

Why GPS: Pursuing a different tune



As part of an ongoing series, we give students the creative liberty to opine on their favorite memories from the School and “why GPS” is a solid fit to pursue their graduate education

By Adriel Taslim, 2018 MIA candidate | GPS News



It was a rather interesting turn of events that led me from my undergraduate studies in violin performance to international affairs.

As part of a select group of highly trained musicians, I was sent abroad to perform

in Europe several times. As it turns out, some of the concerts in which I performed were also sponsored cultural outreach missions from the U.S. Embassy. Seeing the far-ranging influence and impact of international missions piqued my interest in international affairs.

While I had always shown a propensity for international relations and foreign language, I only ever pursued them as hobbies and never thought to use them in any professional capacity. Yet, these performances abroad opened my eyes to the possibilities for my future, and I began to search out the best way to combine my interests in arts and culture with international affairs.

I was fortunate to have incredible support from many of my undergraduate professors. It is quite by chance that one of them mentioned the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS) to me as a great opportunity, given his knowledge of my academic interests and future career aspirations.

GPS's focus on the Pacific region was a huge draw for me, given my family's history in the region and further personal experience in Southeast Asia.

Coming from a performing arts background, I had almost no formal education in any of the subjects I was expected to learn in my first year at GPS. Yet — thanks to the [prep program](#), the incredible support of all my peers at GPS and many late nights studying — I was able to thrive in my new environment.

Beyond the education, however, GPS also provides a great opportunity for community-building through its many social events and [student clubs](#). They deepened my peer support system, which helped me get through even the most grueling moments of the program.

While it often is easy to get caught up in rigor of the academics, I try to keep my end goal of a meaningful employment in mind.



To that end, the amazing support of the [Career Services](#) staff at GPS has been an invaluable part of the student support system.

Through Career Services, I have been introduced to not just job and internship opportunities, but also [fellowships](#), networks and professional resources.

All these opportunities have taken me to locations, both foreign and domestic, to see the amazing ways in which my degree can work for me in the future.

GPS provides its students with a very versatile and customizable education to complement existing skills. These adaptable skills enable us to stay ahead of the curve and open up new career paths in a quickly changing world.