Dr. Dave Houghton

Time at Western Michigan University: 1974–2018

Dr. Houghton began working in the Department of Political Science in the 1974. He takes his role as professor seriously and is always willing to help students succeed. He served as department chair from 1997 - 2004. He is currently an associate professor of Political Science at WMU but plans to retire after more than 40 years of service to WMU in the spring of 2018. His academic research specializes in state and local government. He teaches courses in urban politics, national, state, and local politics.

His greatest accomplishment was designing and creating undergraduate internship programs. Since 1978, Dr. Houghton has placed more than a 1,000 interns. An avid newspaper reader, Dr. Houghton pays attention to possible intern sites and makes personal calls to ask if potential preceptor is interested. He has a long contact list; many of whom are prominent figures in government, law, and business. He received the Distinguished Service Award for designing and directing two internship programs.

He continues to direct the Capital Intern Program, which sends interns to Lansing, other local areas, and usually one to Washington D.C. His dream for the internship program has been to send more students to Washington D.C. He has raised funds from various alumni and community members to create the new endowment that bears his name. Funds from the endowment will support the current internship program and expand its scope. His dream is being realized through this endowment.

Dr. Houghton mentors each intern through their experience and the corresponding seminar class enhances the interns with skills needed to be successful in their futures. The students talk about their experiences with each other, learn about career building and networking, and create a life-long supporter in the process, Dr. Houghton. This esteemed internship has landed many students their first careers and more importantly connections in the real world. He keeps in contact with his interns and enjoys reading about their successes.

With his upcoming retirement, there will be a void in the department and on campus; his legacy will live on through his remarkable work. He will pass on his contacts, mentor knowledge, and more importantly the faith in experiencing education to his successor. The program he created four decades ago will continue in his absence, and future interns will still continue to do great things.

“The biggest reward has been getting to know the students.” Dave Houghton, College of Arts and Science magazine, 2017.

The David Houghton Scholarship Fund provides scholarships for interns to work in Washington D.C. and Lansing.