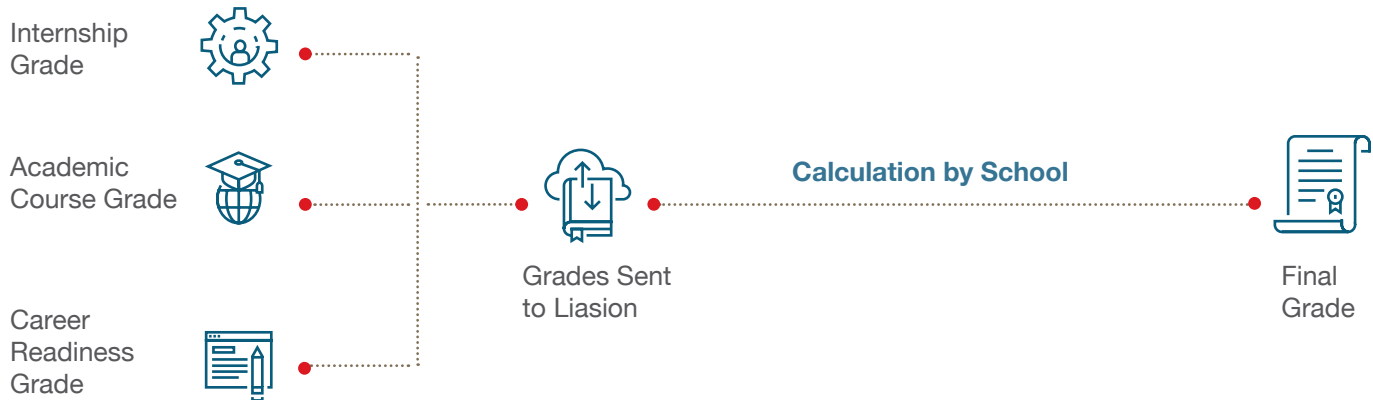
For the fall and spring semester:

- 10 credit hours for the internship experience
- 3 credit hours for the academic course
- 2 credit hours for the career readiness course

At the end of each term, TWC provides a standard recommended letter grade (e.g., A, A-, B+) for each component of the program.

- We work with internship supervisors to evaluate each intern's performance using national career readiness competency standards.
- Course professors and Career Advisors use standard course assessments and measurements to assess student learning and provide a final grade for each student.
- While our grades are recommended (and each school has the option to interpret TWC's grades), most schools use TWC's grade recommendations as their students' final grades.

The Grading Process





“

My internship was an exciting opportunity to experience political communications in a professional environment on a daily basis. It really helped me decide one, to plant my roots in D.C., and two, to change course from my planned, more academic route. TWC was pretty vital in helping me realize what I wanted to do next.

Kelly Miller, from the University of Dayton (OH), interned with the Public Affairs Council.

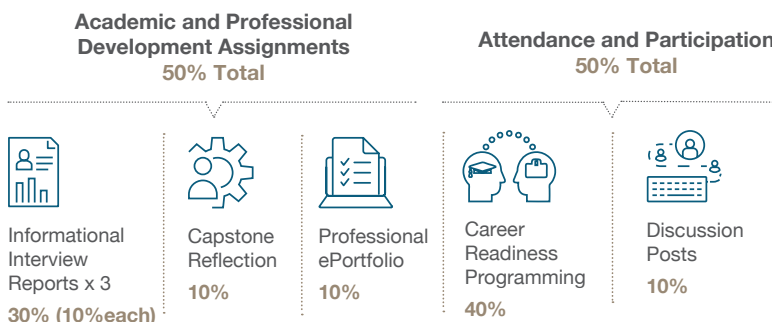


Career Readiness Course Evaluation and Grade Recommendation

The Career Readiness Program is designed to be equivalent to three hours of academic credit. The actual awarding of credit and grade is up to each individual campus.

The grade TWC will recommend for the Career Readiness Program will be based on the following criteria as broken down below.

Career Readiness Course Assignments - Breakdown of Grades



TWC Academic Policies and Procedures

To achieve the learning envisioned in the career readiness syllabus, all students must meet some core expectations and basic rules of engagement. The fulfillment of these expectations will be reflected in the evaluation and grade recommendation (described below). Significant departures from these expectations might raise concerns under the TWC Code of Conduct (see the Policies and Procedures section below and the TWC Code of Conduct).

Timely Completion of Assignments

Many of the topics and activities outlined in the syllabus are scheduled in a sequenced order. Completing some activities earlier in the semester provides a richer basis for subsequent learning. Timely completion of assignments, therefore, is required.

Assignment Late Submission Policy

Students will be deducted one full grade for every day past the submission deadline. After five days, the student may receive a failing grade for the assignment. It is the student's responsibility to preemptively reach out to their Career Advisor if/when they do not think they can meet an assignment deadline.

Uploading to Canvas/Portfolio

All required written work must be uploaded to the appropriate assignment in Canvas. Each student's responsibility is to ensure that documents are uploaded on time, successfully, and according to the assignment instructions.

Attendance

Students are required to attend at least ten career readiness programming options throughout the semester. All programming options will include a registration process for TWC to keep track of attendance. Students will be allowed to attend additional programming events (more than ten) if they desire. If an absence is unavoidable (after registering for an event), students should notify their Career Advisor as quickly as possible.

Absenteeism

Students must attend a minimum of ten career readiness programming events throughout the semester and eight events during the summer. Failure to attend the requisite number of events will result in point deductions from the student's overall grade.

Participation

Active participation in career readiness programming is expected. Participation involves active engagement during sessions and engagement in TWC's online discussion board questions via Canvas.

Timely Arrival

Many of TWC's virtual career readiness programs involve external speakers, TWC staff, your Career Advisors, as well as students from around the country. Out of respect to everyone involved, we expect you to sign in to the event on or before the designated start time. Students who log into events more than 10 minutes after the event start time will not receive participation credit for that event. Additionally, The Washington Center reserves the right not to admit late-arriving students to sessions already in progress.

Academic Honesty

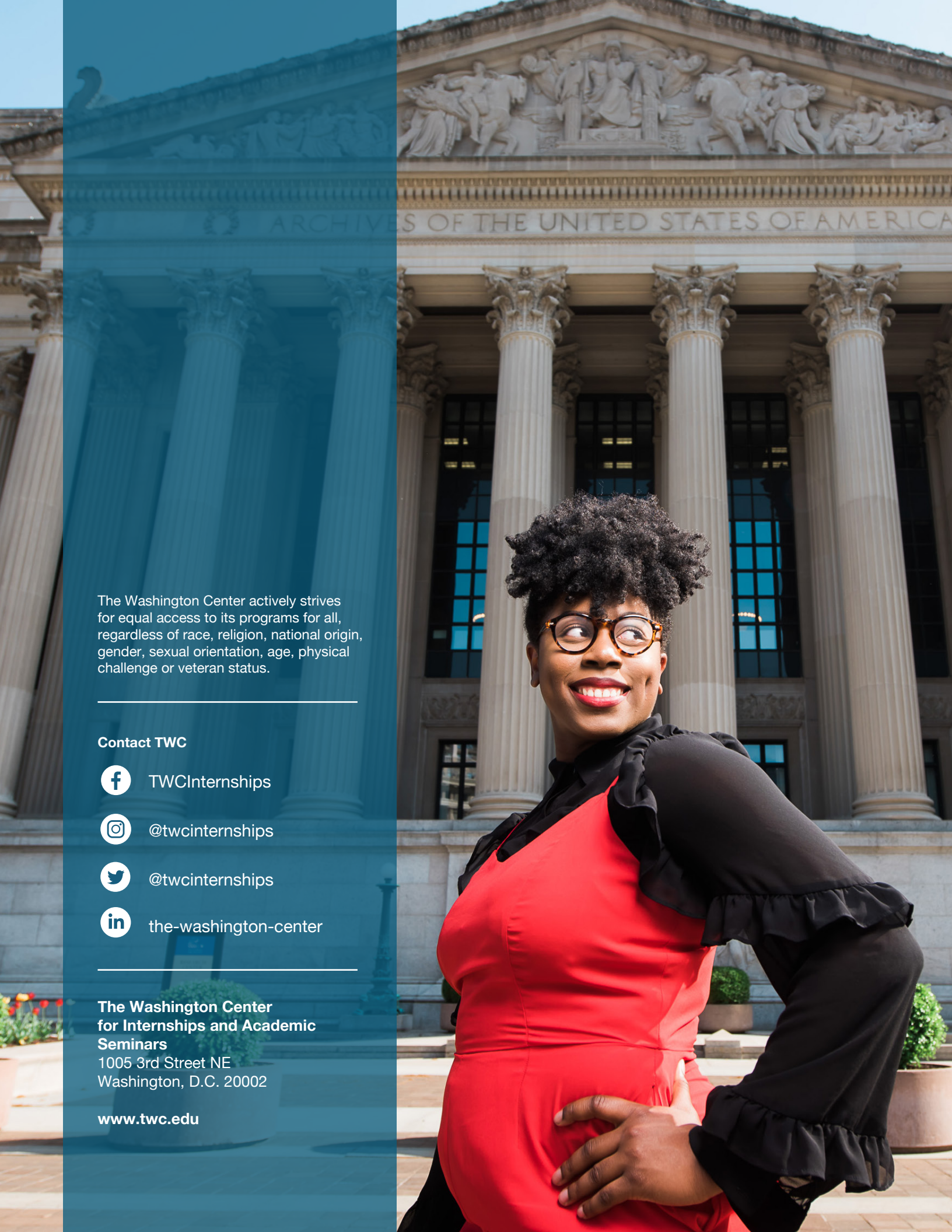
Work submitted by students should reflect their thought and engagement. Any form of plagiarism, falsification, or other dishonesty or misrepresentation may be grounds for failure for the assignment or the Career Readiness Program. It may also trigger procedures under the TWC Code of Conduct.

TWC Code of Conduct

The policies and procedures outlined in this syllabus complement, but do not replace, the expectations and policies outlined in the TWC Code of Conduct. Students are encouraged to review the TWC Code of Conduct on Canvas.

Professionalism

Professionalism is an expectation in all interactions related to The Washington Center. This includes business casual attire at all career readiness programs unless otherwise specified in advance by TWC. Career Advisors will define professional expectations during orientation.



The Washington Center actively strives for equal access to its programs for all, regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical challenge or veteran status.

Contact TWC



TWCInternships



@twcinternships



@twcinternships



the-washington-center

The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars

1005 3rd Street NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

www.twc.edu