

# Model New York City Council Project

Edward T. Rogowsky Internship Program in Government & Public Affairs – The City University of New York

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Model New York City Council Project was developed in 2002 by the City University of New York and Council leaders. The Model Council Project provides a unique opportunity to develop and enhance leadership potential through experiential education for high school students. The Model Council Project brings over 50 CUNY/ College Now Program participants from high schools throughout New York City into the Chamber of the New York City Council to debate and vote on public policies that concern all New York City residents. For many it is their first introduction to government and public affairs at the municipal level.

The Edward T. Rogowsky Internship Program in Government & Public Affairs develops a rigorous, training component and coordinates the model stated meeting for CUNY. Prior to the model stated Council meeting, the students are convened for a series of training sessions intended to prepare them for their roles as model Council members. In addition, students learn about the functions and processes of legislative democracy and the realities associated with policy making and representation in a diverse urban setting like New York City, as well as more general skills such as critical thinking public speaking, and argumentation. Below is a summary of the instructional topics covered during the weekly training seminars associated with the model Council project:

- **Week 1.** Project introduction and orientation; functions of legislators; pluralism and democracy in New York City.
- **Week 2.** Legislative process in New York City; review of Council districts and committees; role of leadership and constituent functions in the NYC Council; introduction to legislative issue.
- **Week 3.** Council-Mayor/Agency relations; community boards and advocates; introduction to legislative issue; committee referral and review of legislative intro; legislative alternatives (amendments) introduced and debated; public committee hearings and public testimony.
- **Week 4.** Committee review continued; final intro reported; planning and preparation for Model Stated Council Meeting (i.e., review floor procedures and etiquette).

The CUNY College Now Program coordinates the selection of the Model Council participants. College Now develops and distributes applications to the its officers at each CUNY campus. Applications are then distributed to New York City High Schools and collected by College Now coordinators for review and selection of final participants. Participants are selected based on academic record and their community service with emphasis on recruitment of high school students from all parts of the city.

Through direct participation in the process of legislative decision-making, Model Council participants are given the chance to further their organizational, research and public speaking skills, as well as the opportunity to learn about the operations of New York City government from its practitioners. By working on a legislative agenda that they themselves develop in part, the students who participate in the Model City Council Project play a central role in their own pursuit of a public service education. Moreover, they are introduced to a “hands-on” approach to involvement in the political and policy processes that affect them, their families, and their communities.

**Edward T. Rogowsky Internship Program**  
**In Government and Public Affairs**  
**The City University of New York**  
365 Fifth Avenue, Room X110, New York, New York 10016  
Phone: 212-817-7250  
Fax: 212-251-0826  
E-mail: [ETRInternship@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:ETRInternship@gc.cuny.edu)  
Web: <http://www.etrinternship.org>

