



ANNA CONSANI is the Director of Community Partnership for Springboard Enterprises in Washington, D.C. She graduated from Cal Poly in 2009 with a degree in Political Science.

ALUMNI FEATURE

Anna Consani

When Anna first arrived at Cal Poly, she was not sure whether or not political science was the right path. However, after taking her first global politics course with Professor Shelley Hurt she realized where her passions lie. Anna values her concentration in global politics because it provided her with a greater understanding of the fundamentals of the world and how different cultures work together. She was taught “that cultures clash because they have differing truths and ideas behind the inner workings of society, and this is why it is so important to have broad perspectives in international relations.” She credits her education and her “Learn by Doing” experience in Model UN for providing her with skillsets in leadership, politics, and diplomacy.

While at Cal Poly, Anna applied for the highly competitive and coveted Panetta Institute Congressional Internship. The institute chooses one student from each CSU campus to work on Capitol Hill and the candidate is then assigned a California congressional member to assist for three months. The internship gave her the opportunity to conduct policy research in Washington, D.C. She recounts being briefed on the importance of maintaining government spending in the defense sector by Secretary Leon Panetta, the former head of the CIA and Secretary of Defense in the Obama Administration. Anna says

that her time at the Panetta Institute instilled in her a deeper appreciation for national politics.

Anna returned to Cal Poly for her final quarter and quickly became involved with Elect Her, an organization that takes applications from schools across the country and provides women with the necessary tools to run for office later on in life. She combined quantitative and qualitative research methods to help improve the Elect Her outreach program. This provided a new momentum for Anna, who now hopes to one day run for office. After graduating, she moved back to the Bay Area where she worked with Representative Jared Huffman. Her experiences in Representative Huffman's office helped her realize the difference between a D.C. office and the local government office, which was mostly concerned with case-by-case issues rather than policy issues.

Anna wanted to challenge herself and become directly involved in national politics. She says that Washington, D.C. drew her because there are people from all over the country with differing perspectives. Anna strongly believes that the more people you can meet and learn from, the more likely you are to develop strong leadership skills. Her past experiences working in both local and national legislative offices left her wanting to approach politics from a new angle. After arriving to D.C., Anna began working for the start-up Spring Board Enterprises as the Director of Community and Partnership. Spring Board Enterprises concerns itself with the women in the tech industry, and Anna's job is to help women leaders foster partnerships and capital growth with local governments and agencies. She has gained an entirely new skill set in entrepreneurship, and combined it with her experience in politics to help women access Capitol Hill.

By challenging herself to work outside of her comfort zone for a tech start-up, combined with the knowledge of a political science student, Anna has helped pave a path for those looking to pursue a career outside of the classic political science field. She advises current Cal Poly political science students to get involved in whatever industry they feel most passionate about, no matter what realm of politics one is trying to enter. She states that when you want to change the landscape of an industry, "one must get involved and understand the posed challenges. The best way to enter politics is by being exposed to a wide variety of industries that help shape the policies that one finds most intriguing."