OUR MISSION

The Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty (SHECP) encourages the study of poverty as a complex social problem, by expanding and improving educational opportunities for college students in a wide range of disciplines and career trajectories. Through its programs, SHECP and its member institutions prepare students for a lifetime of professional and civic efforts to diminish poverty and enhance human capability, while also supporting connections among students, faculty, staff, and alumni engaged in the study of poverty.

SHECP is a collaboration among 25 colleges and universities that integrates classroom study of poverty with summer internships and co-curricular activities.

In 2020, SHECP provided 84 students with summer internships, in 26 geographic locations, with 62 poverty-focused nonprofit and government agencies.

SHECP interns contributed 16,800 hours of service in 2020. A force multiplier, they built capacity for our partners while delivering $456,960 in community impact.

“SHECP students provide long-term hope to change the reality of poverty in America because their academic understanding of systemic poverty is coupled with hands-on experiences in their internships.”

– Rev. Dr. Jason Coker
National Director, Together for Hope

THE NEED

An estimated 38.1 million Americans live in poverty (11.8 percent of the population), according to a 2019 report issued by the United States Census Bureau.

Through classroom study and experiential learning opportunities, these future professionals learn how their work and civic activity will inevitably impinge on poverty. We need your support to sustain and grow our program.

www.shepherdconsortium.org
LEARNING BY DOING

SHECP seeks to transform the study of poverty in the United States by building a vibrant consortium of colleges and universities that lead the development of undergraduate poverty studies programs and the support of innovative work in poverty-related pedagogy.

The poverty studies curriculum begins with gateway coursework at the student’s home institution, followed by community-focused learning opportunities through the SHECP Summer Internship Program.

This eight-week program pairs students with nonprofit organizations that work to strengthen impoverished communities, urban and rural. They focus on a variety of poverty-related areas, including: education, healthcare, legal services, housing, nutrition, social and economic needs, and community building.

Students are matched with agencies that fit their intellectual interests in order to develop professional experience and skills for future civic involvement and employment.

What’s unique about our program is that the internships offer an experiential learning opportunity that encompasses more than work experience, as students live with fellow interns as a cohort within the communities they serve.

Our internship program is bookended by a preparatory opening conference and a closing conference where SHECP interns share what they’ve learned from their experiences. Many continue their studies through capstone projects when they return to their campuses. To date, 1,655 interns have taken part in the program.

THE CONSORTIUM

The Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty (SHECP) was formally established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in July 2012; however, it began in 1998 as the “Shepherd Poverty Alliance,” a poverty studies program founded by Washington and Lee University and allied with Berea College and Spelman College.

SHECP is currently comprised of:

- Baylor University
- Berea College
- Birmingham-Southern College
- Bucknell University
- Centre College
- Cleveland Clinic Lerner College
- Elon University
- Furman University
- Hamilton College
- John Carroll University
- Juniata College
- Manchester University
- Marymount University
- Middlebury College
- Millsaps College
- Missouri State University
- Niagara University
- Ohio University
- The College of Wooster
- University of Lynchburg
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Vermont
- University of Wisconsin–Madison
- Virginia Military Institute
- Washington and Lee University

We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of accountability and efficiency. SHECP is proud to be a GuideStar Platinum Nonprofit Profile participant.

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