



ATHENA BROCKMAN is currently a freelance writer. She was a Capital Fellow from 2010 to 2011. Athena graduated from Cal Poly in 2010 with degrees in political science and journalism

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Athena Brockman

During her five years at Cal Poly, Athena completed a double major in political science and journalism, was the Vice President of her sorority as well as the newly established Political Science Club, was a founding member of the Institute for Research & Policy, and held internships at the State Capitol. With all this experience, Athena's time at Cal Poly provided useful skills and connections that continue to aid her professionally. Athena was drawn to Cal Poly because of its campus and beautiful surroundings, but she now realizes that the Political Science Department was most influential to her college experience. Political science courses provided Athena with her first glimpse into the liberal arts' approach to "Learn By Doing." Athena recalls one class she took that analyzed the intersection of politics and religion, through the conflict between Israel and Palestine. This class compared news sources to religious and political theory, exemplifying how political science relates to a variety of contemporary issues. Athena credits Cal Poly's political science program for providing her qualities that employers look for when hiring. The debates during classes and the discussions made between those with different political views were all essential experiences she had in political science that made a career in politics, law, and government more attainable.

After Athena graduated in 2010, Athena became a Capital Fellow in Sacramento. In this position, she mainly focused on research and communication for assembly-wide functions. Athena's advice to current students interested in applying to the fellowship is to connect with alumni from the program and find ways to stand out. Intertwining one's own personal story and how it relates to their interests in government and law is a perfect way to shape an application. She also notes that the Capital Fellows Program can provide foundational knowledge of the state legislature and lead to more opportunities working in government. Athena spent another four years after her fellowship at the Capitol as a legislative aide for Assemblyman Cameron Smyth and State Senator Mark Wyland. As a legislative aide, she drafted legislation and gave advice to the legislator on specific issues. Athena says, "Being able to give and receive constructive criticism along with critical thinking were skills vital to my role as a legislative aide. My political science degree surely cultivated this foundation that constitutes my work ethic."

Athena is currently a freelance writer for a variety of lifestyle blogs and contends that a degree alone is not enough to show the world what a recent graduate is possible of accomplishing. She explains, "Political science gave me foundational knowledge that I can apply to everything. In addition to my education, I have found that being creative online is an influential facet that allures employers." Athena believes the Internet is perfect for expressing one's professional abilities to employers, and capitalizing on the positive aspects of social media is a great asset when searching for careers. Above all, Athena thinks that especially in the field of government, where getting ahead relies heavily on individuality and networking, staying true to one's beliefs and keeping a steady ambition will always help in the long run.