



Meet our student volunteers

The USPTO offers unpaid externships year-round through our eight-week Student Volunteer Program, which allows college and graduate students to gain valuable experience in their field of study. Opportunities include externships in trademark law, HR, IT, international affairs, procurement, and other intellectual property-related areas. Meet a few of our recent student volunteers inside.

UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE



Alex Carpenter

HOPE COLLEGE — *Majors: English Literature, Political Science*

“The people in my office have been helpful, professional and friendly. They have made my time at the USPTO enjoyable and informative.”

When you ask Alex Carpenter why he chose an externship with the USPTO, his answer is simple. After working for a law journal, he wanted to experience the other side of journalism. That led him to an opportunity with the USPTO Office of the Chief Communications Officer (OCCO). During Alex’s externship, he never had a typical work day. Because the opportunities were so widespread, he was often busy juggling assignments both inside and outside the office. Alex drafted blog posts, edited speeches, worked with audio and visual technicians and examined press interviews.

What’s his advice for a student considering an externship with the USPTO? “Go for it! If there is something you want to do or someone you want to meet, just ask. If the USPTO can make it happen, they will.”



“Don’t be afraid to go outside of your comfort zone. The USPTO does a lot of cool things besides issuing patents. Take advantage and explore different areas that might not first come to mind when you think of patents and intellectual property.”

According to Andrew Cuatto, one of the best parts of his externship in the USPTO Office of the Undersecretary was being challenged to work with patent data and see the various ways it could be useful. One of Andrew’s assignments was to conduct data analysis on a variety of issues, including ways to improve websites and integrate patent data into the landscape of open data usage. Andrew liked having the opportunity to broaden his horizons and see some of the different aspects of a federal agency.

What was the coolest part of Andrew’s externship? Having the opportunity to attend a meeting for the Cancer Moonshot Initiative in Vice President Joe Biden’s office. “It was cool to get to sit in on such an important meeting and see different branches of the government working together to achieve a common goal.”



Andrew Cuatto

UNIV. OF MICHIGAN — *Majors: Economics, Mathematics*



Thomas Hajec

VIRGINIA TECH — Major: Economics, Minor: Chemistry

"I have really enjoyed the freedom and trust given to me while externing at the USPTO. Everyone treats you as they would any other employee in the office, with respect and high expectations."

If you ask Thomas Hajec his favorite part of his externship with the USPTO Office of Human Resources, his answer may surprise you — meetings. According to Thomas, not only do you get a feel for how a professional meeting is conducted, but you also get to observe that everyone, including him, voices their ideas. During his externship, Thomas was assigned to set up and conduct focus groups to support Hispanic recruiting efforts. He enjoyed this opportunity because it gave him insight into what another culture values.

Thomas is preparing to begin his final year of college. What are his plans for the future? "Working with the USPTO has helped me decide that I will likely consider a government position. I've witnessed some of the benefits that come with working at the agency. Who knows? Maybe I'll apply for a full-time position with the USPTO next summer!"



"Being able to see so many people in a position that I hope to eventually reach in terms of public service has been inspiring to me."

Why did Nithya Pathalam accept an externship with the USPTO Office of the Chief Communications Officer (OCCO) this summer? With an interest in intellectual property (IP) law and a desire to experience life in Washington, DC, this opportunity presented the best of both worlds. Nithya spent her summer working on the USPTO website, updating the USPTO's monthly publication — Inventors Eye, organizing 2,000 FAQs, and helping to coordinate the logistics of a trip taken by the agency director to California.

Nithya enjoyed working in OCCO because the office is involved in everything that is happening internally and externally, related to the agency.

What's next for Nithya? Whether she chooses to attend law school to pursue an IP law career or fulfills her desire to have a public service career with the federal government, her externship has prepared her to succeed.

Nithya Pathalam

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY — Majors: Poli Sci, Biology



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