

Student Interns in DC for New Hampshire Sen. Maggie Hassan

UNH’s partnership with The Washington Center plus new Liberal Arts funding provide high-impact experience

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JILL MUNDUNG '24 AT THE U.S. CAPITOL (COURTESY PHOTO).

Interning at the U.S. capital’s Capitol was exciting for Jill Mundung '24, who played a game of “guess that senator” while walking the halls to deliver records to the Senate floor. The [political science](#) major from Dover, New Hampshire, had always wanted to experience living and working in Washington, D.C. — to be where the action was. And now she was at the heart of it.

Mundung took part in [The Washington Center](#) program (TWC) last fall. For nearly half a century, UNH has worked with the center to facilitate a semester or summer in D.C. where students take seminars, network and intern in an organization of their choice, which, in Mundung's case, was the office of the U.S. senator from New Hampshire, Maggie Hassan. Mundung didn't envision she'd be working at the Senate, but when she saw the job listing, she said, "Why not?" and applied.

As a press intern, Mundung's days started as early as 5:30 a.m. Working closely with the senator's communications team, she collected daily press clips that could be 15 pages or as long as 300, as was the case on Election Day. She wrote media summaries of New Hampshire coverage and daily news recaps. She was at the ready for any project the team sent her way. "I read and watched a *lot* of news!" she says.

Mundung was one of 11 College of Liberal Arts (COLA) students interning in D.C. through TWC. In addition to the student community, she was supported by a large and active UNH alumni network that planned events such as an outing to a Red Sox game against the D.C.-based Nationals and a UNH alumni executive forum, where she networked with alumni and COLA's Dean Michele Dillon.

Dillon says she was particularly delighted to meet Mundung because she was able to hear firsthand about the impact of a recent college funding initiative. Last year, COLA launched The Washington Center Awards for Liberal Arts Students, a program that provides financial support to offset the significant costs of living in the Washington, D.C., area.

"My biggest takeaway from the program is to never be afraid about asking for what you want."

“I am grateful every day to have so many donors whose generosity allows me to provide an array of high-impact learning experiences for all of our students,” says Dillon. “I frequently am in conversation with COLA alumni who participated in The Washington Center and it’s clear that its strong program is influential in shaping educational experiences and career trajectories. We want to ensure that finances are not an impediment to any current COLA student’s participation.”

Mundung says she is grateful for the award, which helped her pay for housing and food.

As she reflects on her experience in D.C., Mundung is more confident in herself, she says.

“My biggest takeaway from the program is to never be afraid about asking for what you want,” admitting that she has been shy to do so in the past. “I also came to terms with the fact that as a first-generation student, my starting line is further back. So, I’ve had to run faster and cover more ground — meaning I’ve had to overcome more barriers in trying to navigate through school and my career path. I’ve learned to take pride in my work and not to be so hard on myself.”

Amid the excitement of being in a bustling city and traveling around on the metro (“I’ve fallen deeper in love with public transportation,” she says), Mundung took time on her solo walks to the Capitol to think about exactly what it is she might want for her future career. While she may not have it worked out just yet, she says her internship certainly sparked her interest in working in political communications.

WRITTEN [Susan Dumais '88 '02G](#) | College of Liberal Arts

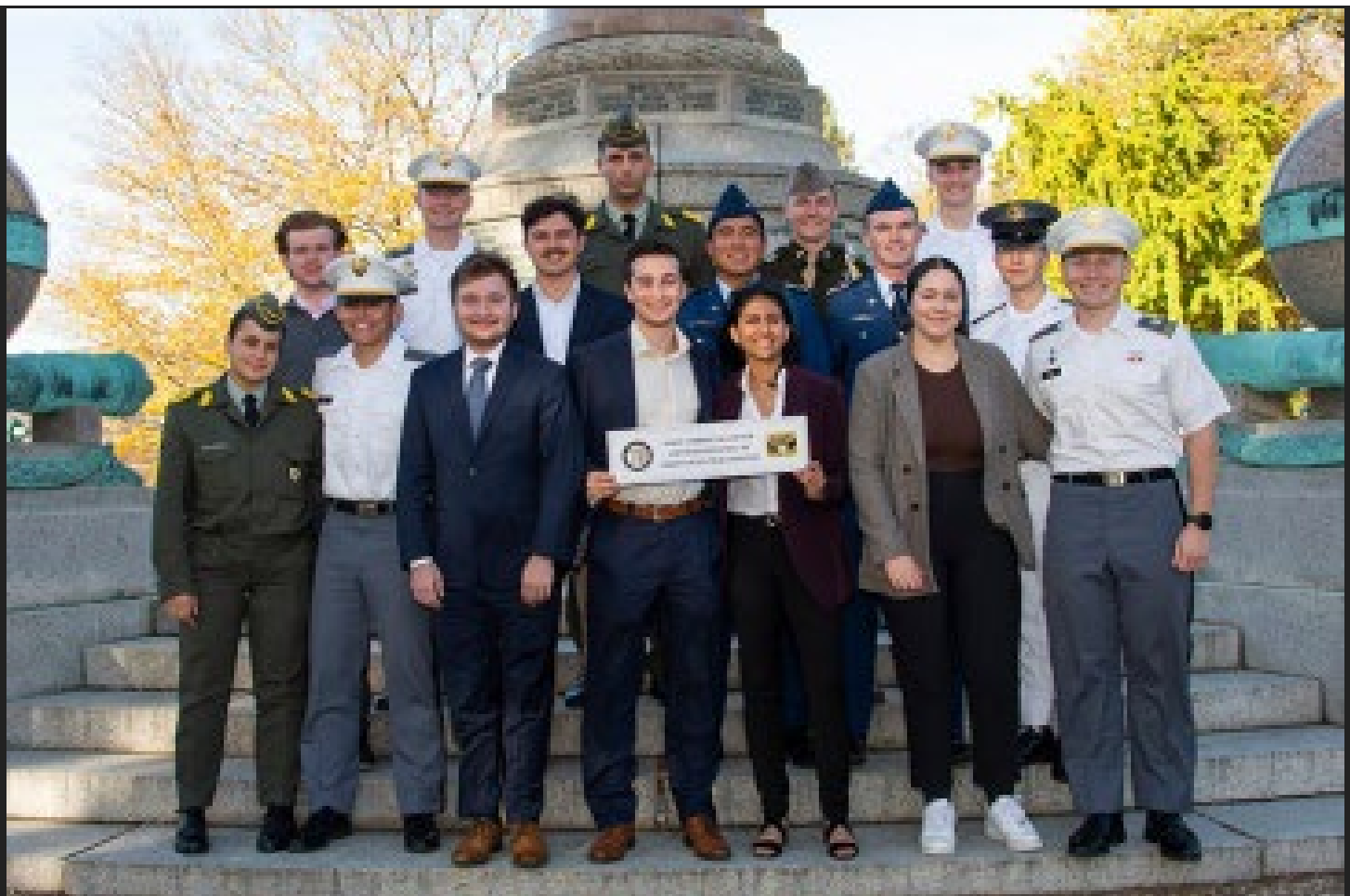
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