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**GSPIA Degree:** MPA

When I started thinking about graduate school, I wanted to find an internationally respected program that balanced political theory with practical skills, and provided a knowledgeable, accessible faculty.

At the time, I was a full-time staffer for Senator Jay Rockefeller working on national security, tax and trade policies. To advance my career, I needed a master's degree. I chose GSPIA because it draws faculty from both academia and the professional field. GSPIA has a fantastic

program with useful interesting classes; experienced and knowledgeable professors; and an active alumni base. It definitely lives up to its billing as one of the best public policy schools in the country.

GSPIA emphasizes the development of practical skills and has taken the lead on new issue areas, such as cyber security. Since I've been in Pittsburgh, I've received a phenomenal education, gained practical training for the professional world, studied foreign languages, and had countless opportunities to work in the field and connect with potential employers. GSPIA is one of the few schools to provide cutting-edge analytic software tools (such as Palantir), as well as an accessible, first-rate faculty. GSPIA professors have not only studied but have also worked on issues like cyber security, terrorism, and non-proliferation, and have done so for some of the leading agencies and institutions in the world. Their insights and advice have been invaluable throughout my time at GSPIA, and I'm not sure that I could have gotten that benefit elsewhere.

Another important aspect of GSPIA is the internship requirement. I spent this past summer interning for the U.S. Consulate in Guangzhou, China. Working out of the Economic/Political Section, I met regularly with government, civic and business leaders; conducted research on issues ranging from labor shortages to climate change; and drafted a variety of cables on current events. I think the significance of my experience is obvious: not only have I gotten hands-on experience with the Foreign Service, but I've been able to live and work in a foreign country, immerse myself in a new culture, and enhance my world view. You can't get that in a classroom. Interning with the State Department has been an invaluable experience.

I've been impressed with GSPIA, and I definitely recommend it to anyone with a serious interest in public service.

GSPIA

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