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*ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT | AK Kramer*

*By Elisabeth Grove*

Reflecting on how he made the decision to attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Andrew “AK” Kramer says something simply “clicked” for him. He knew he would be coming to the right place for the major that was a perfect fit for him. Today, it is clear that AK is still passionate about his decision. “I believe Political Science is really a study of people under duress. How do we navigate a world of seven billion people? How do we coexist in a power hungry, ego-driven society? And when we write these ‘rules,’ why do we follow them? It’s fascinating!”

During his four years at Cal Poly, AK was heavily involved in a number of organizations that directly impacted student life. His many accomplishments included serving on the College

of Liberal Arts Council and the ASI Board of Directors, as well as working for Student Life and Leadership and as a Poly Rep giving tours to prospective students. For Student Life and Leadership, AK organized “Another Type of Groove,” a monthly poetry night dedicated to exploring diversity issues through artistic and creative outlets. Most notably, AK was elected ASI President during his final year at Cal Poly.

Concentrating in Pre-Law, AK became acutely interested in correcting inequities in education. He completed his Senior Project with Dr. Jean Williams, during which time he studied the opportunity gap between white and black high school students in U.S. public schools – a project he says catapulted him into his current line of work. For Kramer, yet another formative experience at Cal Poly was a service opportunity where he spent the night at a homeless shelter with his classmates. Today, he says this was an incredible moment where he gained insight into his future work and into his own humanity as well.

Graduating from Cal Poly with a B.A. in Political Science in 2009, AK went on to earn his Master’s in Educational Leadership and a teaching credential from Mills College in Oakland, California. While he was still in graduate school, he worked for West Oakland Middle School, performing student instructional support.

Currently, AK works for the City and County of Denver on a team that is implementing a system-wide social and emotional learning initiative. AK describes his work in Colorado as the “feelings business.” He notes that the problem solving, decision making, and empathy which he honed during his time at Cal Poly is incredibly important to the work he does today. Furthermore, dedication to developing and sustaining systems of equity and

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access in education is key – as is maintaining an awareness that the playing field in education is not equal for all learners.

Outside of work, AK enjoys wine tasting, spending time with his wife and baby, playing trivia, and going to sporting events.

AK also has some advice for current Cal Poly students:

*“Dive in. College is fake real life – it’s utopia. You have access to EVERYTHING – art, music, culture, food, fitness, academics, socializing – with minimal responsibility. When you head into the workforce no one will care about your 4.0 – they want to know what you believe in. They want to see how you problem solve, how you connect to the world, and if you have the skills to walk the walk. Remember that you are not an island – everything you do has an impact on the world, big and small. Take that impact seriously. You matter – your impact matters.”*