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*ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT | Carlos Villacis*

*By Amy Holmes*

Carlos Villacis is a 2013 Cal Poly Political Science graduate. He currently works as a program analyst with The Building People, a firm based in Washington DC out of the Department of Energy headquarters. Carlos works with the Analysis and Sustainability program, providing them with analytical, research, communication, operational, and writing support. He was drawn to this position by his desire to gain a knowledge of how the federal government managed energy both in terms of policy and research & development.

Carlos made the last-minute decision to attend Cal Poly as an English major after attending Open House in 2009, which persuaded him to pick Cal Poly over UC Santa Cruz. He quickly realized that English was not the major for him and transferred into Political Science to better fit his desire to analyze global

news events and discuss them among his peers. Within global issues, Carlos found his niche in studying climate change and the need for clean energy. To better focus his degree on this area, he picked up a minor in Environmental Studies, which prepared him for a career in science without having a science degree.

On campus he was involved with the Political Science Club where he served as treasurer, and the Political Science Honors Society, Pi Sigma Alpha where he served as president. One of his most memorable classes in the Political Science Department was Contemporary US Foreign Policy taught by Dr. Shelley Hurt. As an undergrad, Carlos worked in a range of jobs from doing laundry for Cal Poly athletes to working as a shoe repairman at a local shoe store. During his senior year, he interned with Public Policy Solutions, where he worked on the election campaign of Lois Capps for Congress. One of his memories from this internship was working at an event where Bill Clinton was speaking and being able to take a picture with former president Clinton. After graduation, Carlos worked in SLO for a year before moving to Washington DC to attend graduate school at George Washington University where he earned a master's degree in Environmental and Natural Resource Policy.

Carlos' advice for current Political Science students is to find an issue or cause that they are passionate about and pursue a career in that field. He believes that the skills gained during your time at Cal Poly are valuable in a wide variety of fields. These skills include communications, writing, research, data analysis, and so on. In his opinion, the most important skill students will gain in a Political Science degree is how to publically engage on topics of interest. Carlos advises students to avoid comparing their personal career progresses to others – both within and outside

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of their major – and to go at their own pace, following their own unique path. Students should remain open to the idea of moving locations for furthering career options and should not let any options discourage them out of fear. Carlos strongly encourages students to take advantage of the resources available to them for advice, guidance, and connections. Most people are happy to help and want to see students succeed in pursuing their passions.

Outside of work, Carlos is an avid fan of exercising and being active through biking, weight lifting, and playing racquetball and soccer. He is a die-hard sports fan of the Oakland Raiders, the Oakland A's, and the Los Angeles Lakers, and is a shameless fan of professional wrestling. Carlos also loves travelling and exploring new cities and countries.