

SCIENCE IN LEGISLATION INTERNSHIP

March for Science Southern Arizona is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and expanding the critical role of science and evidence in our Southern Arizona community through community outreach and nonpartisan political advocacy. As part of the goals and objectives of the organization, we would like to partner with the University of Arizona to offer our proposed *Science in Legislation Internship* to undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows at the university.

The *Science in Legislation Internship* would be a unique and cutting-edge academic opportunity for students interested in the integration of science policy, science advocacy, and science communication.

Background

We theorize that policymaking at the local, state, and federal level are improved through adopting the scientific principles of sound logic and evidence-based review. For effective and responsible governance to take place, policies developed must be subject to peer-review by experts of the various fields these policies aim to impact. Adopting a “scientific peer-review process” to legislation helps maintain a strong, evidence-based foundation for laws that affect our society.

Objective

March for Science Southern Arizona is concerned with legislation associated with the *sciences*; that is, legislation on topics such as environmental and wildlife protections, climate change, natural resources, vaccines and public health, STEM education, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), science funding, and other topics related to the sciences. Therefore, we would like to focus on applying the scientific peer-review process to legislation by comparing proposed science-related policies with current scientific literature to determine if the proposed policies are consistent with the findings of researchers. These synthesis reports present the science in a non-partisan manner easily understood by the general public and would be presented to both the general public and elected representatives at the local, state, and/or federal level (depending on the legislation). By doing so, we hope to increase the scientific literacy of elected officials and encourage evidence-based policymaking that has benefited from a scientific peer-review process.

The Student's Role

The *Science in Legislation Internship* is an interdisciplinary approach to accomplish our objective, and to provide experience for undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows at the University of Arizona to communicate and advocate science to our elected representatives in an educational manner. Over the course of the internships, students would:

- (1) Read proposed science-related policies and pieces of legislation and analyze potential implications, with an emphasis on those in the Arizona State Legislature;
- (2) Conduct a thorough literature review on the topic of concern;
- (3) Compose a synthesis report on how the policy or law compares with the scientific literature;
- (4) Share our findings with the elected representatives of Southern Arizona dealing with the proposed policy or law, as well as the general public.

We would be open to any University of Arizona student, but we would be especially interested in students from the College of Science, College of Agriculture and Life Science, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, and James E. Rogers College of Law. We intend this internship to last one (1) semester, with students (both new and continuing) re-enrolling in the internship each semester. University of Arizona faculty would be more than welcome to participate in the process, either as mentors, or peer-reviewers, or potential other roles not mentioned here.