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ASDU presidents thrive as McCarthy Fellowship interns

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ASDU presidents thrive as McCarthy Fellowship interns

As a McCarthy Fellowship interns worked this summer Navi Dhaliwal '16 and Kevin Sunga '15 applied their Dominican experiences toward shaping their future goals in politics and policy making.

With the help of Alison Howard, chair of the [Department of Political Science and International Studies](#), and professor Gigi Gokcek in the [School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences](#), Navi concentrated on current events and analyzed policies of the past to understand and appreciate the impact and importance of government at the local level. She worked in the Office of California State Senator Jerry Hill.

“The whole point of policy is to be effective and implement change. That’s something I learned because you have to recognize the past to really make that change for the future,” Navi says. “That’s a great lesson I have learned at Dominican.”

Navi is eager to contribute ideas at Dominican. Hours after completing her three-month internship with Senator Hill on August 14, Navi drove straight to San Rafael to join Lauren Castro, director of student activities and leadership in [Student Life](#), and serve as a mentor in Orientation training. Navi also is preparing to lead as the new president of [Associated Students of Dominican University](#) (ASDU), replacing Kevin Sunga in that position.

“Navi’s desire to get involved and engage with other students at Dominican is evidenced by the fact that she also served as the junior class representative for ASDU this past year,” Dr. Gokcek says. “She told me that it gives her immense pleasure to represent her peers, giving them a voice on a variety of campus issues.”

Gokcek realized Navi’s passion and potential for Political Science and Howard recommended she apply in the first year that Dominican has participated in the USF McCarthy Fellowship. Sunga, who earned his Bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Government in May, also was selected from Dominican. He was a policy analyst intern for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. While Kevin, who was working on the Ad-Hoc's Integrated Care Committee and is considering pursuing his Masters in Public Health or Public Policy, Navi contributed a [blog](#) during her stay in Senator Hill’s District 13 office at the Capitol.

“It is very important for students to have opportunities to apply what they have been learning and one of the best places is in the state legislature,” Howard says. “Navi is an ideal student for this program because she has a genuine interest in and curiosity about how ‘politics’ works and constantly seeks out ways to apply what she has been learning. I have no doubt that her summer in Sacramento has reinforced her enthusiasm for how she can make a difference in her community.”

In Senator Hill’s office, Navi had daily contact with constituents, edited bills, worked on talking points and was involved in, in her words, “an immense amount of research.”

“Everything we learn and talk about is very broad and on the large scale. What I’ve learned in this fellowship is to really dial it down and look at what’s happening around us,” Navi says. “We tend to focus on the large scale of things and I think it’s those practical, simple, close-to-home situations that really do make who we are and will be in the future. I’ve come to appreciate the smaller scope and the impact that has on my life.”

Navi, who has developed an interest in domestic policy issues regarding cyber warfare and cyber security, is already considering graduate schools and pursuing her master’s degree in public policy. She also is in the process of working toward a minor in environmental science. She has plenty of options.

“I’m thankful for it because Dominican provided them to me,” Navi says.