

# 100+ Policy Studies Alumni Testimonials

This document opens with comment from Chancellor Kent Syverud and is follow by testimonials from alumni and students divided by the following subheads arranged in this order:

- Business
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Scan through those that interest you to see the value of PST 101 and the Policy Studies Major while also exploring your own career interests by seeing what our alums are doing.

## CHANCELLOR'S COMMENTS

### **Chancellor Kent Syverud, 12th Chancellor and President of Syracuse University, in a letter to all University students, faculty and staff dated February 3, 2017**

When I first became a dean in 1995, I was curious about how to find and hire transforming professors—the kind of inspiring, intense, caring and demanding teachers who had made such a difference in my own education. In interviews at the beginning of their careers, these folks do not obviously stand out among their peers. Years and decades later it becomes obvious that they are wonderfully different.

Back in 1995, I collected hundreds of memoirs authored by these teachers and their students, trying to find and code the common attributes or predictors, so that if possible, I could hire more of them than other schools. It was a humbling experience. The most common attribute turned out to be a healthy disdain for administrators (like deans and chancellors).

Syracuse University has many of these transforming teachers, and the students revere them even while they confide that they are “hard.” One of the most remarkable, at least to me, is Bill Coplin. Professor Coplin directs the Public Affairs Program in the Maxwell School. His Public Affairs 101 course has enrolled more than 40,000 students so far. It is hard. Bill is demanding, even curmudgeonly. He insists students learn and manifest the skills of a competent professional

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while also coming to understand citizenship and what it concretely means to do good.

I have seen Bill teach. He knows his students. He demands a lot of them, but that is because he sees extraordinary promise that others may overlook. He relentlessly advocates for his students, including persuading me to deploy them in my negotiation classes as assistants and to recommend them for jobs and careers. He on occasion (surprise) quietly manifests a healthy disdain for administrators. And he is a treasure to this University and our students.

I can't travel anywhere in the United States or the world without an alumnus coming up to me and thanking me for Bill Coplin. I wish I could reply that I hired him. Instead, I say that I am on the lookout for teachers like him.

## BUSINESS

### **Jason La Canfora '96 Sportscast Analyst**

I graduated from Maxwell/Newhouse in '96 and was an undergrad TA for you. I want to sincerely thank you for all you did for me, reinforcing my beliefs, instilling a sense of citizenship and helping me grow as a free-and-critical thinker.

### **Emmet Raichle '21 G&S Communications**

I recently had a performance review for the PR internship I'm currently doing with G&S Communications out of Chicago. It was a very positive review, but one piece of feedback was particularly gratifying. I was complimented on my "extremely strong research abilities" and "knowledge of not just 'what' I should know, but 'how' I can find out."

I can't credit this feedback to much other than the skills I learned from working with professors in the policy studies department. I was also informed that I am the first account intern G&S has brought on who did not have any prior PR experience, and they've been impressed with how quickly I've adapted. Again, I give a lot of credit to policy studies for preparing me with the skills to do that.

This internship comes to an end in a few weeks and I am looking forward to moving on to AlphaSights in NYC in January, taking all I've learned this fall and applying it to the new role.

### **Alicia Verdile '14 Financial Lines Underwriter**

I'm writing to thank you again for teaching the Dale Carnegie principles to your PAF students. I graduated in 2014 and was recently telling my good friends and fellow PAF alumni, Tim Cheng and Katherine Hart, about a recent "win" I experienced at work and both separately encouraged me to share with you. So, here I am!

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I work as a Financial Lines Underwriter, and I enjoy my job; this role allows me to "do good and do well." The insurance company I work for in Chicago offered relatively poor parental leave benefits to its employees. I took the initiative to collect data from my network, present objective findings, and lobby internally to help improve the benefit packages offered to the 15,000 employees in the USA. I pitched my ideas to internal stakeholders by leveraging that the proposed changes could increase the retention rates of talented employees and could decrease the likelihood of receiving a discrimination lawsuit.

After about two years of persistently using the Dale Carnegie principles, the company I work for officially 1) hired a third party to formally assess the amount of fully paid New Parent Bonding time allowed for employees, and 2) revised its Bereavement Leave policy to guarantee fully paid time off for those who experience a miscarriage event.

- The main principles I used were:
- Don't criticize, condemn, or complain.
- Talk in terms of the other person's interests.
- Appeal to the nobler motives.
- Ask questions instead of giving direct orders.
- Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to.

### **Victoria Kim '17 Field Leadership Development Participant, Toyota/Lexus Financial Services**

I'm glad I could see you yesterday. It's great to see the policy studies program is still leaving a strong impact on your students. The skills I learned in the program will continue to help set me apart. In business, each punctuation mark and spelling must be written correctly on legal contracts so identifying any errors are critical. All of your courses required this type of attention to detail, and I am still reaping the benefits of this diligence today. This is only one example, but I'd be more than happy to leave a more detailed account if you would like another testimonial on your website.

### **Sebastiano Mura '18 - Executive Development Program, Macys**

When I first entered Syracuse University, I enrolled myself as a Political Science major. I felt that this would be the perfect fit for me as I always had a large interest in politics and history. However, as is natural when spending thousands of dollars on a college education, my parents would often give me the dreaded questions that undergraduate students do not want to think about: what are you going to do after you graduate? How are you being prepared for the workforce? What skills are you learning?

I began to think more about what I was going to do post-college with a social science degree, and how I was going to find work. I asked around and often heard that companies were interested in hiring social science students because they had the ability to think outside of the box. This was all well and good, but I worried it would not be enough to make my resume stand out.

I was lucky to enroll in Policy Studies 101 in the second semester of my Freshman year. The focus of the class was very different than other classes I had taken. The course was designed with the idea of teaching you the skills needed to enter the 'real world'. If we showed up late to class we would be penalized, if we misspelled words or had formatting errors on our papers, we would lose a point or more off of our grades. Learning to pay attention to detail and managing time was a crucial part of being successful. We were also taught the tangible skills I felt like I was previously missing. My first experience using Microsoft Excel was in Policy Studies 101. That summer I spoke with Professor Coplin and changed my major to Policy Studies.

I am very grateful for the numerous experiences provided for me directly by the required courses in the Policy Studies major. From being a Teacher's Assistant for Policy Studies 101, to interning at the Syracuse Housing Authority, to being a grant writer for a local city-wide organization. My most important experience came in the capstone course, where I created a 28-page report for the Alzheimer's Association analyzing volunteer satisfaction for their Central New York locations. After my Sophomore year I applied and was accepted for an internship at Macys Corporate in New York City. After my interview, I was told how impressed the interviewers were with the amount of experience I had writing and analyzing data. I was offered a job in their Executive Development Program as a Merchandise Planner (where I now use Excel every day) and thanks to the willing coordination of the Policy Studies Department, was able to graduate from Syracuse University in three years.

If you are a student in the social sciences (or any major) who is nervous about what they will do after college, enroll into Policy Studies 101 and sit down for a meeting with Professor Coplin. The major also allows you to take classes in other areas like Political Science and Economics, so do not worry about your entire college career being devoted to Excel.

## **Patty Terhune '17 - Loyola University**

After I had been accepted to Syracuse, my mom researched programs that had received acclaim that she felt would be worth the (kind of excessive amount of) money. She stumbled upon the Policy Studies major and after reading these testimonials decided THIS was the major for me. Because of this, I vowed I would never be a Policy Studies major. However, because PAF 101 fulfilled a lot of core requirements, I ended up taking it anyway.

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Through that class, I discovered Coplin's Skills Through Experience belief and for the rest of my college experience I lived it. I by no means had the highest grades because I overcommitted myself to clubs and college-level leadership roles, but I learned a lot. I served as a TA for multiple PAF courses, served as a research assistant on one of Coplin's books, and, at one point, was flown to NYC to teach a training on administering PAF 101 to high school students. And, wouldn't you know it, I became a Policy Studies major.

This major taught me that skills ultimately win and the only way to get better at skills is by putting in the work. Studying is great for learning the historical context behind a craft or idea, but the only way to get better at the skills that will inevitably help you succeed is through time and experience. The great professional experiences I had in this major got me a wonderful day-job that pays me plenty while allowing me to pursue freelance comedy writing and performing at night and on weekends. I don't love to admit I was wrong about things, but I owe Coplin a lot and I am privileged to now get to be one of the testimonials that I scoffed at a few years ago.

### **Peter Berg '94 - Enterprise Rent-A-Car**

The match between Bill Coplin and Enterprise Rent A Car is a match made in heaven. As a company, I think our principles and founding values lined up exactly with your philosophies. I often think about the lessons that I learned with you so many years ago. I struggled TREMENDOUSLY academically before I met you (including PAF 101 which I took TWICE). Your class gave me the chance to get out of the classroom, work with people in the community and to do more of a hands-on type of learning. Your teaching style did everything for the growth of my academic career. Looking back, if I didn't have you pushing me I probably would not have finished school.

I will never forget turning in papers and being convinced you used every last drop of red ink in your pen before you handed it back to me....to rewrite. One of the greatest thing you ever did for me happened when I came to you and said that I wanted to go to grad school. You immediately asked me why. I replied, "Well, because I want to help people." You basically told me to forget about it, that I stink at school, why would I want to do it anymore? You said, "Berg, you can sell anyone, you need to get into sales. You can make some real money in sales. I know a guy in DC that I can get you interview to sell MUSIAC". I didn't follow that lead, but I did take your advice. I found Enterprise, and you were right, working with people is what I need to, and I was pretty good at selling. Almost 23 years later here I am! Thank you!

### **Michelle Wadwanski '17 - Maximus**

I'm writing to you today because I wanted to let you know that I've just accepted a job offer as an Operations Analyst with Maximus in Boston, MA. Months ago I came to you seeking career

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advice and you put me in touch with Georgia Hamilton (Policy Studies alum that graduated in 2015) and she was instrumental in helping me throughout the interview process. I even talked about Dale Carnegie in one of my interviews, and I think it left everyone impressed!

I can't thank you enough for pushing me to realize what I wanted to do and get out there and do it. When I first came to Syracuse I thought I wanted to go to law school, and I'm so thankful that I ended up changing my mind. The Policy Studies major has given me not only technical skills (because yes, Excel is life) but has also taught me how to effectively communicate and work with others, which are necessary qualities for any type of job.

Please don't hesitate to send students my way if they want any career advice. The Policy Studies network is so strong and has helped me so much. I hope you have a great rest of the summer and an even better school year!

### **Mathew Mazer '15 - JPMorgan Chase**

I still find that policy studies prepares you more for the business world than an actual business degree. Following a particularly brutal group case study last week in which my team had to present to two hard questioning Executive Directors, I was asked how I was able drive the construction of the presentation and its delivery with poise. I replied to that individual by saying, "At Syracuse, I had this one difficult professor who made sure I'd be ready for this...."

### **Philip Ahn '14 - Rental Branch Manager. Enterprise Rent-A-Car**

I started SU Summer of 2007 majoring in Biology which could not have been further from what I do today. After 2 semesters of academic failure I took 3 years off from SU. After my leave of absence, I made it a personal mission to come back to SU to finish up my college degree. I returned in 2011 and luckily a friend introduced the Policy Studies major. Once I took PAF 101, I realized it was the first course in college that I appreciated and learned something from. Policy studies had me sold.

The PAF major showed me a taste of the real world. It really focused on the skills and tools needed in post-academic careers regardless of field. From meeting setting, Excel and the art of e-mails, skills I use every day. All the different capstone courses really taught me on how to work with teams and clients and deliver a service within a deadline.

During one of my sit downs with Professor Coplin in 2014 he asked me what I was doing over the summer. Coplin stated I needed to jump into the work-force and that my personality and work ethic would carry me upwards. I responded by saying I was looking into different positions and he countered with "Why not Enterprise Rent-A-Car?". I forget if I was offended or confused but I went back to my apartment that night and applied for the internship.

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Summer of 2014, I interned at Enterprise Rent-A-Car in JFK Airport. Completed the summer as top selling intern in the Queens/Nassau Region. Applied and hired full time post-grad as a Management Trainee June 2015 in Astoria, NY. Then was promoted to Management Assistant and again to Assistant Branch Manager by April 2016. After 6 months, applied and was promoted to Rental Branch Manager of Woodside, NY in October of 2016. 1 year and 6 months into my career, I am now responsible for over 250 vehicles and hundreds of thousands of dollars in monthly revenue with my eyes set on more growth.

The skills I learned through PAF are extremely valuable and yes “Excel is Life”. So soak it all in, take notes, save your Maxwell Manual but most importantly be brief.

## **Maggie Tarasovitch '16 - Corporate Analyst Development Program, JP Morgan Chase**

Upon graduation from the Policy Studies major, I got my first job at JP Morgan Chase in the Corporate Analyst Development program. The program is highly selective and allows analysts to rotate through different positions within the bank. My first rotation has been going extremely well. I am in Consumer and Community Banking (the Chase side of things) in Operations Strategy & Analytics. I work specifically on the strategy side. We work a lot with technology and innovation. I got very lucky to be placed on such an interesting team that values my "outsider" opinion and to be working on important projects. I know that a part of the reason I am on these projects is because of the skills Policy Studies gave me. My experience in the major allowed me to jump head first into the projects, ask meaningful questions, proactively articulate my thoughts, and contribute to meaningful outputs that have been given to Executive Directors and Managing Directors. On a few different occasions, my manager has expressed that I have exceeded his expectations for a first-rotation-analyst -- and that is just as much a compliment to me as it is to Professor Coplin and the major. I don't think I can express how grateful I am for the real-world experience I was able to get while in the major and just how critical it has been for my success on the job, even just in these first three months.

I am now in my second rotation at JPMC. I took the first opportunity I could to join our Corporate Responsibility (CR) team. This is the part of the firm in which we enable our employees to volunteer and donate money, we grant millions of dollars to non-profits, we run our own institute (global think tank), and we coordinate government relations at all levels, among other functions. I currently work on the Operations team, which gives me the chance to work with just about every area of CR. I've been really grateful for the opportunity.

To exercise my do-gooder side, I've been volunteering at a local food pantry and have become a mentor for a college student. I've also joined a "club" at the firm called the Volunteer Leadership

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Group. We help coordinate employee volunteerism. Over 50,000 employees volunteered with the firm nationally last year, and Central Ohio was the top city for volunteering - with over 5,000 employees volunteering at 230+ events. Although Columbus is not the most exciting city to live in, it's a great place to live. I definitely can't complain about the cost of living. I recently traveled to New York City for work and had a great time, but it just reminded me of the conversation we had when we traveled to city together - how neither of us like it very much. I really don't think I could ever live there.

I'm sure you're probably sick of hearing it, but I am so grateful for Policy Studies. I use the skills that I learned in Policy Studies every day at my job -- whether it be hard skills like Excel or softer skills, like how to communicate with my manager and coworkers effectively. Thank you, again, for everything you've done.

### **Victoria Savage '14 - Due Diligence Analyst, Stroz Friedberg**

I just wanted to let you know that I have accepted a position as a Due Diligence analyst at Stroz Friedberg. Thank you both for all of the help and advice you have given me, without you guys I'd probably just be wasting my time at Grad School.

### **Steve Canale - GE Manager Recruiting and Staffing**

Over the years GE has hired some excellent Policy Studies majors from Syracuse into our 2 year rotational training programs in both Finance and Communications. The students also possessed minors in complementary areas of study that allowed them a basic foundation in the area of discipline that we normally recruit. A winning combination.

### **Erin McElroy '91 – Global Marketing Manager, IBM**

While at Syracuse, I did an internship every semester, which I highly recommend. The theory that is always paired with practice is what is so key about Policy Studies. I didn't just study, I had the opportunity to work for a non-for-profit transitional homeless shelter, the Social Security Administration, Onondaga County Health Dept., the Syracuse City Housing Dept., and even did a home computer study for the IRS, which was thought of as radical that everyone would have a home computer by the year 2000. Needless to say, I got theory, life skills, and a keen awareness of how Policy Studies is life studies.

After graduating, I moved to Washington DC to work for a technology consulting firm, implementing systems for Federal Government Agencies, whatever that meant. At the time, technology was on the rise and the internet was only used by the military. With the basic problem solving skills I had learned, I jumped in and figured it out. PAF problem solving came in handy! After 20 years in the industry, it's amazing to see how technology has impacted our world. I have had the honor to work with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Agriculture,

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Forest Service, and Housing and Urban Development, mostly putting in financial systems. In addition, after September 11th, I was part of a team that established the Department of Homeland Security, doing work in biometrics.

### **Cathryn J. Sitterding '07 – Associate for Booz Allen Hamilton**

PAF 101 was the first class I took that really opened my eyes to something besides journalism as a possible career. In Professor Coplin's class, I learned that one person can make a huge difference if they just get up and do it. I grew up in rural Indiana and basically had no idea of the severity of some societal problems. Throwing us into the city and community service was difficult at first, but I can't imagine what my academic life would be like without that experience. That's where you learn things, right out in the middle of it.

The entire major is structured around skills for real life. I can't believe how many times my boss has said "Let me teach you how to..." and I said I already knew how. Through classes like MAX 201, I learned how to look at problems and solutions from a statistical viewpoint. The grant writing class gave me an inside look - and valuable hands-on experience - into how a non-profit conducts business. I even took a class where I managed my own tutoring program. I don't know another school or department that offers such intense field experience.

The classes - and Professor Coplin - gave me my start in politics, and now I'm living and working in Washington, making a difference every day. I've been encouraged to do good, to really do good, and not just pretend that I am. The classes in the policy studies major give me constructive methods to accomplish that.

### **Katherine J. Hart '14**

I moved out to Los Angeles before graduating as part of the SU in LA program. I interned with TLC Discovery Communications and was hired full time before walking at graduation. I have continued to succeed and move up the ranks because of my great Dale Carnegie skills and knowledge of Excel. I currently work on a show for the Food Network and use Excel every day... Newhouse didn't teach me anything about Excel, thank goodness for PAF!

### **Drew Bland**

The policy studies major was perfect preparation for the MPA program. Two factors stand out. First is internships. They helped me apply what I was learning in a practical way. In graduate school, much of what you learn comes from your classmates' knowledge and experience. I came equipped with real experience that helped me learn from, and participate in, those discussions. That enriched the experience for me and all of my classmates. Prepared students help the entire cohort.

Second is the curriculum, I emerged from Policy Studies with knowledge of statistics, economics, stakeholder analysis and, perhaps most importantly, Microsoft Office. I spent less time worrying about remedial courses and more time on advanced management courses and electives. I also got more out of the assignments. For example, my MS Excel skills helped me focus on the principles of the infamous Day-care Budget assignment rather than software minutiae. Meanwhile, my classmates' lack of knowledge tripled their level of effort.

Later, during a day of job interviews with my eventual employer, I attended an informal lunch with current employees. The discussion gravitated toward how to use MS Office to do work quicker. After I accepted, I found out those employees thought I already worked there based on my knowledge of the tools they were using in their jobs. I attribute this to Policy Studies since at that point I was only three months into the MPA program.

### **Erin Maghran '04 – Risk Analyst, Marsh Inc.**

Taking PAF 101 as an elective my freshman year, changed my college education. After only a few classes, I knew that this major was not the typical major on campus. Becoming a PAF major opened up endless opportunities including internships and hands on projects allowing development, growth and learning both inside and outside the classroom. Throughout college, I was able to develop my skills and education around my interests and likes in order to help pursue a career after college. Nearly a year after graduation, I am working at Marsh, Inc. as a Risk Analyst and am training to be an insurance broker. While not a typical role for a policy studies major to end up in, the job involves both qualitative and quantitative analysis, client interaction and presentation and project managerial skills all of which I was able to learn and develop during PAF classes and experiences.

### **Derek S. Wallace - Divisional Commercial Manager, Shaw Industries**

My influence in Shaw has grown quite a bit in the last two years. I've been taking on several projects at a time, all of which target areas for improvement. The changes I've been proposing and the challenges we are addressing are significant. It's taken me too long, because it's been on my mind, to let you know that all of the skills I need to be successful in my professional career are ones I learned in your major. You introduce these skills in PAF 101 and help your students develop them throughout your coursework until graduation. We learn how to identify a problem, define what the problem is, brainstorm potential solutions, determine the best solution, strategize how to get these solutions implemented and determine how to measure their success. Companies like mine would be better off if we had more Policy Studies majors on the payroll. It's not that I think you need my thanks, because I know that you don't. I am, however, very grateful. I repay the favor by practicing what you taught me literally every day of my career. I do it focused, of course, on doing good!

## **Paul Alberry '09 - AT&T, Business Sales**

I work for AT&T doing business sales for them. I decided to make money. I did TFA after college, so at least I did good for a while.

Thank you for teaching skills, in the Real world, no one cares about what you did in college outside of your first job. It is what have you done for me lately, if you don't have skills, you are behind the 8 ball from the get go.

One thing that is missed in my generation, and is not taught is personal finance. Everyone is more concerned with being a baller and a show off, than balancing their budget at the end of the month, no wonder our country is broke!

## **Scott Taitel '79 - Chief Operating Officer - Clinton Giustra Enterprise Partnership, Clinton Foundation**

I am the Chief Operating Officer of the Clinton Giustra Enterprise Partnership at the Clinton Foundation, and am also currently an Adjunct Professor at the NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. I earned my BA in Policy Studies from the Maxwell School in 1979, and also hold an MBA from Northeastern University. Originally from Boston, MA, I now reside in Edgewater, NJ with my wife Valerie Murray-Taitel - a graduate of Newhouse.

My Policy Studies background gave me a strong foundation to return to my 'roots' after a long private sector career. After graduating Syracuse, I worked in economic development for community action agencies and metropolitan government (City of Syracuse) before acquiring an MBA. I then had a 20-year career running multinational businesses in numerous management capacities and as a venture capitalist.

However, my Policy Studies background never left my blood, and I found myself later in life longing for the opportunity to combine my international business skills and desire to make a difference in the world. The Clinton Foundation offered the perfect environment for taking a business approach to international development. Professor Bill Coplin influenced me greatly in my days at Syracuse: I started as an International Relations major and followed him to Policy Studies, which was created during my time at Maxwell.

## **HEALTHCARE/MEDICINE**

### **Emelia Dome '21 – Nursing School**

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It has been a year since I graduated from Syracuse, and I have almost completed my Master of Nursing degree from Johns Hopkins. This has been a great experience and my writing skills have often been complimented by many of my nursing professors. I attribute that to what I learned in the Policy Studies program. My experience as a 101 and 315 TA also helped me a lot with patient advocacy and communication skills.

Thank you again for such an incredible undergraduate experience. If you ever get any students interested in nursing, send them my way! Nurses can make a lot of impact in the public policy world (especially now).

### **Emily Willard '09 – Medical School**

I highly recommend the Policy Studies major at Syracuse University. If you are anything like me and somewhat unsure of your future post college, the Policy Studies curriculum will provide you with the real-life skills necessary to be successful in any field.

Coplin is a great leader and mentor. He will call your bluff when you are not working hard enough or are disorganized. His straightforward and frank demeanor is refreshing and truly helped me prepare for professional life. He will be a great advocate for you post-graduation. He responds to emails extremely quickly and goes out of his way to make himself accessible to students after class and during office hours.

I was a Teaching Assistant for PAF 101 in the final semester of my senior year prior to graduation. If you have taken PAF 101 and received an A, I highly recommend you apply to be a TA. You will learn valuable leadership and organizational skills that you can carry into the professional world.

I graduated one semester early from Syracuse. In what would have been my final spring senior semester at Syracuse, I worked as a subsite teacher in the Syracuse City School District. I then went on to work for a network of charter schools in New York City for 3 years in Development. I discovered that I had a passion for medicine while working in education and switched career paths in my mid-twenties. I have since completed a post baccalaureate premedical program at Columbia University and a Master of Biomedical science at Rutgers University. I just submitted my applications to medical school and plan to enroll in medical school in August of 2021.

My career has been very fulfilling and full of surprises. I never dreamed that I have what it takes to apply to medical school and become a physician. Policy Studies gave me the confidence and foundation to follow my dreams and aspirations. The Policy Studies major was a wonderful fit for me as a college student. It laid the foundation for many important skills I carry with me today. I still have my copy of Dale Carnegie's book, "How To Win Friends and Influence

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People.” I return to the principles often and have found that they have guided my life countless times.

If you are waffling between majors, I highly recommend you choose Policy Studies. You will not be disappointed. I am grateful for all that I learned and continue to use today. Many thanks to Coplin and the rest of the Policy Studies faculty.

### **Katherine Frega '16 – Medical School**

I was your 2016 PAF graduate, 101 TA, and Remembrance Scholar who went on to Upstate Medical University for medical school. I am now in my fourth year, and applied to residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology with the hope to be a GYN surgical oncologist. During my time in medical school, I was able to practice the skills I gained from the PAF major to work with the Alliance for Fertility Preservation. Over the last few years, I've worked with state legislators to pass a law that would mandate insurance coverage for cancer patients undergoing fertility preservation before they begin cancer treatment. This past April our bill was passed, with the help of Governor Cuomo adding our bill to his budget. This bill extends coverage to five million New Yorkers who otherwise would have paid out of pocket for IVF and fertility preservation in order to build their families. Pursuing your program at SU as a pre-med was critical for me to be able to understand legislation and policy making as a future medical provider. Attached is a picture of me with the executive director of the Alliance for Fertility Preservation at the celebration we had for getting NY coverage passed. I've been asked to serve as a member on their board as I will begin my time as a physician in a few short months. Thank you for all that you did to prepare me to survive medical school and beyond, I am happy to provide you this update. I will be in Syracuse until this upcoming May, and then will learn my destiny for residency in March.

### **Adam Pelner '15 - Mental Health Policy**

My professional goals have continued from my days as a Policy Studies major in advocating for those who are mentally ill and are not able to fight for themselves. It is in your course where I researched realistic policies in identifying what types of programs would help populations at high risk and need (including those who are homeless and incarcerated). We spoke about how legislation that funded programs to help those who suffered from mental health conditions were a noble cause. But you challenged me in asking the important questions as to what types of policies would be favorable, and more importantly, feasible. As a naive kid who thought everything could get done in the snap of a finger, you asked the important questions and gave me a baseline for how real policy works. Now working in that field, I see that policy in itself is incredibly complicated. But I've learned there are realistic and concrete solutions to drive change, and more importantly, effective communication skills that help drive that success (thank you Dale Carnegie).

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I have been working in the clinical field assisting in therapy for those with a variety of mental disabilities and researching alternative treatment methods as well as trying to expand those already in place. And while it has been an incredibly valuable experience, I am ready to take what you and others throughout the major have inspired me to do -- that is create feasible and long lasting change through policy and good legislation. This is why I am reaching out to you in assisting me with a quick reference to help me begin that journey in graduate school. Thank you again for everything you do. And whenever there is a perspective problem at work on how to treat a patient, I am reminded of your saying "Life is an aggregation problem".

### **Melissa Peralta '14 B.A. Public Affairs and Public Relations, Syracuse University; MPH Candidate, Northeastern University**

I graduated from Syracuse University two years ago and entered the public relations field, working in finance and then consumer/lifestyle PR. I have since decided to take my career in a new direction by pursuing a Master's in Public Health - I hope to eventually be able to serve and give back to my local community in the Bronx and fight against health disparities. Majoring in Public Affairs at Syracuse University perfectly set me up for a future career in the public health field. As a student in PAF 315, I had the opportunity to work with the Food Bank of Central New York on a study surveying donor attitudes. To this date, I still credit this class and project in teaching me invaluable skills and lessons I now use. I also still refer to the 32. pg. report I turned in at the end of the semester in interviews! As a Policy Studies major working alongside Professor Coplin, you will gain an amazing array of skills that will allow you to excel in any field you chose to pursue after graduation.

### **Erica Maltby '13 - Principal, Management consulting firm**

*How did Policy Studies prepare me for consulting?*

Policy Studies is the perfect testbed for consulting. You gain experience in areas that employers want to see- managing client relationships, requirements gathering, excel chops, data analysis, navigating ambiguity and presenting findings. Regardless of what type of consulting you go into, you will need all of those skills.

*What can students do in college to prepare for a career in consulting?*

In consulting, you have to be able to sell your skills. Getting into consulting is no different. Luckily, the uniqueness of the Policy Studies major allows you to craft a story that will appeal to employers. If you see that the job requisite calls for someone who can gather requirements, think about your 315 and Benchmarks projects; if you ever asked your client questions such as: how many people should I survey?, what format should the report be in?, etc., then you have gathered requirements! Learn how to craft your story to sell your skills for the job at hand.

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While the Policy Studies major gives you great ‘real life’ consulting skills, it would benefit you to augment that foundation with a specialty. If you’re interested in technology consulting, pick up a minor in the iSchool. If you’re interested in management consulting, double major in Whitman. Having a second major or minor will give you an edge in your area of interest. The final piece of advice is to leverage your 315 project to gain additional internships or independent consulting work. Having client-facing experience will make you an instant standout in the interview process; many candidates will be Excel stars. Not many will have client experience.

*What is healthcare consulting like?*

Healthcare is a significant practice in most consultancies, with many seeing it as their ‘crown jewel.’ The fact is- healthcare is complex, ever-growing, ever-changing, and behind other fields in terms of technology and innovation. That means there are a LOT of opportunities for consultants to help healthcare clients. Healthcare is also multifaceted- you could be working with providers, government, payers or non-profits. With each of those, the work that you’re doing has a significant impact on you as an individual as well as the nation. It was a variety of technology consulting companies who implemented (for better or worse) the Affordable Care Act, one of the most significant pieces of legislation that we have seen in the past decade. The impact that you can have in healthcare consulting is unmatched in other practices. It is the significance of the work and vastness of opportunities that drives many to healthcare consulting.

### **Lauren Piefer '17 - Summer Intern for Health and Disability Advocates**

As I began my internship this summer with a health policy non-profit in Chicago, I just wanted to say how much I appreciate all the tools and skills that are taught in both 101, 315, and from being a TA. The people I am doing projects for were truly impressed how much I already knew-- as far as policy creation, implementation, benchmarking, research, and doing so in a professional setting.

And it showed me how ahead of the other intern I am because I'm not stuck doing any data work this summer. Instead I have been put on a variety of projects involving helping write policy for a hospital collaboration in Chicago to implement supportive housing, am helping with a ride-share collaborative for hospitals and patients, database creation and input for a veterans program, and working on writing a white paper on the role of community determinants of health and need for policy to address these issues and seek solutions.

I just wanted to thank you for all you do for your students and creating a curriculum that focuses on skills and tools rather than academia because seeing the benefit of experiential learning is incredible.

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## **Runjhun Nanchal '03 - Assistant Administrator for the Department of Urology, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center**

I was somewhat of the typically confused college undergrad who did not exactly know what career path to pursue by the time junior year rolled around. But what else could I do with a degree in Biochemistry? That was when I decided to take PAF 101, and almost by fluke Coplin convinced me to declare Policy Studies as a second major - in the second semester of my junior year!

But that was perhaps the best career decision of my life, for it ultimately led to this career in Health Administration.

After grad school as I started an internship and then this job, I have realized that you were always accurate about at least one thing - that in school, more than academic knowledge, you need the critical thinking skills and tools to be able to excel in any job, and the PAF major offered exactly that - I have used the basic analysis skills from PAF 101, the Excel, report writing and presentation skills from PAF 315 and PAF 410. I still remember being horrified at the amount and complexity of work assigned in each class with practically little or no guidance. But that is exactly what a job in the real world is like, and believe it or not, those experiences from PAF have repeatedly helped me challenge myself in my career.

In fact, I had used the model of the report that I had written for my PAF 315 class for a big project. It went up to the President of our hospital, who was quite impressed with the format. I had used the Prince System for a substantial part of another fairly huge project that was in part sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. See, all those skills that you taught us have practical applications!

Kudos to Coplin and to his team for being one of the few academic programs to offer its students this skill set that is truly invaluable.

And who says that Pre-Med and Basic Science research are the only viable tracks for a Bio/Biochemistry major? Several of my colleagues have had the same career path as I did....just without the PAF advantage ;).

For all the current/prospective PAF majors, be persistent with Prof Coplin, and do not be discouraged if he asks you to "figure things out for yourself." Ultimately, he will give you the best advice."

**Ryan Gerecht '06 – Researcher**

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During the fall semester of 2004, while enrolled in PAF 101 taught by Professor William Coplin, I had the opportunity to study medicine from a very unique vantage point. For the entire semester, I researched, studied, questioned, and analyzed HIV/AIDS, not as the traditional biological or physiological mystery, but as a societal problem in Onondaga County. With my father being an Infectious Disease Physician and having worked with HIV/AIDS children throughout the summer of 2004, I thought I completely understood the risks and realities of the virus. - I was wrong! It wasn't until I was exposed to government policy making and analysis by Professor Coplin, that I realized the full circle of challenges surrounding those involved with HIV. As important as healthcare providers and scientists are to the treatment of those already infected, policy makers are the first line of defense against the continuation of the epidemic in the form of mandating prevention education, syringe exchange programs, and support services.

Research- Last semester I had the opportunity to delve into a variety of research databases investigating the latest HIV/AIDS reports from a variety of professional medical institutions such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the New England Journal of Medicine, and the New York State Health Department. Learning how to critically analyze such professional literature from a policy point of view taught me valuable lessons on the reality of changing society. Political feasibility, cost-benefit ratios, and survey design are terms that pre-meds are not normally familiar with yet are paramount in shaping modern medicine and overall healthcare.

Interviews- Last semester I interviewed a variety of players, stakeholders, and experts from Onondaga County and across central New York from Onondaga County Executive, Nick Pirro, to Syracuse School Board members to the Director of AIDS Community Resources. Learning to interact with these busy professionals provided me with not only valuable information for formulating my policy and writing my modules, but it also taught me the value of being able to verbally communicate efficiently, and professionally. The art of speech and power of persuasion is not a skill pre-meds have the chance to develop in a laboratory over test-tubes and textbooks.

Writing- The completion of 5 detailed reports presenting, analyzing, and proposing policy changes concerning HIV/AIDS was an exhausting yet thoroughly rewarding experience. The attention for detail that Coplin requires, the demand for time management, and the extreme emphasis placed on clear expression of ideas and plans will certainly serve me well in all aspects of life including medicine.

Although I originally enrolled in PAF 101 in order to simply fill graduation requirements, I can now say that my experiences in the class will truly be a highlight in my college career. Professor Coplin's unique approach to teaching through doing good and learning tangible life skills is a treat in and of itself. However, the experience is made even more exceptional by Professor Coplin's incredible enthusiasm for teaching and for the success of his students!

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## **Kerri Aronson**

The classes required for Policy Studies educate students with valuable tools for numerous career paths. I learned many useful life skills including time management. I have worked closely with professors, and those employed in the government and non-profit sectors. In PAF 101, I interviewed a New York State representative, hospital workers, and employees of a domestic violence shelter. In my PAF 315 class, I worked closely with the Upstate New York Poison Control Center and helped them to improve public education through the analysis of a survey. Through my Max 123 class I gained a deeper understanding of the political side of health care. We studied extensively the problem of access to health care in America as well as the cost of health insurance. In my Data Management class I learned how to use computer programs including Microsoft Access and Excel. I can assure you I would not have done any of this had I not decided to major in Policy Studies.

Another large component of the major is my honors thesis. I am currently working with Upstate Medical University on community service initiatives for the medical students. With the help of Policy Studies advising, I designed a survey that will be given to the medical students to assess their involvement in the community. The survey will be used to give the university an idea of what volunteer programs the students are interested in. Thanks to the community service I have done for my Policy Studies major I have been exposed to many of the opportunities in the Syracuse Community and can use my experience for the project.

Policy Studies has given me opportunities and an education I never would have received with only a science major. I have been exposed to many aspects of healthcare before I even enter medical school. I know this broader understanding will only help me in my years as a Physician. I recommend that any pre-med take PAF 101 in their freshmen year to get a feel for the opportunities through a Policy Studies major. If a student decides down the road medical school isn't the right choice, policy studies opens the student up to opportunities in other careers, including health administration. I believe Policy Studies gave me an advantage over those who only major in biology or chemistry.

## **Mansi Mehta B.S. Biology, B.A Public Affairs- Syracuse University '09; MPH- Mount Sinai School of Medicine '11**

In the two years that have passed since I have graduated Syracuse, I have graduated with a master's in public health, studied abroad to conduct research in Argentina, and now am working at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in New York City working on a grant funded project by the Center for Disease Control. It will never cease to surprise me how the work I did with Coplin still helps me today. Everything from knowing what benchmarks are, working with access, grant writing, and knowing specific details about policy (which my supervisor always seems to appreciate) comes up on a regular basis. Coplin's book, "The Maxwell Manual for

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Good Citizenship" (which sits in my bookcase in my apartment) STILL helps me, and I know it always will :)

Coplin was always hard on his students, and I never understood why in the moment, but when I sit and think about it now I'm so thankful to have had a professor like him. I have so much more I want to do for this world, and I am so glad I stumbled upon PAF 101 when I did otherwise I would never have fully realized how I wanted to contribute to society.

### **Margaret Giovannetti '04 - Policy Studies and Biology; Works for Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health in the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and enrolled in Graduate School of Public Health in Boston**

My grad school classes began at the beginning of September - I'm taking two classes in International Health, a biostats course, and an epidemiology course. You'll be happy to hear that a lot of what I am learning in biostats and epi are things I learned through my policy studies classes. The biostats class has a section on Excel, and these first few classes haven't even touched on anything I hadn't already learned in 315 for my survey. Also, both classes have talked about study design and data analysis, and the discussion is basically everything I did for the survey as well.

I'm also working at the Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health in the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services. I sent in my survey and some other writing examples as part of my application, and I've been told they were huge selling points, as well as my knowledge of different MS programs and computer skills (i.e. PowerPoint, Excel, Access, web design). I have to admit, Coplin, you were right when you said employers look for computer skills and writing ability (don't let that compliment go to your head, Coplin). Well, if this email so far hasn't been a plug for the Policy Studies major, I'm not sure what is. I'm sure this is something you will point out at the beginning of some 101 lecture while you tell them they are all bad and better be paying attention in class because it is worthwhile. Well, it is worthwhile, so I hope you are still berating those undergrads as I suspect you are!

### **Christiane LaBonte '06 – Health Insurance Specialist, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services**

I graduated from Syracuse in May 2006 with a BA in economics and policy studies, and loved my SU experience. Like most seniors, I was nervous about graduating and finding a job and learning how to do this adulthood thing. After graduation, I knew I wanted to move to Washington, D.C. I spent the spring and summer of 2005 there, and while interning with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, I caught a rather acute case of "Potomac Fever."

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Sure enough, within three weeks of graduation, I accepted a job as a research assistant (RA) with The CNA Corporation, a not-for-profit policy research firm in Alexandria, Virginia. My work is in the area of health services research, which refers to the quality, efficiency, financing, and delivery of the health care system. The majority of CNA's staff hold PhDs in economics, but there are also sociologists and clinical and research psychologists on staff. At the moment, I am the only Bachelor's-level RA, so I am busy. Fortunately, my SU education prepared me for this job extremely well. One of my first tasks at CNA was implementing and analyzing results for a survey on disability compensation for the Department of Veterans Affairs. In order to analyze survey data, I primarily used SPSS, which I first learned in MAX 201, a required course for policy studies majors. Policy studies, in general, gave me the skills I needed to apply the theory I was learning in my economics courses.

### **Stephanie Zaremba (Good) - Federal Policy Manager at athenahealth**

After a detour through law school and a few years working as an attorney, I've settled into a dream job managing federal policy for athenahealth, a Massachusetts-based health IT company led by a zany yet genius CEO who I dare say you would love (and who employs a few of your alums, by the way). The company vision is to make healthcare work as it should, so I get to work on policy not because it's good for the company, but because it's good for society... doing well by doing good.

Recently, as I was finally getting around to throwing out old high school and college notebooks, I came across my old PAF 101 notes. They were essentially a play-by-play of how I do my job now. I had never taken the time to stop and fully appreciate this before, but I could never have come into this new, non-legal role and excelled without that PAF foundation. So thank you.

### **Shannon McCool '10 - Physical Therapy**

I am making a career change into physical therapy after working in finance for five years. Physical therapy is a lot like Policy Studies, actually. Your job is to assess the symptoms (data), determine the root cause, and design and implement a treatment plan (policy) while being mindful of its other potential impacts. My job in finance used the same strategies, actually. It is amazing how those skills apply to nearly every field. I still believe switching to the Policy Studies program was the best decision I made as an undergrad. It gave me a core skillset to build on and helped me sift through all the BS to figure out my real career options and true values.

## EDUCATION

### **Ronald Taylor '15 – Principal**

“The Policy Studies Program is more than being smart and efficient at what I do. It taught me how to value and leverage networks that pay and sow into you over time.”

### **Mariel Stein '11 – Teacher**

Upon graduating Syracuse, I joined the TFA Baltimore Corps as a self-contained special education teacher for students in grades 1-8 in a low-income school. The students in my class had severe intellectual, emotional, and learning disabilities. All were years behind in reading, writing, and math. They came from low-income homes with poor living conditions and difficult family situations. I taught at this school for two years and completed my Master's degree in elementary education with a specialization in special education. Upon the completion of my two-year commitment, the school shut down. I moved to New Jersey where I became a head preschool teacher at a private Jewish day school working in a classroom with 3 and 4-year-olds. I taught there for 7 years before ultimately deciding to pursue my love of psychology (which I realized while working with children struggling in cognitive and social/emotional development). The Policy Studies program was the catalyst for my teaching career. Through my work with Professor Coplin, I realized my passion for educational policy. Throughout my four years at Syracuse, I learned about the process behind making policy and how educational policies ultimately impact schools and students. While in the program, I learned about TFA from Professor Coplin and other students pursuing, currently in, or alumni of the program. It is through this program that I also became a tutor and founded my own tutoring program. While doing this, I realized my love for education and desire to pursue it further, which is what ultimately led me to TFA and my job as an educator.

### **Madeline Farnham '16 - Teacher - 6th Grade ELA**

I hope this email finds you well. Although my time at Syracuse was a few years ago (wow, time flies!) I wanted to reach out and express my most sincere gratitude for your commitment to making my Policy Studies education the best it could be. Your department plays such an instrumental role in creating passionate leaders and I am thrilled to have gotten a chance to learn from the best.

I wanted to share an update about what I've been up to over the past few years! After graduating last year, I joined Teach for America in Houston. I am a 6<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts teacher and am proudly serving in a Title 1 school where I get to do the thing I love every day... work

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with AMAZING kids. Although I love what I do, I am feeling a strong desire to push myself and am contemplating next steps. I think my best option may be going back to school soon!

I can't help but think of what an incredible legacy you have created at SU. Whenever I am unsure about what lies ahead, I always know I can rely on the skills and experiences learned during my time at Maxwell to make me feel empowered. I still think about those opportunities, like my PAF 315 project working for the SUNY Syracuse Educational Opportunity Center and working at Nottingham High School, and can't help but feel grateful. I learned so much and have been well prepared for the working world! I hope you, your students, and your family are well!

### **Tara Tolton '18**

By taking PAF 410, I discovered that the work I did in class and my work in the community go hand in hand. I learned so much more from studying because it helped me be better in my job. I improved as a tutor because I used the skills taught from assignments. It was effective to integrate both assignments and experience work, and especially the experience work, because the information was immediately being put to use, consequently sinking in much faster than learning through theoretical situations.

The immense support that the faculty gave the students was extremely helpful and very encouraging as well. Assignments were tailored to your experiences which helped to build a better understanding with each new assignment.

### **Katie Hoole '13 -- Founder of Public Charter School, College Bound Academy**

This last year was very challenging being a full time graduate student and being a founding team member of a new school, and I do not think I would have been as successful without my experience in the Policy Studies program under you. I am very grateful for learning from you those four years in undergrad - especially when you said things that made me cry and pushed and challenged me more than any teacher I had had before.

The school I am working at is under the model of a Success Academy charter school or an Uncommon school with the structure, rigorous academics, etc. We focus on supporting and challenging our students to be their best selves both academically, and social-emotionally. And because of that we talk about our own experiences in education. I never had a teacher tell me that what I was doing was not good enough or was not my best until I was in your PAF 101 class; I certainly turned in papers and exams in high school that were not my best.

I am very thankful for your high expectations for your students, and your candidness. Without majoring in the PAF department, I do not know that I would have ever learned from someone

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who pushed me in those ways. Without the experience learning from you, I don't think I would have been the best teacher I could be for my students.

This year I was asked to be a founding principal of a KIPP elementary school in Tulsa, and join the Building Excellent Schools program to found a school somewhere in the country. I turned both down. I eventually want to either run or open a school, but first I want to be confident in my ability to be a highly effective educator for all kids, and know that I can manage adults and create a positive culture; two things I have learned from working under leadership who needed those skills.

### **Kimberly Simpson '05 - Curriculum Designer**

In 2005, Dr. Coplin introduced me to Wendy Kopp during my senior year at Syracuse. I was inspired by the Teach for America movement and became a 2005 Corps member in Charlotte, North Carolina where I taught 8<sup>th</sup> grade English for eight years. I am still in education, but transitioned to higher education three years ago. This year I transitioned from an Assistant Professor of Practice to a Curriculum Designer at Relay Graduate School of Education. At least once a year, I am asked who is the teacher that inspired me to become a teacher. Dr. Coplin is that teacher for me. He believed in me when I was an indecisive undergrad, helped me land an internship at a non-profit organization, and encouraged me to see the value in “doing good”. He instilled in me a sense of confidence that pushed me forward when I questioned myself as a small town girl from Ohio. I will always have fond memories of Syracuse because of his classes and his advice.

### **Susan Crandall '05 – Teacher, Teach For America**

My undergraduate experience as a policy studies major at Syracuse University has proven absolutely invaluable to my success as full-time staff member at Teach For America's national office in New York City. Policy studies prepared me well for my first job out of college; I was able to quickly thrive in a fast-paced, forward-thinking, intense workplace and make significant, measurable contributions to this organization - even as one of its youngest staff members.

I left SU last May with a skill-set that far surpassed that of many of my peers in other disciplines. Through my policy studies classes, I gained mastery in areas that employers truly valued: data analysis and database management, quantitative goal-setting and measurement, computer software fluency, and survey design and research. Through practicums and internships, I also had countless real-world experiences in real-world settings that involved working and communicating effectively with external audiences. Policy studies taught me about tempered idealism: the notion that we can change the world, but only with pragmatic thought, ambitious goals, and strategic action.

I was able to very easily transition into my job at Teach For America, where our mission is improving the educational and life opportunities for children growing up in low-income communities by placing outstanding recent college graduates in two-year teaching commitments in public schools. Though I saw other new staff members-fresh out of college like me-struggle at a workplace where organizational ability, critical and rigorous thinking, relentless pursuit of data-driven results, and constant and continuous improvement are absolutely essential components to success, I was able to dive into my new job with enthusiasm and immediate impact. As a member of our recruitment team, I was part of an effort to attract over 17,000 people to apply to the corps this year, which is a 39% increase among college seniors and a record in Teach For America's 15-year history.

Next year, I will be teaching elementary school in the New York City public schools as a part of Teach For America's corps. As I prepare for what will be an intensely challenging experience, I again know that the practical education I received through the policy studies major has positioned me for major success. I have no doubts that-with hard work and tremendous persistence-the children in my classroom next year will make significant academic gains, and I am truly honored to have received a college education that will make that possible.

### **Lisa Mueller '02 – Teacher, High School for Leadership and Public Service, New York City**

As an undergraduate in Public Affairs, I acquired many practical skills that allow me to be very successful in my profession today. PAF gave me, an aspiring educator, the experience of being a Teaching Assistant with two different professors and even teaching my own section of a community service course. I also took an internship opportunity offered only through PAF which introduced me to the world of urban education. These experiences prepared me well to enter a competitive Master's teaching program.

In addition, I was encouraged to network with professionals in the community and collaborate with my peers on policy projects requiring me to collect, analyze, and professionally present data. My writing and critical thinking skills became polished and my ability to understand and articulate the process of policy making sharpened.

Finally, PAF was a really fun major in college! The program isn't too big, so I got to know my classmates and professors very well. I felt like what I was learning would be useful in my life and that has proved true in the 3 years I have been out of school. Professor Coplin's bark is bigger than his bite, and if you are brave enough to sit down with him for lunch someday, he will quickly have you convinced that you alone can save the world. His belief in my ability to make a difference motivated me throughout my higher education and still motivates me today.

## **Mehreen Nayani '10, Policy Studies, Teach For America 2010 Metro Atlanta Corps**

Because of the policy studies major, PAF 315, and Coplin, I was able to continue working in education! I just finished my two year TFA commitment in Metro Atlanta in May. I taught 5th grade (all subjects) in Atlanta, Georgia. My interest in education and education policy was sparked because of the policy studies major. I probably would have never taken this route if it had not been for PAF 101. The major taught me about real situations and you made sure to not sugar coat how government and policy work. Coplin's openness and blunt attitude pushed some away, but I think that is what got me more passionate.

Anyways, if I remember correctly, you're not one to enjoy lengthy emails. Because of the skills I learned in the major, and specifically PAF 315, I was able to get a job with Achievement First as an Operations Associate for Bushwick Middle School in Brooklyn, NY. I am certain that I would not have even qualified for such a role had I not taken 315 and be pushed to work with excel, analyze data, and create a report. I used my 315 report as an example to help me create a data report I submitted as part of the interview process. During my interview, my interviewer said that my submission showed that my excel skill set was far better than the other candidates. I immediately thought about the long hours I spent in the lab perfecting my report and how tedious the process was. I was quite annoyed and frustrated at times, but I now realize how important this skill set is and absolutely correct Coplin was the whole time.

This major and the class are truly based on skills that real people use. I am lucky that I was able to participate in such a program. It really has opened doors for me that might not have been opened, and it has allowed me to continue working in a field that I enjoy and am passionate about.

Thank you to Coplin for creating such a program that allows students to learn skills that they will actually use in the professional world. I am an employed college graduate (and I stress employed!) doing something I love and hoping to make a difference because of this major. And I still wear my "Top 10 Coplinisms" shirt very proudly!

## **Spencer Knowles (took the course at Gouverneur High School in Central New York)**

I absolutely hated the horrible modules in your class. Public Policy was my least favorite class and I dreaded going there every day. I love your philosophy on life, society, college, and work though. It's very straightforward and realistic. You also stated that relationships are about tolerance. I keep that in mind frequently when annoyed with my longtime girlfriend who I will marry in the next couple of years. I gained many skills from your class and learned an extensive

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amount of information about our government, laws, and crime (my topic). I'm now attending RPI for nuclear engineering and use much of what your class taught me every week. Thank you for positively influencing my thought processes, and helping gain important life skills.

### **Nick Taddeo, Former TA for PAF 101 and current Teach For America Teacher**

I am just starting on my second semester of school as a 6th grade math teacher in the Dallas Independent School District. Teach For America has been the challenge of a lifetime but I know I am continuing to build on the professional skills that started with your PAF courses a few years ago. It's true that "Excel is life". Our principal saw the spreadsheet another corps member and I use to track student performance and has implemented it school wide. We now have to train the other teachers how to use it (harder than teaching low income students math).

### **Rachel Liebman '02 - Teach For America Corps Member '02, Masters in Teaching from American University, Curriculum Specialist at Educational Options**

I only knew two things about my future career when I came to Syracuse: I didn't want it to be focused on earning a ton of money, and it had to have a positive impact on something. That's it. That's all I knew.

Then I met Coplin and like the rest of us, took PAF 101.

I sat in that auditorium and watched the Teach For America video that Coplin uses to show what a good nonprofit looks like. Immediately, I knew that TFA was exactly the type of organization that I wanted in on. From that day on, I'd consider the way that every class I took and every paper I wrote would impact my future classrooms. I poured myself into Policy Studies.

First, I was a TA for 101; I learned to listen to the boss, to lead my peers, and to learn from mine and others' mistakes. Then I helped design and implement a survey for 315; I learned about teamwork, tedium in Excel, and the discipline of writing. Next I helped design and implement an after school program at Wilson Park for PAF 410; I learned about humility and a little about teaching. I was using Policy Studies to set myself on the path to education reform through TFA.

Lucky for me, Coplin urged me not apply to TFA. Like all of his other techniques, his discouragement effectively motivated me not only to apply, but through and beyond my initial two-year commitment. Every day in the classroom, in one way or another, I consciously used everything I learned from my Policy courses. But more than that, I heard Coplin's words in my head telling me to "Do Good." I also heard his words come out of my mouth, urging my students

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to Do Good. Yes, "Do Good," with a capital D and a capital G, because that's what it's all about. That is what he taught me. That is what Policy Studies proved to me. The hours upon hours on Excel, in the lab, fighting with Coplin-it's all worth it. It's all worth it because in the end, you learn how to Do Good effectively.

## **Justin Buffman '01 - Middle School teacher and participant of Middle School Endorsement program**

I'm finishing up a program to obtain Middle School Endorsement in Math so I can teach in the fall. I just accepted an offer for a teaching position at a middle school and look forward to finally having "my own classroom", and place to go to everyday. I know this will sound cheesy, but a lot of the skills I gained from the courses really helped me through my postgraduate studies, and in the workplace.

I found all the writing, especially the different types of writing, helpful. Knowing who your audience is helps frame you're writing just as much as focusing on a topic. The other skill that really pops into my head is the interpersonal skills. During the coursework for PAF, you got to work on different teams and for different types of "bosses". A lot of the training for Middle School Endorsement is focused on teaming, as more schools are using this method of teaching to their advantage. The major helps you become accustomed to working in teams, to learn to balance being heard and listening. It may not sound like much, but knowing when to listen is a skill. Otherwise, when you do try and make a point it can discredit you.

## **Melissa Rouette '01 - Teach For America**

When I first joined Teach For America in 2001, I had no idea how my degree in Policy Studies would help me to be successful as an elementary school teacher. However, I quickly found that so many of the skills essential to being a highly effective teacher are skills that I had obtained through my work in Policy Studies. It is very clear to me that everything I learned as a policy studies student contributed greatly to my ability to make significant gains in academic achievement with my second grade students in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Some of the most important skills I needed to be successful in the classroom were benchmarking, data analysis and critical thinking - all of which I learned as a policy studies student. Prior to taking PAF 315 I didn't know what benchmarking (setting measurable goals to determine success) was. As a teacher, it is absolutely essential to determine the levels that each of your students is entering at, and then to set benchmarks that should be reached at regular intervals throughout the school year so that you know each student is on the path to success for the end of the year and beyond. Hand-in-hand with benchmarking is data analysis. Through the various public affairs courses I was able to get many, many hours of practice with this. As a teacher I had to constantly be collecting data about my students' academic progress and then analyzing the

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data to see if each student was on track to meet the goals I had set, as well as to determine any trends in the data. Was there a certain academic skill that all of my students had done particularly well or poor with? If so, why? Was there a certain group of students who were struggling more than others? Of course, this is where critical thinking became essential - after I had analyzed the data and determined trends, what was going to make the biggest impact in moving my students forward?

Another essential skill to teaching is collaboration, which I was able to strengthen through my policy studies coursework. Many of the public affairs courses require group work on major projects. Teachers, like so many other professionals, must be able to work collaboratively with others in order to have the greatest impact possible. Though I was the instructional leader in my classroom, it was so important that I work on a regular basis with the other second grade teachers at my school to get and share new ideas for lessons, ask for feedback on my instruction, and work through struggles I was having in my room. Also, in order to make a difference for students on a school-wide level, it was imperative for me to join committees and work with colleagues throughout the school for change.

Communication is also a key skill to have as a teacher. The policy studies major provided me with a number of experiences beyond the Syracuse University campus, working with organizations in the community. Through this work I had to learn to communicate effectively with a variety of people in order to accomplish what I had set out to accomplish. This helped me to be better prepared for communicating with parents, my principal, other teachers, and community members - all of whom were important to me being able to reach my goals for my students.

Each of these skills, as well as writing, survey design, and working with Excel, helped me to be highly effective in the work I did as a teacher. They continue to help me in my work today as a Program Director with the Teach For America program, where I select, train, and support corps members. I am incredibly proud to have been a policy studies major, and am thankful to Professor Coplin and Carol Dwyer for helping me obtain the tools I have needed to be successful in my work.

### **Chandra Keller-Allen '97 - Inclusive Elementary Education & Policy Studies dual major, MPP from UCLA, current doc student and research assistant George Washington University**

The field of public policy has become one of my work-life passions and it all started with PAF 101 and Coplin. After SU, I went on to teach in special education for several years, get a Masters of Public Policy at UCLA, and work on budget, policy, and research issues at the US Department of Health and Human Services as a Presidential Management Fellow. Now I work at George

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Washington University as a researcher while I finish my doctorate.

I have been able to handle varied responsibilities in my career, including chairing contentious parent meetings, dealing with autistic children throwing tantrums (sometimes Coplin yelling can be a bit like a child with autism having a tantrum), writing high quality reports, preparing the President's Budget (using Excel, of course), and planning and conducting empirical research, in large part because of the skill sets and foundational knowledge I learned at Maxwell. My problem has not ever been that I couldn't find a job, but that I couldn't decide which job to take. Education policy is a field in great need of some quality PAF graduates. Whether you want to teach, work on education policy, or do education research, the Policy Studies major (especially coupled with an education major) is a clear asset.

In addition to the compelling career-related reasons, I would recommend doing the Policy Studies program because of the people and relationships. Once you graduate and ten years fly by, you won't remember every book you read, or paper you wrote, or even every professor you had. But you will remember Coplin. He is the kind of person that sticks with you, berates you in your subconscious, and spurs you on to keep doing good. I distinctly recall an episode where I met with him to discuss a draft of my final paper for 315. We talked about the paper briefly, my responses clearly not sufficient to his comments. He suddenly reached into his desk drawer, grabbed a rubber stamp with a wooden handle, and slammed it down onto my paper, causing me to jump slightly in my seat. It said, "Your writing stinks."

### **Alexis Lian '11- B.A. Policy Studies, B.A. Political Science**

I can't tell you how much the Policy Studies major has helped me over the past few months and into my current job as a TFA corps member. Recently, when I would show my own bosses how to use format painter, Excel spreadsheet formulas, formatting tips and shortcuts, and quickly find resources online, it really showed me that every single class I took within the major had a purpose and I can't tell you how thankful I am for that. The attention to detail that is required through the major has been incredibly valuable to me as I have been reviewing documents for those above me. I will be incorporating these editing skills, as well as 'real' life skills, into my classroom in an effort to carry on Professor Coplin's educational ideals. Although these assignments and 'nit-picky' attitudes seemed meticulous and difficult at the time, those skills have been invaluable to me. It has become second instinct to pick out grammatical and formatting errors in PowerPoint presentations at TFA and school-wide meetings (a gift and a curse). When my fellow teachers open up an Excel spreadsheet or try to start a report for their masters programs and don't know where to start, I have to just smile to myself. Remembering my late nights finishing modules and my PAF 315 paper, I am able to return to those skills that helped me so many times and start that report, memo, budget or spreadsheet that they so desperately now need help with!

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## **Shannon E. Walsh '16**

I am currently in PAF 101 and have been selected to become a TA for Fall 2015. I wanted to start by saying thank you for the opportunity to work with you and the future TAs next fall.

More specifically, I wanted to thank you for including the O\*NET Online in Module 4. After going through that exercise, my curiosity was sparked and I dug deeper into the education required to become a school psychologist where I live. Through this research, I found out that one of the certified programs in PA is through the doctorate program at Lehigh University, about thirty minutes from my hometown. What happened next was accidental, however, most beneficial. I scrolled through Lehigh University's program website and saw a list of graduates. One graduate stuck out because the site noted this woman is now a professor here at Syracuse University, something I would probably not have discovered without this exercise. I looked up classes this professor teaches and coincidentally I had planned on enrolling in several of them next year. It is through the skills developed in PAF 101 that has potentially allowed me to find a valuable player and mentor here on campus that is directly connected to classes I will take and connected to where I will be looking to earn my doctorate.

After all is said and done, you are right, it comes down to skills.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **John Mandyck '89 – Vice President of Government and International Relations, Carrier Corporation**

Hardly a day goes by where I don't rely on skills or instincts developed by the Policy Studies major. I was immediately drawn to the program because of its practical approach to actually doing something. Of course the eccentricities of Bill Coplin added an intriguing bonus. I'll never forget that my freshman year textbook was The New York Times. It was the perfect, real-world compliment to the policy analysis skills learned in class, like identifying problems, policy alternatives, players and preferred approaches (the policy cycle that you'll learn). To this day, I am a most critical reader of graphs and tables, looking always for the appropriate labels and data identification drilled into me as a freshman in PAF 101.

Today, I manage domestic and international public policies and the resulting effects on a large global corporation. While public policy issues vary in substance and color across the globe, the method to understanding these issues, and what to do about them, are best managed through a

consistent analytical approach. That's what Policy Studies is all about. That's why the major has served me so well in my professional development.

The major by itself will not automatically create a career. Personal motivation must play its role. Students must create the future instead of just waiting for it to happen. Policy Studies is the tool box to creating a future. It offers practical skills that can be applied to any endeavor.

## CONSULTING

### **Sophia Lamendola '19 - Deloitte Consulting**

Entering your first year of college is typically accompanied by overwhelming uncertainty and the expectation to make many decisions that you may not necessarily feel prepared for. The most daunting of these decisions is choosing a major that aligns with the career path that you want.

For me, this dilemma was followed by questions like: How could I possibly know what I want to do for the rest of my life? What if, in four years, I'm no longer passionate about this topic? How do my skills translate in a work environment? Maybe I was more anxious than the average freshman, but I have a feeling everyone has these concerns; at least to some degree.

When I chose my major, I decided to start with the most fundamental question: What was I passionate about? I knew that I liked watching the news and discussing politics, so I applied to SU as a policy studies major, but didn't really have any idea what it was. When I decided to go to SU, I contacted the Head of the Policy Studies Department, Bill Coplin to learn more about the program. My first meeting with Coplin was a mix of frustration, anger, and indecisiveness as he challenged me on my aspirations and mindset for the future. My initial reaction was to quit and find a new major, but part of me appreciated his pushback. I was challenged to reconsider my perception of the world, my future, and my own work ethic, which, was an inherently uncomfortable experience. It did, however, forced me to grow and become more self-aware in terms of my goals for college and my career. Throughout the next three years, I pushed myself to seek out experiences outside of my comfort zone. I quickly realized the initial discomfort of being forced to challenge myself was, ultimately, worth the future growth. The most valuable lessons I learned in college did not come from the classroom; rather, it was through leadership roles, internships/part-time jobs, and volunteer positions I participated in beyond my core educational requirements.

To illustrate this point, I will share the opportunities I took advantage of throughout my years as a Policy Studies major. During the second semester of my freshman year, I was selected for a position as a TA for the Intro Policy Studies Class (PAF 101), where I served as Competition

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Direction; managing all of the in-class competitions to wrap up each unit (aka Module) cover during the class. As a TA, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner, use a detail-focus approach, and, most importantly, be prepared! For many TAs, this is the first time we have been challenged to behave as an adult in a workplace, and the lessons you learn throughout this experience will prepare you better than anything else for your first role in a professional setting. I went on to serve as the Head TA for the Policy Studie's Capstone course (PAF 315) during my junior year, where I was responsible to managing a class of 40 students, 3 other TAs, and for preparing class materials, lectures, and activities each week. In this position, I was given more responsibility and the expectations were definitely higher. I was able to grow as a professional by practicing my organizational and leadership skills in a fast-paced, high-pressure environment. I can pinpoint this as the experience that best prepared me for my career as a consultant working in teams and managing client relationships.

Aside from my TA positions, Professor Coplin is also responsible for connecting me to both of my part-time jobs at Syracuse. During the first week of my freshman year, I expressed an interest in data and analysis and was promptly referred to a Undergraduate Research position at the Institute of Veterans and Military Families -- a non-profit research group affiliated with SU. Eventually, I was promoted to manage my own projects and produce Tableau Dashboards for both internal and public use. I also worked as an Undergraduate Assistant for the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence at SU, where I was held a variety of responsibilities including administrative duties, data collection and analysis, and campus networking/events.

Three months after graduating from SU and beginning my career, I have had time to reflect on my college experience and the role it played in preparing me for my life as a "real adult". The Policy Studies Department has widespread network and access to opportunities which provided me with real-world experience aligned with my interests, which enabled me to expand my resume, learn technical skills, and acclimate into a professional environment. Although I still have so much learning and growing to do, I credit the Policy Studies department for giving me the foundational skills I needed to be successful in such a competitive job market. If you decide to become a policy studies major, your education will not end at learning how a bill becomes a law. You will walk across the stage at graduation with the confidence to overcome any challenge that post-grad life will throw at you.

## **Jennifer Bundy '15 - The Advisory Board Company**

Upon graduation, most of my fellow Political Science grads went right to law school or graduate school – making me feel a bit insecure about my own post-grad plans. For a moment right after graduation I thought law school still seemed like the right move – I even took the LSAT + was accepted into law school for Fall 2016.

I had taken a job at the Advisory Board Company on a whim (mainly because it was in DC + seemed like a fun place to work). The Advisory Board Company is a for-profit consulting/research firm in the healthcare + higher education industries—far from a non-profit or law firm where I originally pictured myself. I was suddenly thrust into a business environment where I was responsible for generating leads for our services at health systems across America.

As I got my law school acceptance letter I just remembered your voice **“do not go to law school”** – and really thought about how it didn’t necessarily go along with my career goals or play to my strengths. I ended up declining my admittance to law school and continued on at my firm, where I was promoted to a Sales Director. I now get to travel around the country (for free) and visit with college/universities to discuss how my firm can help them with enrollment, student affairs, research, etc. They’ll even pay for part of an MBA/MPA down the line! Sales gets a bad rap I think, but not only do I feel like I am doing well by doing good --- I am also have fun! To end this long email – I just want to reiterate how thankful I am that you gave real, practical advice all those years ago in PAF 101. If I hadn’t been in your program I may be an underpaid and unhappy lawyer right now!

## **Lauren Ottaviano ’13 – Intelligence Analyst Consultant for Ernst & Young**

The summer between my sophomore and junior year, I interned for a medical device company as a "Market Analyst." My first day they asked me if I knew how to use excel and design surveys and to test me they had me design a client satisfaction survey and then create a mini-report for my boss. I finished that and a few hours later the VP of marketing for the company came into my office with my survey and report and asked me if I would be willing to travel with them to Chicago to survey potential clients. They were shocked that as a college student I knew not only how to create surveys but how to graphically present, obviously everything I learned in 315 and 410.

The following summer I interned for JP Morgan Chase in their Wall Street Office. I proved my excel abilities early on by helping the CFO of their second largest line of business create financial reports for company Executives. I also applied my Policy Studies skills to design and implement process improvements for Executive Management, and managed fellow interns and international team to define, standardize and analyze metrics for global performance initiative within their Corporate and Investment Bank. Collaborating with a team for Benchmarking prepared me to work on an international team - an incredibly necessary skill for job success. I am a firm believer that the many job offers I received my senior year were because of the skills I learned as a Policy Studies major. Marketing myself as having analytical, teamwork, communication, writing and professional skills proved to be the key to my job hunting success.

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## **Megan Parker '07 – Intern, General Electric**

After graduation in May I will be working in General Electric's Communications Leadership Development Program at its corporate headquarters in Connecticut. I can say, without any hesitation, that I got this job because of my policy studies major.

Working as a policy studies major I was given the opportunity to plan the first Skills for Success conference for Syracuse high school students. The conference was a final competition for high school students to demonstrate skills they had learned over the semester. General Electric, a company with a long history of promoting education, provided the scholarship money for the competition and sent a representative to the conference to present to the winner. During the conference I was able to meet the representative from General Electric and an internship interview followed that meeting.

While I was working as an intern my skills education and experience in analyzing data were extremely important. One of my first projects was to analyze feedback surveys and produce a professional report of the results. This project was exactly what I had completed the semester prior in my policy studies class and therefore was very easy for me to complete. Also the knowledge I gained on public policy and the "state of the world" was extremely important in being able to place context around the public relations campaigns I worked on. As no communications work takes place in a vacuum, it was extremely important for me to understand the forces behind policies and how to properly analyze the policy's effectiveness.

Now as I look forward to my job I know that I will be able to apply the skills I learned and the "do-gooder" attitude I developed as a policy studies major to my future projects. There simply is not a better combination than public relations and policy studies.

## **Jeff J. Dennis '02 – IT Consultant, Deloitte**

There are some courses of study in college that will teach you facts, a body of knowledge that may or may not be useful to draw upon over the course of your career. This is great if you know exactly what you want to do and are confident that you will never change your mind. Policy Studies, on the other hand, teaches you how to learn and how to interact with your environment. It provides you with a framework for analyzing the world around you and a methodology for being effective in whatever you are trying to accomplish. It is the ideal complement to a more industry specific major for those who have a passion for a particular business, and also perfect for people who have no clue what they want to do with their lives but want to be prepared for whatever opportunity that may come along.

The policy studies major is great preparation for the working world. It is highly challenging, very dynamic and largely self-directed. My experience in consulting has been much the same. If you

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can succeed in the policy studies major, you will most likely be able to succeed in any career field. Employers know this, and it is the reason that policy studies majors wind up with some of the hottest and highest paying jobs offered to each graduating class.

Policy studies will teach you how to think critically, respond to change, communicate effectively, and accept constructive criticism in the spirit in which it is given. These are essential skills for whatever career you may want to pursue in the public, private or non-profit sectors. Whether you want to be a GE financial analyst, a teacher at a public school or an IT consultant like me, policy studies will give you the tools you need to excel.

### **Lori Bistis '00 -- PricewaterCooper LLP, Director of PricewaterCooper's Deals Practice**

I have not been in touch over the years but I often think of the Public Policy Program and how it steered me into the career I am in today, which is management consulting (focused on deals, M&A). You were smart to bring the Accenture (former Andersen Consulting) team into your classroom all of those years ago.... I remember you told me consulting was a good option for me, as it was the same as getting an MBA except they would pay me... Well, here I am 16 years later, and I never even had to go to grad school to get to where I am today.

### **Zach Levek '11 Public Consulting Group**

Although I would argue the current job market is difficult across all sectors, I was recently able to find a job. I initially was interning at the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in Denver, CO, my hometown. This was a paid public policy intern position, indeed a rarity. I was hired at NCSL because of my experience with both survey design and survey analysis through PAF 315 and experience analyzing data through work in PAF 410 Community Benchmarks. My new position requires me to conduct business-side analysis of Medicaid spending. My new employer was most impressed with my extensive use of Excel and I explained it was a necessary skill to succeed in Syracuse University's Policy Studies major. Even though I resisted your encouragement to pursue the business side of policy studies, it seems to have found me.

Many of my friends from home, if they were even lucky enough to find a job, are not working in their field of study. Thank you for designing a major that provided me with the skills necessary to find a job in this difficult economic climate.

## LAW

### **Raymond Levine '18 – Law School**

There is no substitute for the ability to manage detail, people, and time. Nor is there a substitute for Policy Studies in building that skillset. I am headed into my last semester at University of Michigan Law School as Managing Executive Editor of the Michigan Journal of Race & Law, Vol. 27, as a research assistant for Professor Patrick Barry in the legal writing department, and with an offer at Schneider Wallace, a plaintiff-side class action firm in California.

### **Dominika Peko '18 – Law School**

As a second-year law student, I can genuinely say that my Policy Studies major has helped me in all aspects of my law school experience. The attention to detail, research, and writing skills you gain through the Policy Studies program lay a strong foundation for all of your writing assignments in law school. Further, by being familiar with many of the policies you learn through the Policy Studies major, you can bring those conversations to your law school classes, where the policy behind a court decision or law is frequently discussed. Finally, the confidence and communication skills you gain through the major significantly prepare you to participate in any advocacy organization, class, or honor society.

### **Mansell Carloni '18 – Law School**

The Policy Studies Major truly changed the course of my education at SU by exposing me to different areas and giving me several opportunities to improve my career prospects. As a key fixture of the Maxwell School, the program helped me foster a sense of community that I will carry with me through law school and beyond. Going forward, I am confident that my background in Political Science and Policy Studies will serve me well. It was a pleasure having you as a professor for PAF 101 and 315 as well as TAing for you. I am incredibly grateful for the advice and guidance that you have provided.

### **Hon. Brian D. Burns '95 - Otsego County Judge, Acting Supreme Court Justice, Dublin City University Fulbright Visiting Teacher**

...met with members of Ireland's Department of Justice Organized Crime and Drugs Unit, their Department of Health, the Chair of the Working Group to develop Ireland's National Drug Policy, and representative from a junior Minister of State to advise them on my Drug Court - and have been asked to continue to advise them after I return to the States. I never thought my voice would help shape Ireland's national drug policy and am grateful for this opportunity. I'm also

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grateful to Syracuse University, Maxwell, and to you for everything I learned as a Policy Studies Major. The critical analysis skills I gained there have helped shape my career and in many ways are the foundation of any success I have been fortunate enough to enjoy.

### **Alexandra Doney '16 - Legal Assistant**

I recently took a position at a law firm in Lowville as a legal assistant. It is a near perfect fit for me because I'm actually getting the opportunity to work on different types of legal cases and gain actual experience doing research and writing in a legal field. Most of my work recently has been with estates, so at least my clients are cool...literally.

I think you will be glad to know the reason that I was offered the job was because the lawyer needed someone who knew excel to catalogue receipts and create some spreadsheets for an embezzlement case. I can now proudly say that Policy Studies has been the sole reason I have gained employment TWICE in my first year out of SU!!!!

### **Jon Jacobs '08 -- Attorney with the Department of Justice Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives**

I want to thank you for the tremendous impact you and the program continue to have on my career. I was interested in law school throughout college. However, you insisted I work before law school. After 5 years, I attended part-time law school. I attribute this decision to the policy studies program's foundation based on hands on work experience. This proved to be an invaluable opportunity to network, gain professional experience and learn the law. In short, my decision to work before law school ultimately lead to this opportunity with ATF, and the skills taught in the program opened many doors.

### **Sally Smith '96 – Attorney Advisor to the Inspector General, Federal Communications Commission**

I graduated from Syracuse in May 1996 with a BA in policy studies. I was a Remembrance Scholar and spend quality time in the marching band. I went on to get my JD from Syracuse College of Law in 1999. Following the traditional legal path, I joined a law firm in New York as an associate. After being stuck in the basement of a law firm researching and writing memos, I decided to move to Washington, DC and get away from the snow. I stayed with the law and worked as a Technology Transfer Attorney as a consultant to the Army for a couple years and then wound up going contract administration at a government contractor. After that, I moved to big business, and worked as the Director of Contracts with AT&T Government Solutions. After 5 years with Ma Bell, I made the big change and joined the Government as an Attorney Advisor to the Inspector General at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

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Although most of my career has been with the law, it has always been the basics of policy studies that keep me grounded and going in the right direction. Not only did I gain the hard skills that can be used in the workplace, I was also able to walk away with "real world" experiences that employers wanted. Whether it was the semester I spent in NYC at the High School for Leadership and Public Service, the time I spent working as a TA for PAF 315, or the time spent in Renee Captor's class learning that Law & Order is not the way the "real law" operates - what I learned and practiced in policy studies still shows through today. Although I work to enforce the laws of the FCC, I am teaming with economists, statisticians, and analysts to evaluate the efficiencies of our audits and investigations, and formulate changes to our structure to better serve the Commission and the public. Although the law degree got me in the door, it's the structure and expertise I got in policy studies that gives me broader exposure and opportunities today.

So what do you need to know? You may think 5 points for turning in a paper late or 2 points here and there for formatting, is silly or bothersome. Guess what? There's an entire section of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) which governs federal contracts that specifically speaks to formatting, deadlines, and the consequences. Not following the rules can get a billion dollar proposal thrown out without the evaluator reading page one! No excuses, no second chances. Try explaining to your employer that you just lost revenue dollars and jobs because you didn't use the right sized margins or font. 2 points doesn't seem so frivolous now does it?

Learn what it's like to give up your time and care about someone or something else. The time you take to do your community service is more than credit or a "gotta do" to get through PAF. It's a chance to get real world experience - something that most students and graduates won't have. It's a chance to try and see what you like to do and "test drive" possible career choices. Finally, it's a chance to do something good with what you have. There is nothing better for the soul than to spend time giving to someone else. To go to Syracuse, you have special gifts and opportunities that most people can't imagine. Go share those gifts with someone else. And don't forget when you get that piece of paper when you graduate and walk out to the Dome, to keep doing something for someone else. Donate blood, mentor a child, build a house, usher at a local theater, follow your passion and help someone out. They need it and you have those skills! PAF taught me a lot. I thought outside of the box and Coplin encouraged that with "gentle" nudging to get back in line every now and then. I fondly remember those long nights with a lot of coffee working in Excel or deciding the format that my PowerPoint presentation needed to be in to satisfy a client. Not much has changed, now that I think about it. I'm still thinking outside the box and I'm still drinking coffee while working on an Excel spreadsheet. And I'm still determined to do good!

**Michael Sanderson '02 - Legislative Director, Maryland Association of Counties**

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I'm doing my best to put my Public Affairs studies to work in real life -- I've been in public policy now for nearly 15 years, working for the Maryland General Assembly as a tax policy expert and legislative committee staffer, and now I work as the Legislative Director for the Maryland Association of Counties, basically lobbying the state legislature on behalf of local government issues. On the side, I also teach economics at Anne Arundel Community College, which I really enjoy.

As a professional in public policy, there's nothing from my college coursework that connects as well to the things I do professionally more than the core concepts of Syracuse University's Policy Studies program. The skills that I started building in those classes are the ones that I need all the time when analyzing and influencing public policy issues. Academically, there's nothing more central to what we do in the policymaking arena.

### **Joseph Daniel Krzysiak, '09 - Paralegal**

After working with numerous not-for-profits and consulting groups, I decided to work in the legal profession to decide if I'd like to practice law in the future. I applied for a paralegal position with a law firm and have just started. Ideally I would like to work with a nonprofit.

Paying attention to detail as a paralegal is very important and essential in everyday paralegal work. All the annoying and tedious editing that was taught in the Policy Studies program is helping me out.

My 101 TA experience helped me even more. Correcting those modules, looking for errors, and adhering to the APA style. Getting points off your papers is nothing compared to some of the work that is carried out in a law firm.

### **Adam J. Karns, '03 - Litigation Associate**

I graduated from SU in December 2003 with a dual major in Policy Studies and Spanish. In 2004, I headed to law school at the University at Buffalo. I received my J.D. in 2007, and I passed the NY bar exam which I took in July 2007. After the bar exam, I worked for one year as a judicial law clerk in Pennsylvania, during which time I also sat for and passed the PA bar exam. I am now working as a litigation associate at Relin, Goldstein & Crane, LLP, a medium-sized law firm in Rochester. I have tried several cases and I am in court a minimum of three days per week.

Of all my courses at SU, the required courses for the policy studies major were by far the most challenging and practical. My writing skills improved tremendously, in large part because the policy studies major emphasizes the importance and effectiveness of writing in a succinct, technical manner. This has proven invaluable in my career as an attorney.

## **Stephanie Good, '08 - First Year Law Student**

Policy Studies gave me a background that set me apart from my peers in my first year of law school. Obviously, everyone at law school is extremely smart, but courses like PAF 101 and PAF 315 forced me to master skills like writing concisely, being attentive to detail, and researching thoroughly. Those skills are why I excelled in legal writing - while everyone else had to spend the first semester learning how to stop writing "like English majors," Coplin broke me of that habit years before and I had a huge advantage on everyone else.

Also, the Policy Studies puts a big emphasis on knowing the ins and outs of programs like Microsoft Word and Excel, and many times I have been a very valuable employee because I know how to set up an elaborate spread sheet or because I can show someone how to put a different footer on different pages. It all seems trivial until you realize how much your boss needs you because you are the only one who knows how to work that master spreadsheet of all the cases your firm is currently handling and who is working on them.

The other great thing about Policy Studies is how well it pairs with so many other programs at Syracuse. I also majored in Economics, at Coplin's strong urging. I can't count how many times I've been reading a case that had a detailed discussion of economic policy and I've thought about how lucky I am to have such a strong background in both policy and economics. It comes up in law a lot more than you might think. Policy Studies also paired really well with some courses I took in the Legal Studies program that is run through University College. The legal research and writing course was a great way to further hone the writing skills I learned in PAF 101 and PAF 315.

## **Carlo Serio '07 - Paralegal Dechert LLP**

I decided to take a year or two off before going to law school. I wanted to get a little more experience, take a break from school so I'm not already burned out when I enter law school, and make sure that law school is what I really want to do. I accepted a job as a paralegal at Dechert LLP in Manhattan and I love it. The city is great and I really enjoy my job. I'm learning a lot and also making some great contacts. During my interview process with the several firms I applied to, Syracuse (the Maxwell School in particular) and my Policy Studies major were always topics of discussion. A lot of the skills you taught me were beneficial in me getting the job I decided to take. The work I did in the major, especially the internships were so helpful and tended to be the focus of my interviews. The employers liked how there was an emphasis on both individual and team work. I just wanted to thank you again for all of your help during my years at Syracuse. The practicality of what is done in the major set it apart from a lot of others at Syracuse.

## **Eric Apjohn '06 - Law School Student**

My time at WP with Andy as a volunteer under Amy Klein and Vanessa Delaine, which led to the two of us taking over their program when both Amy and Vanessa went abroad, is one of the foremost memories in my mind during my 4 years at Syracuse. This experience actually served as the basis for my law school admission essay. I'll never forget some of the work I did during my time as a PAF major at SU, especially as a co-manager of the WP mentoring program with Andy.

As a freshman I wasn't quite sure of the significance in requiring volunteer hours for 101 but I'm glad I stuck with the program and ended up completing countless hours at both WP and Skills.

### **Shaun Kodes '04 - Law Student at New York Law School**

I have just completed my first semester at New York Law School and I cannot thank you enough for the skills that you have taught me through my four years at SU. I finished my first semester with a 3.5 GPA which places me in the top 10 percentile of my class. In addition, I have been selected to partake in a very exciting study with several legal scholars. We will be analyzing the trends in the rate of litigation in the US and how accurately it is represented by the media and by politicians. The position was highly competitive and I can honestly say that the only reason I got this opportunity was because of the skills I learned in PAF. There were three rounds of interviews, a written policy analysis, and a writing sample. The interview process went well since I was able to apply the public speaking skills that I learned in 101, 315, & 410; the written policy analysis was basically a combination of the 315 paper, the Mod's, and the law and society courses; and finally I used the B&G club paper from 410 as the writing sample which blew them away (and don't worry Carol, I made sure to tell them that you had revised the paper).

Although Coplin always tries to convince his students to do anything but go into law, when they do, I am sure they will be the most prepared. However, as a word of caution, if a student leaves PAF 400 w/ Captor and says "I want to be a lawyer," tell him/her to take Con Law or American Legal History. I think that Renee makes class so interesting that it presents a glorified version of the profession. Students interested in law should take at least two courses that deal with actual case law analysis (i.e. Con Law I or II) to make sure that they are prepared to dedicate three years of their lives to reading similar material. Unfortunately, I have seen many students that chose to go to law school after just taking non-intensive case reading courses (i.e. Renee Captor's class) and were unprepared for what they got themselves into.

In addition, I never actually thought that a member of the legal profession would ever benefit from knowing how to use Access ... boy was I wrong. My firm was having a problem with their file managing software and they needed to add an additional search and report function to their program. The company that released the software charges thousands of dollars to design such a program and incorporate it into our system. During the holiday break, I stopped by the office and had engaged in a conversation with one of the senior partners at the firm when he told me about

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the situation. I informed him that I was familiar with our filing system and that I could design the search and report function in Access and then give it to the software company to translate into our system. The database took me a week, it saved the company thousands of dollars, and got me a significant raise. Once again, PAF to the rescue.

I will be eternally grateful for the guidance and wisdom that the two of you have given me, and the lessons I have learned are truly responsible for my success in law school. I hope that everything is going well, and hopefully Coplin has broken the curse of the declining spring enrollment in PAF 101.

### **David H. Greenberg, '97 (former 101 and 315 TA), Associate at Dickstein Shapiro LLP**

I chose Policy Studies over other courses of study because of the major's pragmatic focus on the real world rather than the theoretical. Now, approaching ten years after my graduation, I have no doubt that I made the right choice. I use the analytical framework honed during four years under Professor Coplin's tutelage each and every day. Indeed, how many other majors can say that they still read their 101 textbook each and every morning? I do, along with the *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* for editorial balance.

Today, I am a member of the State Government Compliance and Litigation Practice in one of the largest law firms in Washington, D.C. My job is to educate state attorneys general on complex legal issues that affect both their states and my clients, and assist attorneys general in reaching non-litigation solutions when they do have concerns about my clients' actions or inactions. As part of my representation of several Fortune 500 companies in this practice, I am doing largely the same player, position, and priority analysis I did as a PAF student. And because the major focuses on development of a toolkit of skills (instead of the collection of soon to be outdated substantive knowledge), I am able to provide counsel to companies in a variety of industries, from retailers to pharmaceutical companies to table-top video game manufacturers.

I also was drawn to the major for its commitment to public service. I vividly remember taking the Athenian Oath on the last day of PAF101, and to the extent my day job does not allow me to live up to the lofty principles I committed myself to that day, I try to find other ways to help transmit our world greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us. Two examples come to mind.

First, my colleagues at the law firm elected me to serve on a liaison committee with senior management, which allowed me to work to make the firm a better place for my fellow associates. Our successes were highlighted in a feature article in the *American Lawyer* magazine, which chronicled the firm's ascent from among the worst ranked firms based on associate satisfaction to the best firm in the country in that category. Second, I ran for and was elected to what must be

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the lowest ranking elected post in all of the land: a Director of the Conduit Road Fire Board, a citizen-constituted body created by the Maryland Legislature in 1933. The Conduit Road Fire Board established and oversees the Glen Echo Volunteer Fire Department in Bethesda, Maryland. I am now a Vice President of that organization and work to make sure my family and neighbors are receiving world-class fire and rescue service.

I recommend that Policy Studies major to current students without reservation. I am confident that without the skills learned in and around Maxwell Room 102, I would not be in the position that I am today.

### **Bryan Thomas Fischer '11 (current Policy Studies Major), Brindisi, Murad, Brindisi, Pearlman, Juilian & Pertz Law Firm**

Coplin, the anal retentiveness and excel skills you have forced onto me have done two things for me this summer (a blessing and a curse). I landed a paid internship with the Brindisi, Murad, Brindisi, Pearlman, Juilian & Pertz law firm out of Utica, NY through a Herkimer County program and apparently they liked me and my ability to write and edit all the legal documents that need to be sent to other lawyers for each case (they are made up of like 20 plus paragraphs of about 1-2 sentences each like a module) because they asked me to continue to work till the end of the summer after my 200 hours are up. However, one day I was asked to make a word document outlining some expenses and instead I ended up making an excel sheet because it made things look more organized and it made more sense to save time and use formulas. Long story short I went from spinning around in my chair because I finished all of my work for that day and whatever else I could help the paralegals with to having 15 files with requests for excel sheets put on my desk between 3:30 pm yesterday and this morning (kill me)... Thanks for creating a clone...

### **Jon Barnhart '11 - Political Science Major and Former President of Student Association**

I recently started a new job as research associate at a higher education consulting firm and frequently find myself referring back to the lessons of PAF 101 to complete my projects and accurately (and concisely) present information. Today I lent my copy of the Maxwell Manual to a colleague so she could complete a bench marking project and figured I simply had to reach out and say thank you once more. Your class taught me exactly what I needed to know in order to be successful in the field I hope to build my career around.

## GOVERNMENT/POLITICS

### **Gary Funk Policy Studies and MIS '94**

"I wanted to reach out and reconnect. I was a Policy Studies Major and MIS Major when I was at Syracuse. When I was at school, I struggled to figure out my major and what I might want to do post graduation. I chose Policy Studies mostly because of you, but also because so many of your students at the time were going into consulting roles that could take advantage of the analytics and writing from your classes and the business side understanding from the Management school. It was a rough road to start, but ultimately the skills from the Policy Studies major have really carried me in my career.

I started out of college working for a Paper company doing IT stuff, running a system for fulfilling orders and building out a new ordering system. From there I moved to MasterCard where I worked on a rewrite of their credit card clearing system. After that I found a clear path with going to work for A.G. Edwards as a systems Analyst and then on to Wells Fargo on the Capital Markets side. Once at Wells I began to hone my skills and my writing skills helped me move into a business process lead and on to more senior roles. I had stints with Citi Mortgage and RaboBank in the Netherlands. I also spent time in Product and Sales roles with Black Knight. Currently I work for Freddie Mac. In my role now I work in a strategy role. I am able to use all of my skills to help eliminate documentation from the mortgage process and currently focused on eMortgage and streamlining workflows for the mortgage broker community.

As I look back at my career, I am thankful for you as a professor and early mentor. I still use one of my original papers from your class as a guideline for many of my deliverables. Tell them what you are going to talk about, provide statistics to summarize the goal, and then the detail. Thank you for dedication and straightforward guidance. I could not have ended up where I am at without your help in my college education."

### **J. Amber Conway '07 – State Department**

I don't know if you remember me, but my name is Amber Conway (nee McCoy) and I am a 2007 Maxwell alumna. I was a cheerleader and you once told me to "cut the crap and get a fellowship" :) You also made me graduate early (to this day my mom LOVES you).

A lot has happened since I graduated. I joined TFA and taught in Houston, Texas. I went on to work at a nonprofit in Bolivia before attending Stanford Graduate School of Business and joining

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the State Department as a diplomat. I guess you could say I am trying to follow your advice - DO GOOD.

Anyway, I was at a Maxwell event in DC last week and Dean Slyke mentioned you. I told him how your advice/admonishment has shaped so many of my career decisions. He laughed and said you have that impact on everyone.

## **Mitch Forbes '16 - Secretary of the Air Force in the Office of the Legislative Liaison**

I just wanted to email you and thank you for time well spent at Syracuse in the PAF program. PAF was a perfect fit for being a non-traditional/veteran student. PAF's mixture of practical experience in PAF 101, 315, 410 benchmarking and as PAF 101 TA: Competition Director helped prepare me for my new career.

I was able to use my **GI Bill to pay for all** of my MPA at Syracuse. While the MPA program was valuable, most of it was just continuing to develop skills that I learned in PAF as an undergraduate. PLEASE continue to spread the message that if a student is not interested in pursuing a career in academia DO NOT GO STRAIGHT INTO GRAD SCHOOL FROM UNDERGRAD!! Get at least 3-5 years of real world experience, in fact, many companies have started to PAY for employees to go to grad school part time.

After graduate school, I applied to multiple government and partisan organizations in DC. In all of my applications I included writing samples from my MPA capstone course. NO GRAD SCHOOL WORK from the country's "#1 rated MPA program" out shadowed potential employers' interest in talking about my classes' 410 Benchmarking report on Lead Based Paint Poisoning in Onondaga County. Sure, the MPA opened a few doors and got me interviews, but all job offers came from interviews where we primarily discussed my Policy Studies degree work. For example, I had four interviews that concluded with a job offer from OMB, from my first panel interview to the final interview with the Branch Chief all we discussed was that report. I eventually landed a job working defense issues for a member of congress. I loved my time on the hill and did not want to leave, but with a wife and child in DC I needed more income and stability. Today, I work for the Secretary of the Air Force in the Office of the Legislative Liaison, ensuring that the interests of the United States Air Force are met on Capitol Hill. If there was one thing I would stress to your students it's their Dale Carnegie principles. You can write like a poet and work excel like Bill Gates, but if you can't go to an after-hours event and hold a conversation - good luck – especially on Capitol Hill! I would encourage students to go to networking events and do as many informational coffee interviews as possible! Find a mentor that is in your career field of interest and ask questions. People love talking about their career

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paths and helping out new comers in need, it makes them feel important and they can open amazing doors for you!

### **Lauren Marie Rowell '17**

I am glad to hear things are going well with the major. I am so grateful for the policy studies program, it really shaped my college experience. Between the skills I acquired and the opportunities it provided, it definitely helped get me to where I am.

Also, I wanted to let you know how much I appreciated the community service aspect of the major. You push students to get to know the city of Syracuse by requiring them to volunteer and study local issues, something most SU graduates never do.

The policy studies program definitely gave me a leg up with writing succinctly and clearly, something a lot of my peers struggle with.

### **Adam Sternbach '09 NJ Governor's Office**

I wanted to let you know I started a new job in the NJ Governor's Office in January. I'm working as an Associate Counsel focused on a wide variety of legal and policy matters.

As I've begun to think about how I ended up in this position, I need to thank you for your guidance and mentorship at SU. You helped me discover a love of policy and the practical ways it impacts everything, both personal and professional. You also helped me understand how to identify problems, develop solutions, and evaluate impacts by thinking critically, and most importantly, thinking outside the box. Without the Policy Studies major, I don't think I would be in the position I am today.

If there is anything I can ever do to help you or any current students or alumni, please let me know.

### **Wyatt Dalton Suling - '17 Policy Coordinator**

When I tell people I majored in Policy Studies in college, I often get quizzical looks, so I describe Policy Studies as business school for government and public service work. Students who enroll in business schools like Whitman do so because they want to learn the skills they will need to succeed in the competitive business world. Entering college, I knew I wanted to learn the skills I would needed for work in public service, probably in security. I had never heard of the Policy Studies major or public administration, so I was annoyed when I was randomly assigned to PAF 101 by the university. Thankfully, I went ahead and took the course.

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I absolutely loved PAF 101's practicality, skills-oriented content, and culture. So much so that I switched to the Policy Studies major in my first semester and served as a PAF 101 TA, another experience I value for the responsibility and challenge it gave me. But the most rewarding course of the Policy Studies major for me was PAF 315. The work I did at my client's office was my first professional experience and taught me a lot about how government actually operates. I just began work as the Policy Coordinator for the Missouri State Treasurer helping to research and solve problems that threaten Missouri's future. While the shape of my public service has changed from my original goal of security, the skills, experience, and flexibility the Policy Studies major gave me have positioned me to truly "do good" as Professor Coplin is fond of saying. I think my Policy Studies major is going to continue to be valuable as time goes on and I am proud of my time as a student in the major.

### **Alex Bluestone – '10 PAF101 TA**

I cannot tell you how much Maxwell prepared me for public affairs work in the professional world. Before graduating, I worked at the White House and for the Clinton Foundation, later serving as an ad hoc communications strategist and associate during the 2016 election. I spent roughly three years as a global affairs and strategic communications consultant tackling climate change and global health issues. This fall, I enrolled at the London School of Economics' two-year MPA.

I was writing an essay this week, in which the subject of public duty was a central theme and I couldn't help but think of all those days, walking past George Washington and the Athenian Oath outside the main lecture hall. Its words have never seemed to ring truer or with as much importance.

Thank you for your help in guiding me to where I am today.

### **Andrew Swab '12 – Department of State**

Almost nine years ago, I was awarded the first prize of \$20,000 in the 2008 Maxwell Scholarship contest, for a policy proposal about solar panels on my high school's roof. In 2013, the district ended up installing those panels, saving the district nearly \$920,000 over the next 20 years. I took PAF 101, and lived in the Maxwell learning community in fall of 2009. Since then I graduated from SU, and worked in the policy and planning division of the bureau of diplomatic security at the Department of State.

I am writing because I will be continuing my education in a master's program in public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School this fall. I wanted to write an email to thank you.

That initial contest got me into Syracuse - a world-class university that, quite frankly, my family would find difficult to afford without the Maxwell Scholarship. The skills built in PAF 101,

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including proficiency in Excel, and critical thinking about public policy issues led to my success and promotion to my current job.

Many people do not take a moment to recognize the people that really made a difference in their lives until it is too late. I wanted to take some time to say that I appreciated you as a professor, and as an organizer of that contest. Whether you know it or not, your influence has guided my steps. I would not be here today without the good work you have done in your time as a professor at Syracuse University.

### **Kayla Anderson '19**

Being a policy studies major was crucial in getting my first college internship. I was a TA for PAF 101 my freshman year, and currently I work with Coplin doing writing and communications for various programs and projects. When I was interviewing for the internship, the director of communications at the Pittsburgh Housing Authority was impressed with all the experience I had in both policy and communications. He was also impressed that I knew a lot about what a housing authority does, and some of the problems that they face. Everything I told him came from Stephanie Pasquale's presentation in PAF 101. He did not ask me about my Newhouse major or classes. Needless to say, being a policy studies major and a PAF 101 TA was the reason I got the internship.

### **Jane Patt '82 - Monroe County, Manager of Contractual Services**

I wanted to congratulate you on the great article in the Maxwell Perspective! So glad to hear that Policy Studies is still very much alive and well at Maxwell! I so clearly remember my first week of college, sitting in my dorm room reading the catalog, trying to determine a major. I read the policy studies description, gave you a call asking about it, and you told me to come right in. The rest, as they say, is history.

I've worked for our local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) (Finance Manager), the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (Procurement Manager), and I have spent the last 3 years very happily employed with Monroe County (Rochester, NY). I started out in the Division of Procurement, worked a bit on several special projects, and I currently work in the Controller's Office.

I have to say, I honestly don't think I would have gotten any of these positions without the academic and mental preparation of your major. Obviously, the academics are stellar, but almost more important is the confidence you instill in your students in their own abilities to "do well and do good." Your ability to challenge their thought-process and produce in them a desire to analyze and solve problems is remarkable. As evidence, here I am 25 years later thanking you for guiding me through my policy studies years.

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## **Emilie Scardilla '17 - Intern, White House**

I have to say I find your method of teaching more and more useful as time goes on. For this internship, we have to write a memo to a staffer which I have done multiple times in your classes and have the Maxwell Manual to refer to! Thank you for everything.

## **Jenna Kristal '10 – Intern, U.S. Congress**

I just wanted to write and thank you for all of your guidance in the Policy Studies major. I graduated in May and moved to Washington D.C. a month ago. I recently got an internship on Capitol Hill with Senator Jon Tester. During my interview, his staff was most impressed with my course work and experience in the Maxwell school during my undergraduate studies. I spoke about the Onondaga Community Indicators Report that we created in PAF 410 and my brief collaboration with the Syracuse Peace Council for my PAF 315 project. The Senate staff was very pleased with the amount of hands-on, "real world" experience that the Policy Studies major gave me. So again, I just wanted to thank you for giving me the knowledge and exposure to move me closer to my career goals.

## **Rob Magliaro '08 – Intern, Governor Ed Rendell (PA)**

I am a rising sophomore student who took PAF 101 in the fall semester of my freshman year. With just the PAF 101 experience and a few other PAF core classes I was able to obtain a summer internship in 2005 at Governor Ed Rendell's Office in Pennsylvania. Initially, I thought the PAF 101 material was over simplified, theoretical generalities about public policy, but I was surprised to learn its relevance in real, complex policymaking.

I found that a majority of the Governor's statewide policy programs are in response to "societal problems" that effected large proportions of the state's population. For example, the Pennsylvania Nursing Home Transition Program (NHT) is a statewide public policy initiative that attempts to solve the problem of "too much expensive, low quality long-term health care" by helping consumers (citizens living in nursing homes) move from nursing homes back into the community. The "players" involved are the Governor, his office of Health Care Reform, the national Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), the Department of Aging, the Department of Public Welfare, Nursing Homes, the state legislature, and several other government agencies. The policy mandates "stakeholder involvement" by requiring consumers to have a say in planning their transition and individual care plans once they leave the nursing homes. Additionally, the NHT policy created "report cards" on nursing homes around the state based on individual, face-to-face, consumer satisfaction surveys. NHT also set "benchmarks" of transitioning 150 consumers statewide by the end of June 2005 and then doubling that number by June 2006. There is a constant reassessment of the "cost-benefit" ratio to insure the NHT policy is cost and quality effective. "Political feasibility" is also a prevalent in the NHT policy because nursing homes often oppose the policy because it damages their business by taking consumers

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away from the nursing homes and putting them into the community. Some politicians, who felt NHT may not have been effective or were pressured by nursing homes, needed to be convinced of the merits of the policy for NHT to be implemented statewide. As many of the NHT initiatives as possible were actually done outside of the legislature because of how long it takes to build a consensus among policymakers and politicians.

### **Amelia L. Gannon '09 - Intern, NEMA**

I would have never guessed that writing a memo which I learned while being a 101 TA would be so valuable. I use Dale Carnegie principles every day. The boss and office relations Coplin demonstrated in 315 have proven to be a great introduction to everyone I come in contact with. It has made me much more comfortable when interacting with people I have never met before who have a great deal more expertise and power than I do.

While I have a great deal more to do to prepare myself for the real world I have noticed the skills I learned in the Public Affairs program has made me more capable and professional than the other interns I meet on The Hill. Some of them are intimidated by the work, have no idea what research needs to be done to complete assignments, and have to ask for help with simple tasks like the Xerox machine. All of these interns have completed an extra year of school than me. I can honestly say this after just a few weeks at my internship. I am learning very valuable skills that other interns are not even getting the opportunity to have.

### **Cathryn J. Sitterding '07 - Fleishman-Hillard Government Relations, Homeland Security Practice Group**

PAF 101 was the first class I took that really opened my eyes to something besides journalism as a possible career. In Coplin's class, I learned that one person can make a huge difference if they just get up and do it. I grew up in rural Indiana and basically had no idea of the severity of some societal problems. Throwing us into the city and into community service was difficult at first but I can't imagine what my academic life would be like without that experience. That's where you learn things, right out in the middle of it.

The entire major is structured around skills for real life. I can't believe how many times my boss has said "Let me teach you how to..." and I said I already knew how. Through classes like 416 and MAX 201, I learned how to look at problems and solutions from a statistical viewpoint. The grant writing class gave me an inside look - and valuable hands-on experience - into how a non-profit conducts business. I even took a class where I managed my own tutoring program. I don't know another school or department that offers such intense field experience.

The class - and Coplin - gave me my start in politics, and now I'm living and working in Washington, making a difference (very small difference, since I'm just an intern) every day. I've

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been encouraged to do good, to really do good and not just pretend that I am. The classes in the policy studies major give me constructive methods to accomplish that.

## **Nick Valinski '13**

PAF 101 started out as an elective for me outside of civil engineering, but ended up influencing my career much beyond freshman year. Very few majors will open you up to real world experience through client interaction and internships in the same way that the Public Affairs major will.

As an engineer, Excel was never a particular weak spot for myself. But being able to socially interact with people (a common engineer's problem) and understand how and why decisions are made beyond a technical design standpoint was invaluable. Through the PAF program, I was able to work for a reasonable number internships including Onondaga County in financial, engineering, and educational regards. These connections ended up jump starting professional connections to take well beyond college as well as a major head start into working to deliver real solutions to real problems in the world as opposed to just calculating theoretical bridges.

## **Rebecca Kellerson '05 - ICF International**

Luckily, I heeded your advice my senior year, and took Carol's class on Access. For those of your students who may feel as if they could never be database-savvy, I would argue that it's not about being an expert. Even general knowledge of Access has set me apart from my peers. Additionally, over this past year at ICF, I was tasked with "self-teaching" myself SAS. SAS programming knowledge and the ability to think in logical programming terms has allowed me to be a part of a 2-person ICF team responsible for generating the U.S. Census Bureau's American Housing Survey and Codebook. As Kim has told you, ICF recently won the Louisiana Recovery Authority's Road Home Contract. I've spent 2+ months in Baton Rouge providing support on this project as it has grown from conception to grants awarded to hurricane victim families. A large part of my work in the Road Home Program has been Section 3 compliance - Section 3 the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 requires that economic opportunities generated by certain types of HUD financial assistance be made available, as possible, to low and very low-income persons, particularly persons living in areas where HUD-assisted projects are located (like the Road Home). My work with Section 3 compliance has included: survey design, performance measurement metrics, mapping (GIS!), policy recommendations, and crafting concise narratives. The reports I have developed with my small team have been so well received by our client that they are submitting the work to HUD as an exceptional example of Section 3 reporting.

Had it not been for the skills I developed in the policy studies major, and especially the lessons learned from my 315 project, I would not have had such challenging and gratifying opportunities at ICF.

### **Jennifer Zuccarelli '03 - Media Spokeswoman, U.S. Department of the Treasury**

I was what one might call an "academic drifter" in college. I loved learning and earned high grades in my classes, but I wanted a different or additional major every semester during my first two years of college. One of the only things that remained constant throughout those first few years was my PAF major and Professor Coplin's guidance.

The PAF program allowed students to really tailor their academic schedules to their interests. The program's community service and internship requirements were invaluable compliments to the in-class learning. And the PAF instructors gave their students the tools necessary to excel in the work place, not just esoteric philosophy about "doing good."

After four semesters and four different majors, I realized that the Public Affairs program really complimented almost any other major in the school. I finished school with double majors in Newspaper and Public Affairs (PAF).

I have no doubt that Professor Coplin's constant support and the skills I learned in PAF put me far ahead of the other recent graduates at my internships and helped me to land my first real job, which led to media spokesman jobs on Capitol Hill and in the Administration. The PAF program is a major reason I was able to launch a career in a highly competitive industry.

### **Laurie Schroll '01 - Analyst for a D.C.-Based Consulting Firm Working on Government Contracts**

Coplin's Policy Studies Program lays the groundwork for "real world" government work. I have held multiple internships, worked under one President and consulted with more than seven federal government agencies throughout my professional career. While in college, I held internships in the New York State Assembly in Albany, NY and as a White House intern for the Chief of Staff under the Clinton Administration. Upon graduation in '01, I began my consulting career at Accenture and later moved to BearingPoint where I have worked in the Public Services/Federal Government sector for the past three years. Additionally, Coplin's community service initiative made an impression as I continue to volunteer and have been involved in non-profit Girls on the Run organization for the past three years ([www.girlsontherun.com](http://www.girlsontherun.com)). The methodologies, strategies and experience gained from my Policy Studies major has contributed to my foundational knowledge that has led to a success career in consulting and provided me with an opportunity to implement change within my community and at the national level.

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The formulation and evaluation process for policy implementation that Coplin exposes students to can be directly tied to any strategy, planning and/or implementation effort used within the federal government. Before any "change" (or policy) can be implemented within the government, the problem at hand needs to be clearly assessed and dissected in order to identify and formulate the most efficient and effective strategy for combating the issue. In addition, gaining stakeholder support (or player support) is a necessary for any government effort. Since organizations are naturally resistant to change, stakeholder support is imperative in ensuring that the strategy or policy is accepted and socialized. I've seen numerous brilliant strategies squashed because there was no support or follow through within the organization.

From my Policy Studies days, I remember the class complaining about the ridiculous anal-retentiveness that takes place around spelling, punctuation and formatting on PAF 101 papers (I was a TA). Hopefully the Coplinites have engrained those rules in your brain. The review process is critical before presenting any deliverable or presentation to stakeholders. I recently had a colleague present process work stream documentation to the Director of an Agency. The first thing the Director noticed was that his name/stakeholder group was not the first listed in the hierarchy of the documentation. This is not the way to make a first impression with a political appointee especially since exposure at that level within an organization is far and few between. Overall, I would provide a few points of advice for jump starting a career. First, internship experience is crucial. Internships look great on your resume, they give you exposure and "the know" of business. Professionals prefer to hire people with a background in that industry, internships help to give you that inside track! Be sure to build your contacts, stay in touch and never burn your bridges. It's a small world and the people you know can be turn out to be a shining light down the road. Also, don't use drugs and don't get a DUI or DWI if you ever want to work for the government. It is a black ball that follows any security clearances. Finally, stay in the Policy Studies Program. Policy Studies will help you to build a foundation for success and don't forget to listen to Coplin (he may seem irrational at times, but he knows what he's talking about).

### **Sam Davis '01 - Working for Political Think Tank**

I failed-PAF 101-that is why I succeed. Well not really but I do feel like the Michael Jordan of Policy Studies. For I was on the verge of failing when Bill asked me to withdraw from the class (Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team).

My first attempt at PAF 101 was more about challenging Coplin on the grounds that the practical application of "doing good"-public service-took energy and resources away from fighting issues on a grander scale. To me, public service meant whether or not you're doing good amounted to making monumental structural changes all at once. So instead of taking the class seriously and learning the critical skills Bill was trying to teach, I slighted the course. Über immature? Yes.

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And Bill made that very clear. He asked that I retake the class and that before I do, ask myself whether I was really ameliorating people's lives by being so rebellious and idea driven. So after losing many battles with him in my own head, I re-enrolled. This proved to be one of the most important decisions of my life.

In the business of politics and government, just as big as the gap between the rich and the poor, there is a huge disparity. And the disparity is between those who pay attention to detail with every minutia given the utmost respect, and those who are labeled incompetent and stay in the mail room throughout their careers. That particular focus of detail was my everything in working for Senator Clinton. Because I did so much crossing of the T's and dotting of the I's, she gave me more and more opportunities of greater and greater political sensitivity. Makes sense doesn't it? How can you trust someone's work if they are sloppy?-the political consequences of that are enormous. So with that I was able to rise through the ranks in her office and establish a solid portfolio of federal legislative work. Maybe more importantly however, (practical!) public service (e.g. student mentoring in south Syracuse) gave me a certain perspective of policy development often lacking in Washington. There is no better place to learn the importance of this than in the Policy Studies program.

Bottom line, Policy Studies is the Mecca for those who want to affect serious change.

*Sam Davis is Policy Analyst at the Center for American Progress. Prior to joining the Center, he spent three years with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) as her Policy Analyst working on a wide array of issues including consumer finance, government reform, and bankruptcy. During the 2004 Presidential election, Sam was Director for Planned Parenthood Action Fund in Las Vegas. He can be reached at [sdavis@americanprogress.org](mailto:sdavis@americanprogress.org)*

## **Stacy Reinstein '99 - Executive Staff Assistant to the Director, Arizona Department of Economic Security**

Now that I am seven years out of undergrad, and four years out of grad school from the University of Chicago MPP program, I feel as though I have some good perspective on what I learned as a Policy Studies major.

Up until this August, I have been working for Governor Janet Napolitano in various capacities, primarily in "Special Projects" having to do with social policy issues - juvenile justice, child welfare and substance abuse. In August I started as the special assistant to the Director of our State's human services agency, the Department of Economic Security. While the name does not help define what we do (and we are working on that!), the agency provides services for the state's child protective services, adult protective services, developmental disabilities, welfare including TANF, medical assistance, food stamps, financial assistance, etc., refugee resettlement; early

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intervention (ages 0-3), foster care and other group home licensing, vocational rehabilitation, child care, and even more!

In my position I use the skills that I learned in PAF 101 and throughout my four years as a Policy Studies major. I have even referred back to modules and writing skills and citations requirements for my own writing and reference! I have always felt since entering the Policy Studies program that what we learned was applicable to the real world. And I saw that - from my college internships, through grad school and my graduate internships, to my work as an analyst at the GAO and today. I often refer to the "triangle" concept of policy influence when trying to explain who needs to be involved, included and given a voice in order to effect policy. I also notice how loosely the word "policy" can be used in government, and I try to help delineate the differences between how people use and write policy, and what public policy really is and can be!

I am continuously inspired by the work that I did at Syracuse and what I learned in Coplin's program. As I am "aging" (smile), I have a nostalgic feeling and sometimes wish I could go back and learn it all over again!

## **Katie Walpole '12 - Management Analyst, Clark County, NV**

During my entire time in graduate school at the London School of Economics, the Maxwell School was well recognized by both my peers and professors. When I started working for Clark County, NV in July, Maxwell's reputation was synonymous with excellence and ensuring students were prepared for the real world. My supervisor and other members of my team knew that I was prepared to take on challenges.

I recently was promoted to a new management analyst position in the County Manager's Office. I started in the professional development internship program. The transition from the development program to the next level of the management analyst class is the same path that numerous members of senior management took. It is encouraging to see my potential career path unfold.

My workload varies daily. I often find myself working on projects involving code enforcement and animal control- two areas I never expected to work on. I've truly enjoyed getting a handle on the issues and working to come up with alternatives to address the problems. I'm able to work on those projects because I acquired a broad range of skills from policy studies courses and internships. I'm tasked with data mining, preparing reports for the Board of County Commissioners, and conducting research on a wide variety of issues. As a member of the lobby team for the County, I handle bills that could potentially impact our service delivery. Policy studies helped prepare me to look at issues from a variety of different angles.

My MPA degree was an addition to the great skill-set that I obtained from the policy studies. I still keep my Maxwell Manual on my desk as a reference, and I've loaned it out a few times. I'll

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continue to use the knowledge and skills I learned from policy studies for years to come.

And, Coplin was right about everything.

## NON-PROFITS/CHARITIES

### **Sophie Katz '19 – Manager of Data Reporting and Analytics**

I was a 2019 PAF graduate, 101 TA, 315 TA and New York City Maxwell Program Intern. During undergrad I also worked for the Institute for Veteran and Military Families and my final semester I developed a report on a federal grant for the New York State Office of New Americans, focused on workforce and economic barriers for the immigrant and refugee community in two upstate New York counties. These experiences laid the foundation I needed for a career in non-profit/government work.

After promptly signing my offer letter on the day of graduation, I moved directly to New York City and started my career in public health 2 weeks later at the Community Healthcare Association of New York State (CHCANYS). My position as the Clinical Excellence and Innovation Coordinator began working on a CDC initiative to improve Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease health outcomes, working with a group of community clinics lodged in some of New York State's most underserved communities. After less than a year on the job, in March of 2020 I found myself coordinating webinar series' to support health centers to shift the entirety of their services to transition to telehealth platforms, the best solution to keep community clinics afloat in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In April and May this work evolved into supporting health centers with COVID-19 testing. Beginning in August, I found myself at the forefront of COVID-19 vaccine planning and distribution for community clinics, who alongside hospitals, were the first to receive the vaccine. I was working directly with the City and State Departments of Health to disseminate briefings and updates, clarify guidance, and advocating to open up additional vaccine phases.

After almost two and a half years at CHCANYS, I shifted my focus in safety-net healthcare from primary care to reproductive health. I am now working at Planned Parenthood as a Manager of Data Reporting & Analytics. I'm now on the leadership team of a New Jersey branch of Planned Parenthood and am overseeing the data efforts. Although I'm not even three years out of college, I was able to leverage my experience as a PAF TA into being a supervisor, and (of course) my pivot table expertise to help me land the job.

### **Jason Packer '00 – Chief Executive Officer**

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“You [Coplin] taught me how to do this. Public-private partnerships. Thank you, I’m grateful for you getting me ready to lead.”

## **Stephen Costello '77 and '88 Director of AsiaEast.Org NGO**

Your course in 1974 was one of the best ever for me. Amazingly, I have kept using many of the insights and data points in my work in Washington and Seoul. As you may remember, when I returned to Syracuse in 1984 after a "walkaround" out to LA, I waited on you at Phoebe's Garden Cafe. You urged me to come in and think about how to finish the degree. I did and finished less than two years later.

## **Tori Perez-Shires '04 Chief Development Officer, Rescue Mission Alliance**

### **Finding my Mission: Selling Beer to Selling Hope**

I entered Syracuse University in the Fall of 2000 sure that I wanted to attend law school. Instead, I stumbled upon Public Affairs. From concise, professional writing to spreadsheets and data analysis with Excel, the multi-discipline approach to course requirements gave me a broad level of experience that I have been able to fall back on time and time again in my post-SU career.

I spent the first 13 years of my professional life in the beer industry, working in progressive roles for distributors and breweries, and ultimately serving as the National Key Accounts Manager for a large Midwestern brewery, where me and my team worked directly with key stakeholders at large grocery/drug/restaurant chains throughout the country. But I never forgot the social lessons taught to me during my Policy Studies tenure – Doing Good and giving back to the community. Since college, I have served as a Board Member for a child care not-for-profit here in Syracuse, raised money creatively in my personal circle for non-profits, created donation drives post-Hurricane Maria for Puerto Rico, and currently serve as a family mentor for a refugee family here in the Syracuse area from Afghanistan.

Now, I have been able to take the for-profit skills I have acquired, combined with a love for the greater Syracuse community and turn it into a Do-Good Career. I was recently named Chief Development Officer for the Rescue Mission here in Syracuse, and my heart is full. I have the great opportunity to go from selling beer to selling hope. My efforts will help change lives in the Syracuse area by working to end hunger and homelessness with the Rescue Mission.

Policy Studies is more than a major. It’s quite possibly the closest thing to real-world experience a college student can get.

## **Mark Hancock '96 - Founder, Build Advisory**

Humble beginnings in Binghamton "bricks" - the heat was hit and miss, and the USDA orange-y cheese block was a key source of nutrition (with the purple ink stamp that had to be toxic). Tough neighborhood. Moved to Syracuse my senior year of high school. When I entered SU, they put me in Economics. I found my way to PAF because I was sick and tired of Pareto-optimality and regression analysis - and I wanted to learn how to DO something. The PAF skills served me well in every position I've had from Associate at Jones Day to the West Coast Market leader for EY's nonprofit tax practice. Found my way to a General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer with an international foundation with ops in 30 countries, and a lot of hands-on public health work. decided to open shop as a management consulting firm, and work with great people and great clients ...

### **Robert E. Watson '79 - President & CEO, Concuity, Inc.**

I was able to come to SU in 1975 because of scholarships and work study programs during the school year. My family, while not on welfare, clearly fell into the category of what the media currently refers to as the "working poor."

I came into the Policy Studies program during my sophomore year. At some point the Public Affairs Office connected me with a SUNY researcher doing a project with troubled youths in Syracuse for a paid part-time research position. That position became a full-time summer job so that I did not have to return to the family farm and mend fences or work as a house painter alongside my father. I continued to work on this project until my graduation. The ability to do this changed my life in many ways. First, I learned skills needed for the working world that I would never have learned in class. Second, it embedded on my brain the ideas of "doing good" and "giving back." Third, it allowed me to go straight from SU to the Wharton School of Business (I was, I believe, one of less than ten people out of a class of 600+ that came directly from undergrad to the MBA program at Penn).

Concuity is a member of a San Francisco area organization called the Entrepreneurs Foundation. We gave equity in this company and commit, as a company, to 2-3 community based events per year. One of our projects this year was to clean, restock and paint the Ronald McDonald House at Children's Hospital of Oakland, CA. At a personal level my wife and I also make sure that we contribute to the betterment of our communities as well by gifts of time (frankly, in many ways, we feel this is more meaningful than cash as it is "real"), frequent flyer miles (this is a big help to make-a-wish type organizations), etc.

The point of this is to thank the Public Affairs Program for the introduction your office made possible over 25 years ago. Without it, I might very well be back in Harpursville, NY painting houses to make ends meet will struggling to keep a farm operating. I have never forgotten how it changed my life, and I try to do my part to give back to the communities in which I live and work.

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## **Kevin Brady '05 - Graduate in the Peace Corp**

I graduated in May 2005 as a Policy Studies and Spanish major, and I'm now a Peace Corps volunteer in Mongolia. I live in the Gobi Desert, in a tent called a "ger."

A lot of my policy studies classes prepared me for the work I'm doing now in my village (small community development projects), and without those classes I'm sure I would have a completely different perspective on a lot of things. If any of your students have questions regarding Peace Corps service, they can email me any time. It certainly is tough, but it changes your entire life in countless ways. It's a cliché, but it's true.

PAF 101 was easily the most influential course of my college career; not only for the material and concepts learned, but because of the overarching theme of the class - that doing good is really a requirement of being a responsible citizen. The course really got my head out of the sand regarding the world around me, and regarding the kinds of societal problems that any country faces.

Another extremely important course was PAF 315, where a student is assigned to a nonprofit or public organization and works on a set project that must be completed by the end of the semester. The class was beneficial for the work itself, but also for the obvious fact that it gives students a chance to work closely in the real world. To me, for a class to be successful, it must have real-world applications. The lessons I learned from 315 (time management, how to comport yourself in a professional environment, multi-tasking) are invaluable to me now in the Peace Corps.