**Basic Information**

Full name: Danny O’Connor

UC email: oconnodt@mail.uc.edu

College: Mcmicken College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Political Science

Thematic Area: Community Engagement

Expected Start Date: January 2014

Expected End Date: May 2014

**Project Information**

1. Provide a detailed abstract of your proposed honors experiential learning project

 For my proposed honors learning experience, I will be partaking in an internship throughout the spring semester at the office of State Representative Connie Pillich, who will be running for State Treasurer of Ohio in 2014. I will have various responsibilities and duties that will not only cause me to utilize teamwork and cooperation skills, but will also be exposed to various different people through public relations and community engagement. My primary duties will involve working with the financial team in order to obtain resources that will allow Pillich to run a successful campaign. My jobs will include donor research, creating call sheets, fundraising calls, database management, media monitoring, drafting memos, and event planning and staffing. This internship is of crucial importance to me as it is not only my first internships experience, but also relates directly to my area of study in school. This will expose me to a real life political situation that the classroom can not necessarily provide, and will help build my resume to get more of these kinds of opportunities in the future. I will be spending 15-20 hours a week for about 15 weeks with this internship, which will come to a total of approximately 225-300 hours.

**Clearly and thoroughly ad**d**ress how each of the following elements will be exhibited in your work**

1. Connection to learning outcomes within the honors thematic area (community engagement).

The learning outcomes that I will address for community engagement through this internships are as follows:

-Possesses awareness of purpose of service, including need for reciprocity, understanding of social issues, and ability to see those issues from multiple perspectives.

-Recognizes how public policies and practices, and power and privilege, have an influence on social issues. Explore ways to alter public policy and/or identify solutions.

-Relates, communicates, and works effectively with others towards sustainable social change.

 My various duties in the internship will allow me to effectively meet each of these learning outcomes. The first of these learning outcomes will be met primarily through the overall goal of my internship, that being to help Connie Pillich be elected to the position that she is running for. My internship is allowing me to help a public figure attain a position they believe they can use to benefit all Ohio citizens. My internship will have me engage in communication with various different people through calling and social media. This interaction with public relations will allow me to gain several different perspectives of social issues from various people in Ohio. Working in an environment as political as a campaign will allow me to gain a first-hand knowledge and understanding of public policy that is impossible to get from the classroom. While I may not be able to myself, working directly under influential individuals will help me to learn how I can one day alter public policy, and create solutions that will positively alter and shape the community that I live in. Finally, my internship will involve working with other interns as well as several full time workers that will serve as coordinators. This will force me to utilize crucial team work skills and to work effectively with others, as most of the work will be split and will include tasks that require collaboration. All of this will go towards the goal of electing the candidate that we are working for, which of course, would lead towards sustainable social change.

1. Connection to Goals and Academic Theories

 As a political science major, a great deal of my time in the classroom will be spent learning about political history and theory. While this is crucial and important knowledge to have, it falls short of providing the first hand perspective of how politics operate in the modern world. Only through such opportunities as studying abroad or working as an intern will I be able to gain this sort of insight into how the political spectrum operates. Working on my first campaign, I have various goals that I would like to achieve. The first is very simple, that being to gain first-hand experience in the operations that comprise the political process. Starting at the state level, I will also eventually be able to analyze for myself, the major differences between the local and federal levels of government beyond what I just learn about in such classes as American Government or Comparative Politics. I also want to gain greater team work and leadership skills. Much of the work I will be doing will require team work. Such tasks as event planning and staffing, or drafting memos and call sheets will not be able to be completed by individual interns with a lacking of experience. There will also be several times where a good deal of work will need to be completed in a short amount of time. Team work will be extremely critical. I also hope that through this internship, I will learn how to take charge in certain scenarios and help guide others to get work done as quickly and efficiently as possible.

 There are two overall concepts that I want to learn about through doing campaign internships over the years, and I will be able to begin this learning process in the spring when I begin my first of these internships. The concepts I am wanting to learn about are highlighted in the book *Public Communication Campaign Evaluation* by Julie Coffman. This book perfectly outlines the two major theories held behind the different types of public communication campaigns. These being “individual behavior change campaigns” and “public will campaigns.” Individual behavior change does not directly involve individuals running for public office and are most often utilized in the health arena. Individual behavior change looks to target individuals who are performing a behavior viewed as bad or destructive (i.e. smoking or alcohol abuse) and looks to influence them to change that behavior. In contrast to this, public will campaigns look to increase awareness on a certain issue with hopes that it can shift public attention away from this perceived social issue. The campaign I will be working on in the spring will likely possess many of the aspects of a public will campaign. As a political science major, however, I will be faced with opportunities beyond just the world of public office or public representatives, and have an overall goal of being involved in and learning about all of these different campaign strategies.

1. Initiative, Independence, and Creativity

 A great amount of initiative had to be taken for me to secure this internship in the first place. I had to first even be exposed to this opportunity by signing up for the internships course offered here at UC. I was among almost no other freshman, as many of the other students in the class were older and looking for an internship that could eventually lead to a full time position. Without a resume loaded with various impressive internship or job experiences, I had to effectively utilize and embellish what experience I did have to even gain the attention of employers. When I finally received and took part in an interview, I had to once again effectively sell myself to the individuals from Connie Pillich’s office despite being a very young and somewhat inexperienced student. I had to show them that I had other crucial skills that would make up for this lacking of experience that would allow me to stand out from other (particularly older) students who had interviewed for the same position. One of the key skills that I possess that will be crucial for this internship is writing. For almost all my life, writing has been something that I am deeply passionate about and greatly enjoy doing. It is an activity that I would often partake in in my spare time throughout high school. I will have many jobs during my internship that will require a strong writing ability. I also have strong communication skills and am not only good at working on a team, but am also effective at working with people. Much of the internship will involve telephone calls and various forms of communication that will expose me to other people. Having good overall people skills will be crucial in accomplishing these tasks efficiently. I believe, however, that the best attribute that I bring to the table is a strong work ethic. I have always considered myself a hard worker, and will always take on any challenge and tackle it to the absolute best of my ability. I hope that through this internship, I will be able to even further develop all of these abilities.

1. Reflection and Dissemination

 I will keep a weekly report of what I have undertaken and accomplished in my internship and explain how I have learned or met one of the academic goals that I seek to fulfill. At the very end of the spring semester, I will type up and extremely detailed report that outlines exactly what I did in the internship. I will explain what my regular duties were during the week and what I ultimately accomplished throughout the entire process as far as aiding the campaign of Connie Pillich. I will also talk about how each thing I did related back to community engagement and how it helped fulfill the learning outcomes that fall under that honors theme. I will upload this analysis to my portfolio for it to be viewed by other honors students and advisors. As an honors students, I find that the most important audience for my proposed experience are the other members of the honors community, as I look to take part in and help continue to grow UC’s best academic program. The best way, however, that I will share what I learned from this internship will be by bringing the experience and skills I gain to whatever future internships or career endeavors that I venture upon.

1. Project Advisor

The main advisor that I will be working under for this internship will be Libby Coletta, Operations Manager of Connie Pillich for Ohio Treasurer, libby@conniepillich.com

1. Hours (budget not applicable).

This internship is unpaid. There will be no sort of budget used and a grant or scholarship will not be necessary to complete the experience. I will be working 15-20 hours a week and will be working for the totality of the spring semester. At this time, I do not know an exact time frame this will entail, but anticipate it to be about 15 weeks.