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After graduating from Dickinson in spring 2009, I started my graduate work in Security and Intelligence Studies with a certificate in Russian and Eastern Europe Studies. During my time at GSPIA, I have had access to unique opportunities to focus my studies on topics of my choosing and to prepare myself to enter the job market with confidence and a sense of direction. I plan to pursue a career in the federal government, focusing on Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

I chose GSPIA for several reasons. First, the courses of study available accurately reflect the interconnectedness of international relations today. Majors at GSPIA do not look at just one regional or functional topic (i.e. Africa, terrorism, public transportation). Instead, GSPIA's approach is much more holistic and allows students to examine the entire system by studying things like Security and Intelligence, Human Security, or Global Political Economy.

GSPIA coursework is practical in nature and students have the chance to learn and experiment with a variety of analytical techniques, styles of writing (especially policy memos), and computer programs (i.e. SPSS statistical software and GIS mapping). Having these practical "real-world" skills before graduation puts you at a great advantage and is another major reason why I chose GSPIA.

The faculty are experienced practitioners and, in my experience, very accessible. Dr. Phil Williams helped me develop a research project on Russian organized crime and its potential consequences for Sochi, host of the 2014 Olympic Winter games. He also put me in touch with GSPIA alumni to critique my work. Now I am examining trends in Chechen terrorism for my capstone course and will have a final product I can take to potential employers as an example of the analytical abilities I've developed at GSPIA.

GSPIA has been a great follow-up to my experiences in Carlisle. Dickinson's focus on engaging the world and accountability are directly in line with GSPIA's mission to prepare leaders committed to the values of public service and diversity in order to build a better world. I encourage any Dickinson student who is looking to continue their studies in the realm of public administration or international affairs to seriously consider GSPIA.

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