

Question 1

Since I started my collegiate career back in the Fall of 2017 I always tried to do one thing that would ensure my success in life which is to be the best I can be. That is why I am applying for this program, Washington is a place like no other. Even when I used to briefly visit Washington back in highschool for Model United Nations I was intrigued by the dynamic of DC. So when I came to college I switched my degree from Criminology to International Politics/Affairs with an aspiration to work in Washington one day. I want to succeed in life and in doing that I believe all roads to success stop through Washington.

One objective in applying to this program is to make myself more marketable for employers across the spectrum. In this competitive job market you need to go above and beyond the call to get a desirable job. I am confident that participating in this program will help me achieve that. From this internship I hope to gain experience, insights, and an understanding of how things work in the capital. Just simple insights from professionals in this field would be amazing and I know there would be so much more than just that. I want to capitalize on this opportunity that could potentially lead me down a path for success, and that is all I want to spend my time doing. I am a junior in college, life is going to get real in just a couple short years and I want to spend the rest of my time preparing myself for that. If I was granted this opportunity in Washington I would thoroughly enjoy giving it my all because I am ready to set myself up for a career.

The unique qualities and skills I would bring to this internship would be found nowhere else. Being responsible for all operations of a property worth two million dollars is special as well as overseeing a budget of around 60,000 dollars throughout each school year. What I am referring to is being the President of a National Fraternity here at Penn State. Especially in a time like today the amount of pressure put on fraternities and their leaders are unique. The whole country is looking at fraternities and how they conduct themselves and there is a microscope on Penn State. One of my main focuses has been trying to change the narrative of what fraternities do here. I have been striving to accomplish this by reaching out to our neighbors and having positive conversations regarding how to create the best environment for everyone. A different challenge I faced was mediating conflicts on a daily basis. However, it taught me to be three things when it comes to disagreements, cool, calm, and collective. Applying this method has proven good end results as well as satisfied parties on both sides. When I was first elected President there was a culture of poor choices when it came to the state of the fraternity. Along with a small group of other members, we effectively changed that for the better. I began to amend our relationship with the university by setting up meetings with administrators across the board and inquiring on how we can improve. I took their advice and a little less than a year later we now have a productive and positive relationship with them. However, that was only one aspect that needed to be fixed. We needed to change the mentality of the brotherhood with solutions that would actually work. What I decided on was bringing in a consultant that worked with fraternities all over the country. Their organization is known as DMB coaching and they have been

here 3 times in the last ten months and I can confidently say that the brotherhood has experienced a complete turnaround for the better. Our philanthropy has skyrocketed since then, recruitment hit an all time last spring, positive relationships across the board have been established and the overall state of the house has dramatically improved. I am personally thrilled to be part of a turn around like that which happened over the course of a year.

The type of internship that really draws my interest is one that involves consulting. Whether that be for security or policy I have always had an interest in consulting. However, I would also be extremely interested in working in most areas that are available in Washington. The main thing I would like to get out of this is experience, it does not have to be certain kind either. I want to make myself better and working in most areas in Washington would help me achieve that goal. I do not want to limit myself by stating that consulting is the only thing that I am interested in because I am open to any opportunity that would be granted to me in the capitol. Overall, I want to make this year the one I take the next step forward on the path of succeeding and getting a good internship where I can be granted an opportunity to do that would be optimal.

Question 2

For decades, the United States has been bogged down in seemingly endless conflicts with various groups, some government-affiliated, others independent insurgents, in the Middle East. The primary strategy for the U.S. in waging these wars has been to minimize the direct involvement of U.S. soldiers in the region, instead supporting and assisting local groups who handle the bulk of the direct combat. This allows the American military to participate in these conflicts while reducing the amount of American lives lost in these foreign conflicts that tend to be unpopular with the public. Among these local groups, few have been as reliable and indispensable for America's strategic objectives in the region as the Kurds. The Kurds are an ethnic group who inhabit an area spanning the officially recognized territories of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Despite being promised a state of their own more than 100 years ago, that has yet to come to fruition, and as a result the Kurds have often found themselves the victims of various genocides and attacks at the hands of the countries whose borders they live within. Their primary antagonist throughout the years has been Turkey, a NATO member state whose borders contain roughly half of the global Kurdish population. The Turks have never been shy about their attitude towards the Kurds, with their official stance being that the Kurds are a terrorist group, and have long sought to remove them from their territory. Seeing as both the Turks and the Kurds are strategic allies of the United States, the longstanding conflict between them has been a source of awkwardness within the international community for years. These tensions boiled over into a rapid escalation of the conflict on October 9, 2019, when, after a stunning and

universally condemned decision by President Donald Trump to relocate American troops who had been supporting the Kurds in northern Syria, Turkey launched an invasion into that region in an attempt to remove the Kurds from that area. The Turks claim that they are attempting to clear out the Kurdish presence in the area in order to create a buffer zone reaching roughly 20 miles into Syria so that they can resettle many of the millions of Syrian refugees that currently reside in Turkish territory. The Turkish offensive, code-named Operation Peace Spring, has been publicly denounced by many of the biggest players on the international stage, including the European Union and the Arab League, as well as Syria itself. President Trump's decision to effectively abandon the Kurds has been met with waves of backlash both back home and abroad. On the domestic front, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have broadly disavowed the move, calling it a reckless and ill-advised maneuver that does not meaningfully advance any particular American objective while bringing about severe consequences for American military interests both immediately and in the long run. The Democratic response to such a controversial act by a president with whom they have had a long, extremely contentious relationship is predictable. However, the degree to which this has split the Republican party is noteworthy for an organization that has stuck by him throughout an unprecedented deluge of scandals and media outrage. Several prominent figures within the GOP, including reliable Trump ally Lindsey Graham, have openly criticized the president for betraying a longstanding American ally and further destabilizing a region that has been the primary source of the United States' foreign policy struggles for decades. While the domestic political consequences for the president are significant,

they pale in comparison to the challenges that his decision will create for American military interests in the Middle East for years to come. The Kurds have been an important ally in the region for a long time, but they are far from the only group who has been helping the U.S. military in combat against its various enemies. The United States has destroyed its credibility with all of its other allied groups now that it has turned its back on such an important and reliable ally and allowed them to be attacked in what was an extremely predictable invasion once they were exposed. This will force each of the other groups with which the United States has similar relationships to reexamine their alliances with the U.S., if they have not already, and will assuredly weaken the perceived reliability of American support going forward. Furthermore, this will make it much more difficult, if not impossible, for the United States to recruit new allies and build new relationships given its now dubious track record. This withdrawal of local support will mean that, in order to maintain their current level of involvement in the Middle East, the Pentagon will be forced to send more American troops into the region, a strategy to which the American public is resoundingly opposed. Adding to the issues facing the United States in the wake of this move is the fact that it will now be considerably easier for anti-American terrorist groups such as ISIS to recruit new members, perhaps now even some previously pro-American Kurds, into their ranks. Concerns have also been raised about whether the Kurds, who have long received American military support and training, could now abandon any allegiance they once held to the United States and become an active enemy to the U.S., similar to the American-backed Mujahideen fighters in the Soviet-Afghan War of the 1980's who then devolved into groups such as

Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. All told, it is far too early to know for certain how the situation currently playing out between Turkey and the Kurds, as well as Donald Trump's direct role in bringing it about, will affect the United States in the long run, although there are alarmingly few reasons for optimism. The domestic controversy is surely bad news for the president, although given his history of scandal it is difficult to tell if it will significantly impact him going forward. The foreign policy implications appear far graver, but with the rampant instability that has plagued the Middle East for the past century it is challenging to predict anything with certainty. Throughout the chaos and ambiguity, all that can be said with absolute conviction is that the outlook for the United States both at home and overseas is assuredly grimmer than it was one week ago