



Supporting Student Experiential Learning: The SELF Fund

Empowering GPSIS Students Beyond the Classroom

The SELF Fund's Purpose

The Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies (GPSIS) at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) is committed to providing students with transformative experiential learning opportunities. These activities, including internships, service-learning, research, study abroad, Model United Nations, and more, enhance students' educational journeys and prepare them for meaningful careers. To facilitate these experiences, GPSIS is proud to introduce the Student Experiential Learning Fund (SELF). This fund will offer small grants to students in GPSIS to alleviate some of the financial burdens associated with these enriching endeavors.

Meeting the Need

The creation of the SELF Fund is driven by our dedication to supporting GPSIS students who actively engage in experiential learning activities during their academic programs at UCA. We recognize that these opportunities often come with additional costs, and we aim to bridge this gap. By providing modest grants, we can empower our students to fully embrace the world of experiential learning, both on and off campus.

Our Goal

With your continuing support, this fund will serve as a vital resource for GPSIS students pursuing experiential learning opportunities that require travel, lodging, conference fees, and other expenses. This is not an exhaustive list of needs or support, and every contribution counts toward empowering our students' academic and professional growth.

Examples of GPSIS Student Experiential Learning

- **Professional Internships**

Professional internships offer valuable real-world experience, networking opportunities, and skill development for students. While some internships are unpaid, they can still enhance resumes and help students explore their chosen fields. The issue of unpaid internships raises concerns about financial burdens and equity in access to opportunities, prompting discussions about fair compensation and legal regulations.

- **Service Learning Projects**

We encourage students to actively engage in service-learning projects that span from local to national levels. These initiatives enable them to apply their academic knowledge to real-world situations, fostering civic responsibility and empathy. Through these experiences, our students gain a deeper understanding of community issues and develop the leadership skills needed to make a positive impact.

- **Study Abroad**

UCA's study abroad programs offer students a chance to explore diverse cultures and gain a global perspective, enriching their academic journeys. These programs promote cultural competency, personal growth, and adaptability through cross-cultural experiences and interactions with local communities. Aligned with academic interests, they prepare students to become global citizens equipped to navigate a connected world and contribute positively to society.

- **Independent Student Research**

Our institution is dedicated to fostering independent student research across diverse fields of study. We offer robust support throughout the entire research process, from formulating questions to data collection and analysis, under the guidance of experienced faculty mentors. This commitment enhances students' academic growth, cultivates critical thinking skills, and provides them with valuable hands-on experience to excel in their future academic and professional pursuits.

- **Academic Seminars and Conferences**

GPSIS actively supports students in presenting their research at local and national academic seminars and conferences. These events offer valuable opportunities for students to share their research findings, engage in scholarly discussions, and receive feedback from peers and experts. Participation enhances their presentation and communication skills while fostering connections within the academic community, contributing to their academic and professional development.

- **Model United Nations (MUN)**

Through national MUN conferences, students engage in realistic simulations, embodying diplomatic roles and developing skills in international diplomacy, conflict resolution, and global affairs. This immersive experience not only enhances their public speaking and critical thinking abilities but also fosters cultural sensitivity, empathy, and a global perspective while connecting them with a diverse network of future leaders and experts.

Join Us in Nurturing Future Leaders

By supporting the SELF Fund, you become an essential partner in equipping GPSIS students with the tools they need to excel in their fields and make a positive impact on society. Your contribution, no matter the size, directly enhances the educational journeys of our students and helps them become engaged, informed, and ethical global citizens.

To donate, visit: <http://uca.edu/go/experiential>

To learn more about the SELF Fund, please contact :

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