

CONTRIBUTOR BIO

HANS POSCHMAN is the Program and Fellowship Director at the Institute for Advanced Technology & Public Policy and graduated from Cal Poly in 2007 with a degree in Political Science and in 2009 with a Master's of Public Policy degree.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Hans Poschman

When Hans Poschman applied to Cal Poly, he was accepted as a Mathematics major. However, after taking a government course during his last trimester of high school, Hans fell in love with politics. A quarter into his college career, Hans switched into Political Science and has since pursued his passion for legislative politics. Hans began his legislative career as an intern with San Luis Obispo's local Republican Party in 2004. Through the connections he developed as a hard working intern, Hans took on more responsibility by working on a local ballot measure after which he took a job working for the College Republican National Committee (CRNC).

As a field representative for the CRNC, Hans traveled to Washington State where he organized students from numerous Washington universities. His job was to encourage college students to vote and to volunteer for the Republican Party and its candidates. Part of Hans's job was to organize student volunteers to campaign and participate in various parades and street skits, which helped promote the party's causes and messages. One skit Hans is particularly fond of is called Debate Dodge Ball, in which volunteers depicted a U.S. Senator refusing to debate her challenger by playing a game of dodge ball with said Senator as the dodger. Hans recollects that one of the joys of working on campaigns as a

college student is the ability to get creative with earned media by doing events like street skits. His work in Washington did not go unnoticed, as Hans was named Field Representative of the Year by the CRNC.

After earning his undergraduate degree in Political Science and spending his extra time interning and volunteering, Hans continued his education at Cal Poly as a graduate student in the Masters of Public Policy Program. During his graduate years, Hans worked as Executive Director for the SLO Republican Central Committee. His duties involved handling day-to-day operations of the party, including campaign events, fundraising activities, and taking a leadership role in numerous local races. Hans particularly enjoyed this position because it gave him the opportunity to heavily engage in campaign strategy while building stronger relationships with candidates.

This experience helped Hans earn a job working for the then California Assembly member Sam Blakeslee. Hans began at the entry-level, completing any and all tasks related to being responsive to constituents' needs. As he proved himself, Hans was given more responsibilities, which included meeting with various organizations and individuals, speaking to large groups, and working with people to resolve problems with state governments. As Blakeslee rose, so did Hans. When Blakeslee won a Senate seat, Hans earned the District Director position, overseeing staff and offices across the five county district. Among his proudest moments working for the legislature was when a local legislative proposal he worked on became law, and the times when a simple call from the Senator's office could solve a constituent's problem.

Following his work with the Senator, Hans became involved in the Council of State Governments (CSG), which is a non-partisan, non-profit association of state legislatures. CSG offers consulting on public policy issues as a service to state legislatures. Hans was part of CSG's Western office where he worked directly with the legislatures of 13 Western states. Based in Sacramento, Hans served as a policy advisor on agriculture, water, and the environment.

As much as Hans enjoyed his work outside of San Luis Obispo, he couldn't resist the opportunity to return to his college town. Today, Hans works as the Program and Fellowship Director of the Institute for Advanced Technology and Public Policy on Cal Poly's campus. He is currently focused on launching the Institute's Digital Democracy website which allows users to do a Google-like search of the words spoken at legislative hearings and to pull up specific moments in videos which can be easily shared on social media. The goal of the

project is to make the legislative process more transparent. The program employs Cal Poly students of all disciplines enlightening them to the cross-disciplinary nature of legislative issues and public policy.

Hans' best advice to students is to volunteer. "If you show up, do the work that is asked of you, and prove your competency, you can earn opportunities to work on bigger and more exciting projects." He also advises that, especially in politics, new opportunities arise by building relationships. Hans says that "the best thing a student can do for him or herself is to intern, volunteer, and to meet people within your desired field. Use your time in college to experiment with jobs and career paths so you know what you like before you leave college and build the connections that can lead to a job after graduation."