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## A New Generation

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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## A New Generation

12.03.2012 | Students

University of Dayton student Holly Christian had a choice two summers ago — return to her hometown of Brookville, Ohio, to detassel corn 40 hours a week, passing up a coveted internship in state government, or take the internship and fall further into debt.

She didn't have to choose because the University of Dayton's Statehouse Civic Scholars Program provides housing and a stipend for living expenses for 12 students gaining valuable work experience in state government before graduation.

And now, thanks to a \$50,000 contribution from the AT&T Foundation, those who come after Christian will be able to do the same.

"Equipping our students to graduate ready for the workforce is an important issue for students, our company and our country. Without key college and career readiness skills, students miss out on significant work and life opportunities," said Tom Pelto, president of AT&T Ohio. "Our company and every American business needs an educated workforce to compete globally, and we are thrilled to partner with the University of Dayton's Statehouse Civic Scholars Program."

The gift will maintain the Statehouse Civic Scholars Program for a third year and beyond.

"We are developing the next generation of excellent and ethical public servants in Ohio, teaching them valuable networking skills and, hopefully, giving them a reason to work and live in Ohio after graduation," said Eileen Austria, Statehouse Civic Scholars Program coordinator. "We're also trying to take out the deal breakers, like living and travel expenses. If we want kids to stay in Ohio, we have to find ways to get them in the door (of internships at places like state government). You have to give them a reason to stay in Ohio."

"Thanks to AT&T's generosity, we can continue this program that has been successful for the first two summers."

For each of the past two summers, 12 students worked in the offices of Ohio Gov. John Kasich, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine and Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted, among others.

After the first summer, the program and the students turned heads. Austria said she received inquiries from state representatives about why they didn't have a University of Dayton student placed with them. They want her to get in touch with them earlier so they can have a University of Dayton student.

"Although we usually only take law student externs, I agreed to try a UD college extern, and am I ever glad I did," Ohio Supreme Court Justice Evelyn Stratton said about Christian.

"She was able to take some projects, run with them, and enhance them beyond what I expected. We even shared the results on a proposed website with the Ohio Department of Veterans Affairs, and they were equally impressed."

Seven Statehouse Civic Scholars Program participants have received full- or part-time offers in state government or government relations positions.

The program started with funding from the University of Dayton's College of Arts and Sciences dean's office, the political science department, honors program and government affairs office. It was born from a demand by University of Dayton students for more internships.

"Our students consistently ask for more opportunities," said Jason Pierce, chair of the University's political science department. "Given the investment the students are making in their education, there's an important role for departments to play proactively creating internship programs."

"We really appreciate the investment AT&T is making in our students and in helping them reach their career goals."

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