

Attending the 2011 Public Policy and International Affairs Fellowship Program (PPIA) at UC Berkeley was a seven-week, life-changing experience. The program offered me the opportunity to sharpen my analytical and quantitative skills and introduced me to the complex world of public policy. The rigor of difficult quant-based problem sets, research projects, and presentations challenged me and I am now ready to further develop my skills. At the Goldman School of Public Policy I want to focus on policy issues concerned with under-served youth. My goal is to become a uniquely lensed leader poised to make needed changes for the betterment of our collective futures.

Throughout my undergraduate career, I was involved in many activities in which I took a leadership role to help disadvantaged communities. As a peer-advising counselor, I worked to increase retention rates for under-represented minority students by facilitating a number of workshops promoting campus resources and serving in this role for a summer transitional program. As a co-founder of California Youth Connection, I collaborated with other foster youth to establish a chapter of this advocacy organization in Yolo County. CYC develops legislative policy to better serve the needs of foster youth across the state of California. During my entire undergraduate career, I helped assist with the transitional needs of foster youth entering the university system as a member of the Guardian Scholars Program. I also worked with licensed California doctors, medical students, and fellow undergraduates at the Imani clinic in the Oak Park neighborhood of Sacramento, providing free healthcare services to create better relations between the public and aspiring health care professionals. These experiences fostered leadership skills and provided an opportunity to help others, but it has been the comprehensive scope of public policy that remained intriguing as a career path.

As a PPIA fellow I became knowledgeable about various aspects of policy and I took a particular interest in tackling challenges that unjustly face the future of too many of our youth. I completed a five-minute policy research presentation on the state of foster youth in California for Tai Sunnanon's Policy Analysis and Communication course and produced a policy memo detailing findings on student test performance in inner New York City public school schools verses charter schools. Both these projects served to encourage my interest in harnessing the necessary policy and leadership skills to help create social mobility and reduce the abysmal barriers faced by many underserved youth. Then, my work in Washington DC as an intern at the Brookings institution brought me into the real world of how policy analysts set the national agenda. I was privy to the company research and news, engaged with Brookings' employees, and ultimately came to understand how Brookings' products affect the entire nation, giving me a taste of what it's like to be a part of the policy world. My primary job was conducting research for Brookings senior fellow Jennifer Bradley and Vice President Bruce Katz on their book *The Metropolitan Revolution*, and I accomplished this through an analysis of green initiatives, city project initiatives, commercialization, political precedent and the current political climate. As a result of my Brookings internship, I was able to see first hand the challenges of involving government, law, business, economics, and citizens when it comes to making decisions for the public good.

Since graduation, I've done direct service work as I considered my graduate school options and gained insight into the on-the-ground obstacles that relate to the policy issues I aspire to remedy. As a math instructor in an underserved area in Sacramento, California, the main challenges I faced involved communicating digestible

course material for wide ranging math abilities and grade levels, engaging productively with coworkers, and understanding the barriers any given student faced. I became successful at understanding each student's sticking points, adapting my lessons and office hours, and ultimately was able to help my students achieve a higher pass rate than previous teachers. Now, as an English instructor in Japan, I have been challenged to improve my communication skills. Due to my complete unfamiliarity with the language, I have worked to develop body language that better communicates my intentions to students, coworkers, and the public. In addition, I have adopted new speech habits making my words louder, clearer, and more comprehensible in both personal and presentation spaces. Most importantly, I believe my ability to adapt to life in a foreign nation has benefited me in unseen ways, helping me to become a highly flexible leader that can assist others find success in a turbulent world.

I aspire to be a leader in resource allocation to help the underserved and motivate individuals to take action and push towards greater economic well-being. My interests include creating legislative policy on foster care and related educational issues and managing a large non-profit devoted to helping young adults develop a career. Children with whom I share a similar background too often face barriers that find many of them limping through life. My commitment is to the public good and I aspire to utilize policy to help many young minds positively affect our ever-changing world. I know that the Goldman School of Public Policy Masters Program at UC Berkeley will provide me with the knowledge I need and assist me towards a career concerned with education, social welfare, and underserved communities.