

# To Train & Empower: A Summer with MPIRG



The Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG) is a grassroots, statewide, nonpartisan, student-directed nonprofit dedicated to training and empowering students - and engaging the community - to take collective action in the public interest.

## On the Job

My daily schedule was rarely routine but much more a rhythm. Most of my work fell into three major areas: planning events, public policy research, and administration & finance.

### *Events Planning*

- MPIRG hosts day long trainings for incoming chapter and board leadership. Along with planning the day, I co-led a training on campaign planning and strategy with the board chair.

### *Public Policy Research*

- I conducted research on how a recently enacted St. Paul student housing zoning policy impacted neighborhood quality of life complaints.

### *Administration & Finance*

- I assisted in bookkeeping, revising the annual budget, researching grants, and sitting on a hiring committee.

## MPIRG Chapters

- Macalester
- Hamline
- St. Catherine
- Augsburg
- U of M – Twin Cities
- U of M – Duluth
- U of M – Morris
- Concordia Moorhead
- MSU Mankato



Students attended trainings, workshops, and panels at Fall Retreat 2014.

## Reflections

### *Change is slow and uneven*

- MPIRG is large and fairly decentralized. It cannot change overnight and without the direct initiation by student leadership. Some initiatives never come to fruition, some are lost in transition.

### *Tradeoffs*

- MPIRG's greatest asset – an all-student board of directors – is also its biggest weakness.

### *Importance of relationships*

- The informal and “unproductive” time spent with coworkers is essential to building the relationships for a trusting, supportive workplace.



Students and staff brief before transiting to the Capitol for Lobby Day 2015.

MPIRG structures its work through three main issue frames: *economic justice*, *environmental justice*, and *racial justice*.