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Political Science at Ashford University
Quarterly Student Newsletter

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POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM STUDENT NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE PROGRAM

Welcome to our Student Newsletter !

It is with great pleasure that I am sharing our second quarterly student newsletter. In each of our newsletters, you will discover some aspects of the program you may not be familiar with. We hope this newsletter helps you better understand our program and its people.

In this second issue, we hope you enjoy meeting two of our recent alumni. Enjoy learning about them as they will give you some tips on being successful at Ashford University!

So please, scroll down and learn more about YOUR program!

Enjoy,

Dr. Jean Gabriel (Gabe) Jolivet
Chair of the Political Science and Government Program

QUARTERLY MEETING WITH THE CHAIR

Once a quarter, you will be able to ask me questions about our university, our program, and our discipline. I will hold, with the help of Dr. John Ackerman, a quarterly meeting on Adobe Connect in order to meet with all of you. This will be a great occasion for all of us to get know each other a little better!

Our first meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 24 at 9:00 PM EST/ 8:00 PM CST / 7:00 MST/ 6:00 PM PST**. Log on to: <http://bpiedu.adobeconnect.com/commartsad> or click on the image below:



The meeting room will open approximately 5 minutes before the meeting begins. Each meeting should last approximately 30 minutes or as long as you have questions and I have answers.

I look forward to meeting with you then!

MEET OUR POLITICAL SCIENCE ALUMNI

Each quarter, we will get to know a little better someone from the Political Science and Government program. It could be a full-time faculty member, an adjunct faculty member, a current student, an alumnus, a staff member or a mystery guest! Only time will tell.

In this second newsletter, I would like to put the spotlight on two of our recent alumni, Cathy Novak and Peter Kostas. You may have had classes with either one and they would like to share their experiences with you! Enjoy learning about them! They will even give you some tips on being a successful POL student!



Cathy Novak

Tell us a little bit about yourself:

I'm 51 years old, have two sons – ages 18 and 19 – a wonderful husband who is retired from the Air Force, and we live in Portland, Oregon. For over 25 years, I've been working in the technology field and for 20 of those years, specializing in technology solutions for government. I enjoy being the translator between business requirements and technology solutions. I have a passion for government and the people that work in government. My husband and I also run our own small business, selling a boutique line of clothing called LuLaRoe. That may sound like an odd combination, but between the two, I get to engage actively in areas I am passionate about. **Equally as important to me is empowering females to be successful.** Women

supporting women in their business, or whatever it is they would like to succeed in, is vital to me to role model for our younger generation.

Last, but definitely not least, I am a devout Chicago Cubs fan and am thoroughly enjoying this season!

What made you pick Political Science as a major?

I have no regrets about my life or the path it took, but graduating from college always seemed elusive as life would get in the way. When I was 18, I started college, working towards a computer science degree. Initially, my work became my priority and then it was family. I made several attempts to go back to college and finish, changing my major each time. From computer science to accounting and then to business administration. Finally, at the age of 48, and with my oldest son close to graduating high school, my husband, and my father were fully supportive of my decision to go back to college. I'll never forget what my Dad said to me when I told him I wanted to have a college degree before I turned 50, - "Well, you're going to be turning 50 anyway --- you might as well do it with a college degree!" That was definitely the clincher!

When I thought about returning, I had no doubt that I was going to study political science. **With my prior experience, completing the degree gave me a credibility that I felt I didn't have before.** For the companies I work for, I blog about current government topics and author e-books. Now, when they give the introduction and my bio, it includes the fact that I have a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. That's awesome to see, and I haven't tired of it yet!

Can you describe your experience at Ashford University in the POL program?

My experience in the political science program at Ashford University was great. I did do a lot of research before I decided on a university – and Ashford had a very comprehensive syllabus for their program. The courses were challenging, but not daunting – and being on the schedule with deadlines aligned perfectly with how I do my best work. I found most of the instructors and professors very engaging and willing to help when asked. I really enjoyed when the course instructors would tie current government topics to the study at hand. My favorite course was the political science capstone because I thoroughly enjoyed creating my own research study for a government-related subject. The capstone was an excellent way to reinforce all of the learning from all of the courses.

If you could give one advice to current POL students, what would it be?

Easy. **Listen to the instructors and professors and if you don't understand instructions, then ask.** In my first course at Ashford, the instructor provided advice on how to layout discussion responses and specifically recommended creating headings for each item an instructor was asking to have covered in the response. I adopted that piece of advice and am still using it today as I pursue my MBA with Ashford, with a specialization in Public Administration and Marketing. I can't tell you the number of times the feedback I've received from instructors has included a comment that they appreciate the headings in the responses. Using headings in discussions helps to make your responses clearer for the instructors, provides evidence that you have covered everything they've asked, and helps the students create a nice outline to follow for their responses. I found that doing this significantly reduced the amount of time it took for me to prepare a discussion.

Anything else would you like to add?

I am a mentor with the Ashford CHAMPS program. Being a mentor, I help new students get comfortable with Ashford University and the on-line college experience. If you need help – reach out to CHAMPS. It's on the main page of your student portal. **CHAMPS is always looking for mentors – so if you have a desire to help – reach out to CHAMPS.**



Peter Kostas

Hello Peter! Would you mind sharing some of your background with us?

I was born in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pa. Growing up, there was a wonderfully proportionate exposure to culture diversity as my grandfather on dad's side was a Greek immigrant and my nanna was 100% Italian. On my mom's side, granddad was 100% Polish, and grandma is 100% Irish. Being close to both sides, I was always exposed to a vast array of perspectives on political ideologies, policies, and point-of-views. I believe this exposure nurtured the Sophist in me as I always saw and felt both truths from opposite ends of the spectrum. To say the least, philosophy was my first passion and created a gateway of sorts; one which inevitably led to an interest in politics. The initial push to lean towards a PolySci major came at Ohio University when I finished up with 105% in my Public Policy class. I was instantly hooked and was inspired by the words of my professor and author, Dr. Michael Nojeim. He said I was "wonk-bound" for D.C. Since that day; I've taken significant strides to fulfill those prophetic words. I majored in PolySci as a means to an end, a career, and as an 'end' in itself, for its sake. Also, **a PolySci major is one of the most diverse majors one can have; the critical thinking skills and schools of thought one acquires can and, are, used just about everywhere else.**

Why did you study Political Science? Can you describe your experience at Ashford University for us? Finally, any advice for current POL students?

When choosing a school to finish what began at O.U., I looked far and wide for an online environment that best fits my 'function'. And this is where Ashford University comes in. Between their regional accreditation (the best a school can have), and endorsements from the likes of Forbes Business School, I was sold. Each class is formatted identical to one another, and a student can ALWAYS know EXACTLY what to expect (i.e. discussion boards, quizzes, and approximately 2 papers per class). The response time from all professors, especially Professor Jolivet (Chair of the PolySci dept.), was impeccable. With that said, I was able to graduate with a 4.0 (Suma Cum Laude). Now, if I may be as so bold, **I would like to pass the 'torch'** and give each and every one of you reading this the formula to get you from point 'B' to point 'A,' as in grade!

First, remember these classes are only five weeks apiece. **Don't be afraid to always work a little ahead.** Each week begins on a Tuesday so I would make sure and have all discussion board requirements completed by Monday night. These are the initial posts required from each student. Now, Tuesday arrives and you can begin rounding up your references for the first paper due. With that said, do not underestimate, for one second, the power of Ashford's database. Take the library webinar, which is frequently offered, as it will show you how to finesse the database. It will show you

how to pull quality, peer-reviewed articles and books as well as teach you the search keywords to find what you are looking for. I would also recommend taking the writing webinar as well. It will show you proper APA formatting as this is the official style used at Ashford. **Finally, don't be afraid to ask questions. Anytime you are unsure of something; these professors are here to assist you.**

I know you want to add something, don't you?

In close, I believe existence PRECEDES essence. We're all artists of sorts. Each and every one of us begins with a blank canvas. We must first paint of picture of who we would like to be and then simply walk into the frame. Good luck and Godspeed!

I hope you have enjoyed learning more about YOUR program in this second issue of our quarterly student newsletter!

If you have any idea concerning what you would like to see in future issues, or if you would like to share a website or a story with your peers, or if you like to be in the Student spotlight, drop me an email at Gabe.Jolivet@ashford.edu and let me know more.

Wishing all of you a great summer!

Dr. Jolivet

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