



**Name:** David Akers

**Hometown:** Solon, OH

**GSPIA Degree:** MPIA-SIS

I chose to pursue an advanced degree at GSPIA because of my desire to work at the C.I.A., State Department, or an international security think tank on the issue of nuclear proliferation and arms control.

GSPIA is ranked among the top graduate schools in the nation in international affairs by Foreign Policy magazine. The professors have

both theoretical and practical experience in their respective fields of expertise, and the school offers a wide range of classes that address many of my research interests.

Students have numerous opportunities to become involved with research projects outside the classroom and learn more about the fields in which they are studying through GSPIA's research centers and institutes. Undergraduate students that want to continue their studies in a field that interests them, or for those that are pursuing an advanced degree to increase their competitiveness in the job market, GSPIA offers the academic resources and an international reputation that will fulfill both needs.

From my perspective as a Security and Intelligence Studies major, a GSPIA education is relevant because there is a great need for professionals with an academic background in terrorism, insurgencies, cyber crime, nuclear proliferation, and other major security-related issues.

The Intelligence Studies (IS) program at Mercyhurst College prepared me to be an effective graduate student at GSPIA in a number of ways. At the academic level, the IS program introduced me to the intelligence cycle, the various roles and interactions that the intelligence community has in the U.S., and the evolution of the U.S. intelligence apparatus. The program's course requirements have provided me with a solid foundation in American history, political theory, current events, terrorism, and a number of other fields that are studied in depth at GSPIA.

Each aspect of the coursework that I have completed at GSPIA has helped prepare me for my future as an international security professional. The courses that I have completed focus on prevalent security-related issues, such as terrorism, cyber crime, U.S. military strategy, and arms control – all areas where there is a need for knowledge experts. My courses have prepared me with a strong knowledge about the history, the debates, and current developments that surround each of these complex and sometimes interrelated issues.

Each day, I feel more and more confident with my future career and my abilities to become a more effective and efficient security analyst.

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