



OWU Department of Politics &
Government Alumni Newsletter
Fall 2025 & Spring 2026

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Faculty & Staff, Spring 2026

Faculty

Dr. Ashley Biser
Dr. Ji Young Choi
Dr. Michael V. Esler (Emeritus)
Dr. James C. Franklin
Dr. William C. Louthan (Emeritus)
Dr. Brianna N. Mack
Dr. Franchesca V. Nestor (Chair)

Administrative Staff

Deborah Lovell

Newsletter Editors & Writers

Jenna Ashbrook, Vincent Sack II

George Meader Bequest:

The department gratefully acknowledges that this newsletter is made possible through the financial support received from a bequest by a former Ohio Wesleyan student, George Meader, who attended from 1923-1925. Meader was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from a southeastern Michigan district from 1951-1965. He received his law degree from the University of Michigan in 1931. Prior to serving in Congress, he had a private law practice in Ann Arbor, served as a county prosecutor, and as counsel to the U.S. Senate special committee investigating the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. He served as counsel to congressional committees and resumed the private practice of law after leaving the Congress.



Faculty Updates



Below are some of the more recent updates for the department faculty. Please also visit the Faculty & Staff page by scanning the QR or clicking on link below to read more about each professor.

<https://www.owu.edu/academics/departments-programs/department-of-politics-government/faculty-staff/>

Ji Young Choi is serving as the director of East Asian Studies and advisor of OWU Model UN. His research work, "The US-China Tech War and South Korea's Strategy: A Case Study of South Korea's Chip Industry" will be published in an edited book soon (London: Routledge 2026). Also a review article on Dr. Choi's book, *The Politics of South Korea: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner 2025) was published in *Pacific Affairs* (March 2026) by Dr. Hannah June Kim.

Michael Esler is enjoying his well-earned retirement while teaching PG 350: Law and Courts in the fall as an emeritus professor.

James Franklin is currently the Director of the International Studies Program. Dr. Franklin worked with students throughout the school year as part of Ohio Wesleyan's Summer Scholar Research (SSRP), which was recently expanded to non-natural sciences faculty, and is currently working on his book to be published.

Francesca Nestor is currently the Politics & Government Department Chair. Dr. Nestor participated in Ohio Wesleyan's Summer Scholar Research (SSRP) where she worked with several OWU students on her research throughout the last school year.



Pictured from left to right: Michael Esler, William Louthan, Ashley Biser, Nicky Mack, Francesca Nestor, Ji Young Choi, James Franklin

Gabby Gonzalez Duarte

My post-graduation plans are to take a gap year before pursuing a graduate degree in public health, with particular interests in epidemiology and biostatistics. During that time, I hope to continue building experience in public health research and community-based work. I have also accepted a summer internship with Resilient Retreat, an organization grounded in trauma-informed care that provides free and confidential programs for survivors of abuse, first responders, and helping professionals.



During my senior year, one of the most meaningful things I have worked on has been my honors research project on barriers to healthcare access among the Latino population in Central Ohio, with a particular focus on Delaware County. This project is part of the Community Health Assessment through the Delaware Public Health District, which has made the work especially meaningful because it connects academic research with ongoing local public health efforts. Using focus groups and qualitative research guided by the Socio-Ecological Model, the study explores how individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and policy-level factors

shape healthcare access and experiences. The goal is to better understand the lived experiences of Latino community members and contribute findings that can help inform local efforts to improve health equity and access to care.



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

POLITICS CATCH UP
WITH YOUR PG PROFESSORS

Got questions and thoughts about EVERYTHING that's going on? Come talk things over with your PG Professors!

Friday, September 26, 12 PM
 Elliott 101
 Food provided!



Registration starts October 27th with Seniors!

Interested in learning about upcoming classes?

Come learn about Spring 2026 classes being offered within the Politics & Government Department!

Friday, October 24, 12 PM
 Elliott Room 101
 Food will be provided!

Monthly PG Luncheons

This year has been full of the monthly lunch and learns. We talked about upcoming courses in the department, political events, as well as beta-tested a fun political game about DC statehood!



How does a state become a state?

Come have fun with the PG department as we play a **surprise** politically-fun game!

Friday, February 6, 12 PM
 Elliott Room 101
 Food will be provided!

Additionally this semester we successfully, as a department, created t-shirts to fundraise for various departmental needs.



Politics Lunch & Learn

Interested in learning about current events?

Thinking about majoring in:

- Politics & Government?
- Pre-Law?
- International Studies?

Curious about upcoming classes in the PG department?

Come to the Politics & Government Department's Monthly Lunch & Learn

Friday, March 20, 12 PM
 Elliott Room 101
 Food will be provided!



The J.K. Eddy Memorial Lecture on World Politics Technology and the Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Implications for the US-China AI Race

Wednesday, March 25, 2026
4:30pm Benes Room, Hamilton Williams Campus Center

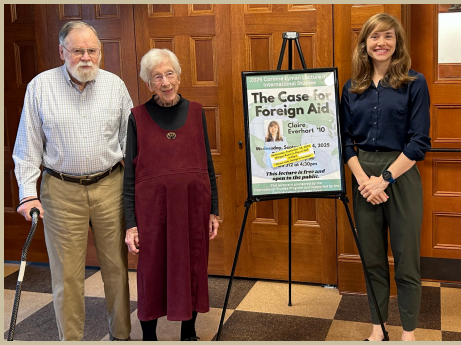
The Eddy K Memorial Lecture this year featured Jeffrey Ding, an Assistant Professor of Political Science at George Washington University. Dr. Ding earned his Ph.D. in international relations from University of Oxford, where he studied as a Rhodes Scholar. His lecture provided a thoughtful analysis of artificial intelligence and its impact on international relations. A central theme of the lecture was developing a better understanding of how and when emerging technologies influence economic power transitions. Ding challenged common assumptions about AI, arguing that while many view it as a decisive factor in shifting the U.S.-China power balance, its actual impact depends less on invention and more on diffusion (how widely and effectively a technology is adopted across an economy). Ding was careful to frame AI as a “potential general-purpose technology” (GPT), similar to electricity. Like electricity, AI’s transformative power will come from its broad application across industries rather than isolated breakthroughs. This raises key questions about which countries can implement AI most effectively at scale. At the conclusion of the lecture, Dr. Ji Young Choi led a discussion and a question & answer session. The questions added another layer of thought surrounding the topic of AI and it’s future effects around the globe.



The John Kennard Eddy Memorial Lecture on World Politics is a living memorial to a former student. The Eddy family has chosen this very valuable and important method of keeping Jeff’s flame alive across the generations of Ohio Wesleyan students. Please visit www.owu.edu/eddy or scan the QR code to learn more about the history of the lecture.

SPONSORED BY THE OWU EAST ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAM, INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PROGRAM, AND THE POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT SUPPORTED BY THE J.K.EDDY MEMORIAL LECTURE ENDOWMENT FUND





Lyman Lecture The Case for Foreign Aid by Claire Everhart, Sept. 24

This recent lecture offered an insightful look into the role and importance of U.S. foreign aid, clarifying common misconceptions about its cost and impact. Claire Everhart explained that foreign aid represents only 0.46% of the federal budget and highlighted its effectiveness through USAID's efforts, which have saved over 91 million lives 31 million of them children. She outlined four key reasons why maintaining foreign aid is essential: strengthening soft power and global goodwill, enhancing national security, promoting economic stability through global trade, and ensuring strategic competitiveness. Concluding with an optimistic outlook, she emphasized the need to engage the private sector and rebuild support for development initiatives. The talk underscored how crucial it is for citizens to stay informed, advocate for global aid, and contribute to nonprofit efforts that uphold humanitarian progress.

Benjamin F. Marsh Lecture On Public Affairs



The Department of Politics and Government was honored to host OWU alumnus, Dana Bucin, JD, Partner at Harris Beach Murcha Law Firm, for a deeply important lecture titled "What to do about immigration? An Immigration Attorney's Take on Navigating a Flawed System." Drawing from her extensive legal experience, Dana Bucin discussed what she's doing to help immigrants in the courtroom and exhibited how zealous she is in defending her clients.

Bucin examined how immigration is framed in public debate, noting that misconceptions often stem from systemic failures rather than individual choices. She compared the immigration system to a broken traffic light that forces people to make difficult decisions when seeking safety and opportunity. Bucin highlighted current legislative issues which raise concerns about fairness in deportation policies, and she concluded by emphasizing the cultural and social contributions immigrants bring to local communities. Her presentation encouraged students to think critically about how law, policy, and compassion intersect in shaping national identity.

Following the lecture, on October 29th, Dana Bucin and two of OWU's professors, Robert Gitter, Ph.D. Emeritus Professor of Economics, and Veda Kim, Ph.D. Professor of Sociology & Anthropology discussed the circumstances immigrants face when attempting to come to the United States. Dana Bucin explained a situation of why zealous advocacy and proper representation of council is so vital for every individual.

We extend our gratitude to Dana Bucin for sharing her groundbreaking work and inspiring us to think critically about the topic of immigration.

To learn more about the history of the B. F. Marsh Lecture on Public Affairs. Scan or visit: [Benjamin Marsh Lectures](https://www.owu.edu/academics/departments-programs/departments-of-politics-government/benjamin-marsh-lectures/)
<https://www.owu.edu/academics/departments-programs/departments-of-politics-government/benjamin-marsh-lectures/>



Take the First Step in Pre-Law at OWU

Are you interested in pursuing a career in law? If so, the OWU Politics & Government Department's Pre-Law Studies major is the perfect fit for you! The Pre-Law Studies major is designed to prepare students for the rigors of law school and success in the legal profession. The major offers a rigorous and interdisciplinary curriculum that combines courses in politics, government, English, history, philosophy, and economics. Students who are interested in declaring the Pre-Law Studies major should contact Dr. Nestor for more information. If interested in learning more about Pre-Law Society please email Dr. Franchesca Nestor fvnestor@owu.edu



Moot Court

Every fall, students have the opportunity to participate in the yearly Moot Court Competition, tackling challenging legal concepts and developing their argumentative skills. With Dr. Esler's retirement in 2025, OWU alumna, Katie Berger, headed the course. Katie Berger graduated from OWU in 2016 where she then went on to earn her juris doctorate from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. Katie Berger now works within the U.S District Court for the Southern District of Ohio.

This year's Moot Court case tackled a pressing constitutional question at the intersection of academic freedom and discrimination, focused solely on the First and Fourteenth Amendments. William DeNolf v. Olympus State University challenges whether speaking out against affirmative action, then being fired for this action as a public employee, is a violation of First Amendment rights. Further, DeNolf raises a Fourteenth Amendment claim, arguing that Olympus State University's admissions policy violates the Equal Protection Clause. While the Supreme Court has loosely dealt with topics similar to this in recent times, it has never dealt with this unique combination of First Amendment speech on affirmative action, making this year's competition a compelling exploration of First and Fourteenth Amendment rights. This year's Moot Court team consists of 13 participants. We thank Professor Katie Berger (OWU alumna) for coming back to her undergraduate roots to advise this year's competition!

Arneson Institute

The Arneson Institute at Ohio Wesleyan University hosts and manages the "Wesleyan in Washington" program, which offers internship study opportunities for Ohio Wesleyan University students. The institute coordinates faculty oversight of appropriate internship credit and matches students with important and substantive internships and educational experiences not restricted to any one discipline. Additionally, it provides students with a wider range of connections for internship opportunities

Model UN

OWU Model UN meets every Wednesday at 7:30 pm to practice debate and problem solving skills. Each year, the club goes to three conferences. They attended TennMUN at University of Tennessee in September 2025. At the most recent conference, Anna Heines, the President of OWU Model UN, received the "best delegate" award for their committee at a Model UN conference in the College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, Virginia) in April of 2026. For more information, contact President of the club Anna Haines at arhaines@owu.edu and follow them on Instagram for meeting reminders and updates: @owu_model_un The OWU faculty advisor is Prof. Ji Young Choi (jiychoi@owu.edu).



CONGRATULATIONS OLIVIA DANLEY!

2025-2026 President's Assistant and Acceptance to OSU Law School

Olivia Danley is a 2025 OWU Alum who was very involved on campus. She was on the field hockey team, in Kappa Alpha Theta, and also participated in academic organizations like Moot Court. Even with all of these commitments she managed to finish her degree a year early.



Olivia knew she wanted to pursue law school, a goal that was solidified after shadowing a magistrate and gaining firsthand insight into the legal field. She began preparing for the LSAT and navigating the application process. However, her plans shifted when she tore her ACL, leading her to take an unexpected gap year. Taking this in stride she decided to focus on her applications and accept the Postgraduate Assistant position in the President's Office for a one-year term, an opportunity that ultimately became a transformative experience. As a first-generation college student, she gained valuable insight into the inner workings of higher education, learning what it takes to run a university while building meaningful connections with faculty, staff, and leadership. Her work in the President's Office allowed her to "look behind the curtain," developing skills and perspectives that extend far beyond the classroom.

We are very proud and excited for Olivia! We wish her well in her future endeavors!

International Studies

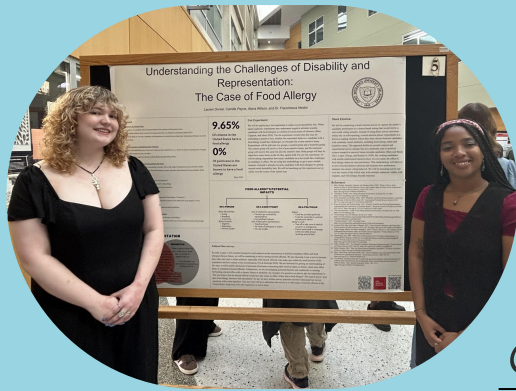
An international studies major at Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU) offers a comprehensive curriculum that covers global issues, international economics, and international politics. Students are encouraged to study at least one foreign language and spend at least one semester studying or interning abroad. The program also provides an integrative senior seminar to tie everything together. Graduates of the program can pursue various career paths, including graduate programs in international affairs, international business, and area studies. Additionally, the major provides students with solid liberal arts skills useful in most professions, as well as specialized language and knowledge desirable for a career in international fields. The diverse and interdisciplinary nature of the major equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in an increasingly globalized world. If you are interested in this program, please contact Dr. James Franklin (jcfranklin@owu.edu).

East Asian Studies

The East Asian Studies program aims to give you a broad perspective of East Asia (particularly Japan, Korea, and China). To achieve this goal, the program adopts an interdisciplinary approach including studies in politics & government, economics, history, religion, sociology & anthropology, and foreign languages. You benefit from the variety of perspectives and expertise that faculty from different departments bring to their classrooms. You may choose to focus on one particular East Asian country. As a major, study abroad will be required, so you will be able to apply your studies in a culturally immersive experience. In addition to study abroad, Theory-to-Practice grants and Travel-Learning courses are great opportunities for research, travel, or internships in an East Asian country. Students have gone to Japan, South Korea, China, and Taiwan. If you are interested in this program, contact Prof. Ji Young Choi (jiychoi@owu.edu).

ON AND OFF CAMPUS OPPORTUNITIES...

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES



SSRP - Dr. Nestor *UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES OF DISABILITY AND REPRESENTATION: THE CASE OF FOOD ALLERGY*

Dr. Nestor's SSRP students, Lauren Dorsel, Camille Payne, and Alana Wilson, presented their research with Dr. Nestor in September, after which they joined students Caroline O'Malley and Kiki Russell to work on updating congressional committee data. All five students are subsequently attending the Midwest Political Science Association conference in April to present on both projects. This research will continue into the 2026-2027 school year with another SSRP this summer.

2026 CSPC Presidential Fellow



This spring semester, Vincent Sack '27 traveled to Washington D.C. to attend a conference, where he learned about the modern American political climate and to present his research paper, "How the Media Portrays Assassination Attempts Against American Presidents."



SSRP - Dr. Franklin *ANALYZING OPPRESSION AND POLITICAL REPRESSION WITH NEW GLOBAL INDICATORS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS*

Dr. Franklin's SSRP students, Emily Kocel and Shannon O' Malley, presented their research with Dr. Franklin in March at the International Studies Association conference in Columbus, Ohio. The students, both International Studies majors, collaborated with Dr. Franklin on a paper, "Analyzing Oppression and Political Repression with New Global Indicators of Human Rights Violations"

Scan here to learn more about Dr. Franklin's research with students



AWARDS & PI SIGMA ALPHA

At the 2025-2026 end of the year celebration, awards ceremony, and Pi Sigma Alpha new member inductions, the evening started with the 12 new members being inducted Pi Sigma Alpha Upsilon Chapter. Congratulations to **Caroline R. Anderson, Kyle G. Barnes, Madinah N. Bintshahiydullah Binraymond, Candace M. Bowman, Caitlin O. Calvin, Reagan M. Davis, Matthew W. Higgins, Anastasiia Hnidets, Ella H. Holtsberry, Isabel D. Milner, Payton E. Mindel, Adam R. Walker**. The department also recognized Dr. William Louthan for his 50 years of service as the faculty advisor for OWU's chapter.

The department also thanked the current PG student board (**Madinah Binraymond, Lauren Dorsel, Max Fossaceca, Isaac Nichol, Vincent Sack II, Hayley Sanders**) for their service this year and welcomed the members joining the PG board for the 2026-2027 academic year (**Araceli Allo, Anaya Belle, MiKayla Boyd, Hailey Harris**) joining returning board members **Madinah Binraymond, Isaac Nichol, and Vincent Sack II**. Senior Moot Court cords were also given to those seniors who participated in Moot Court during their time at OWU. During this evening, the PG and Pre-Law graduating seniors were also recognized.

The Department of Politics and Government presented the two annual departmental awards, the Earl E. Warner Award for Academic Excellence and the James J. Hearn Award for Community Service. The winner of the **James J. Hearn Award for Community Service** was **Gabriela Gonzalez Duarte** and the **Earl E. Warner Award for Academic Excellence** was awarded to **Kaylen Brandt**. Congratulations to all on a great year!



Pictured from left to right: Dr. Louthan, Adam Walker, Ella Holtsberry, Reagan Davis, Anastasiia Hnidets, Caroline Anderson, Candace Bowman



James J. Hearn Award for Community Service
Gabriela Gonzalez Duarte

Scan here for more information about departmental awards.



Pi Sigma Alpha is the national political science honorary. The Upsilon Chapter at OWU was established in 1934 by none other than Ben Arneson himself. Membership is highly prestigious. Graduate schools, law schools, and prospective employers are very pleased to find membership in Pi Sigma Alpha on an applicant's resume and the society offers competitive scholarships for graduate study!

OWU ALUMNI UPDATES



<p>Sue E. Hughes (1951) Horse Show Judge & Dressage Instructor, Plymouth, MI</p>	<p>Trevor G. McKenzie (1981) MBA Finance, Self Employed, Think & Profit Consulting Inc., New Kensington, PA</p>	<p>Rayna Kessler (2005) JD, Partner, Robins Kaplan LLP, Miami Beach FL</p>
<p>Russell B. Geiger Jr. (1953) Retired</p>	<p>Tom Edmonds (1983) JD, Senior Litigation Counsel, AUSA, US Dept of Justice</p>	<p>Jeff Van Schaick (2006) MBA, Jaguar Transport Holdings, SVP External Relations, Aurora, CO</p>
<p>John P. Entelis (1964) MA, PhD Professor Emeritus, Political Science, Fordham University, River Edge, NJ</p>	<p>Paul McManus (1991) MBA, First State Trust Company Managing Director, New Canaan, CT</p>	<p>Britt Born (2006) JD (Ohio Bar 2014), Hamilton County Juvenile Court, Project Manager/Staff Attorney, Cincinnati, OH</p>
<p>John F. (Fred) Down (1968) MA (Political Science), MBA (Finance), Retired, Scottsville, VA</p>	<p>Evelyn (Jones) Walter (1991) M.Ed, Founder & Coach, Next Up Leadership Group, Broomfield, CO</p>	<p>Brent Perrin (2007) Political Appointee, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC</p>
<p>Bonny O'Neil (1969) Retired</p>	<p>Evan Haim (1994) JD (2002), General Counsel, Chicago Fire Department, City of Chicago, Chicago, IL</p>	<p>Beth Schopis (2007) JP Morgan - VP</p>
<p>Sanford "Pete" Lee (1970) JD, Retired Colorado State Senator, Colorado Springs, CO</p>	<p>J. Leon Smith (1995) JD, Executive Director, Citizens for Juvenile Justice, South Weymouth, MA</p>	<p>Callahan "Callie" Seltzer (2007) MA, MA (City Planning), Division Director, Real Estate & Community Development Finance, Fairfax County, Washington DC</p>
<p>Bill McDonough (1974), Columbus, OH</p>	<p>Carrie Wilkie (2001) MA, MLIS, Rewild Safaris, Private Safari Consultant, Yardley, PA</p>	<p>Matthew Laferty (2008) MA of Divinity, Director, Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome, Roma, Italy</p>
<p>Susan Bottiggi (1975) MBA, Retired, Formerly with PNC Bank, Market Exec., Wealth Management, Alexandria, OH</p>	<p>Dana Roxana Bucin (2002) JD (Law) in International Law, Murtha Cullina LLP, Partner, Chair of Immigration Practice, DEI Chair, Portland, CT</p>	<p>Shannon (Hopkins) Pitorak (2008) MA of Divinity (MTSO 2019), MA of Social Justice (MTSO 2026)</p>
<p>Anne Kleindienst (1976) JD (1979), Retired in FA23 after 44 years in private law practice, Phoenix, AZ</p>	<p>Blake McDonald (2004) Associate Director, Government Affairs, Zimmer Biomet</p>	<p>Matt Weisman (2009) JD, Attorney, Rumizen & Weisman Co., Ltd., Solon, OH</p>
<p>Paul Eddy (1977) JD University of Connecticut, School of Law, Retired Sr. VP & Group General Council, The Travelers Insurance Co., Essex CT</p>	<p>Courtney (Cook) Scheff (2004) JD, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office, North Royalton, OH</p>	<p>James J. Walsh, Jr. (2010) JD, MA, Partner, Benesch, Westlake, Ohio</p>

<p>Erin Fleck (2011) US Naval War College, Defense & Foreign Policy, US Senate, Communications</p>	<p>Jake Chernoff (2018) Project Shema, Program Coordinator, Chicago, IL</p>	<p>Callia Barwick (2024) MA in Public Administration & Policy Former Student Services Contractor for EPA, Audit Support Staff for Office of Research & Development within the EPA, Washington D.C.</p>
<p>Allison (Boyd) Stevens (2011) MA, Public Administration Research Analyst, KY Legislative Research Commission, Office of Education Accountability</p>	<p>Kaden Vaughn Thompson (2018) Doctor of Pharmacy, Pharmacist in Charge, Publx Pharmacy</p>	
<p>James Murphy (2017) Executive Director, Travis County Democratic Party</p>	<p>Avery Newcom (2023) JD Candidate, Judicial Intern, Colorado Public Defenders, Ithaca, NY</p>	



The department would love to hear from you! We have passed your words of wisdom on to our current students in the Spring 2026 PG Newsletter. Thank you for filling out and updating your information either on the paper copy and sending it to the Politics & Government Department or by updating your information in the [google form](#). This information was updated from submissions from Spring 2025 to April 2026.

Please mail to:
PG Alumni News
Elliott Hall 205
Ohio Wesleyan University
61 S. Sandusky Street
Delaware, OH 43015



Scan the QR code to go directly to the online form.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

We need your help! Please fill out the following information sheet to help the Politics and Government Department keep track of its alums. Any information you could provide is valuable and allows us to continue to update you on department and other alumni news. You may also send your resume as a supplement to this form. Thank you! Please circle the following concerning your information:

o **YES**, I give the Politics and Government Department permission to use this information in future newsletters, on the web page, etc.

o **YES**, I give the Politics and Government Department permission to use this information, but **I wish to remain anonymous** (i.e. we may publish your information without using your name).

o **NO**, please do not publish this information.



Scan the QR code to go directly to the online form.

Name: _____

Maiden Name (if applicable): _____

Class: _____

Street Address: _____

Email: _____

Postgraduate Degree(s): _____

Institution: _____

Present Employer: _____

Position: _____

How did your course work, internships, and other experiential learning experiences as an undergraduate at Ohio Wesleyan help to shape your subsequent postgraduate education choices, career development and participation in civic and political affairs? Please be specific.

Please mail to: PG Alumni News, Elliott Hall 205, Ohio Wesleyan University, 61 S. Sandusky Street, Delaware, OH 43015

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