

JALEN WARD, MA

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Education

University of California, Davis

Davis, CA

Ph.D. in Political Science, Department of Political Science (POL)

In Progress

Provost Fellow in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

California State University, Fullerton

Fullerton, CA

M.A. in Political Science, Division of Politics, Administration, and Justice (PAJ)

August 2021 – May 2023

Thesis: "Political Applications of Agnotology and Constructed Ignorance"

Advisor: [Dr. Brian Lovato](#) Committee Members: [Dr. David Traven](#), [Dr. Scott Spitzer](#)

California State University, Fullerton

Fullerton, CA

B.S. in Psychology, Department of Psychology (PSYC)

August 2018 – May 2020

Undergraduate Project: "Re-examining the HIV+ Stigma: Structuration Approach as a Framework to Social Stigma"

Minored in Political Science (POSC)

Irvine Valley College

Irvine, CA

A.A. in Psychology, Teacher Education, Natural Science & Mathematics

August 2015 – May 2018

Research Interests

Political Communication, Race and Ethnic Politics, Political Psychology, Political Epistemology and Ignorance, Health Politics and Policy, Agnotology, Misinformation, Conspiracy Theories, Health Economics, American Parties

Professional Experience

UC Davis Graduate Student Association

Davis, CA

Office of the External Vice President

October 2024 – Present

[Legislative Affairs Director – State and Federal Policy](#)

- Co-lead advocacy efforts in service of the GSA membership for the Sacramento and Washington D.C. events alongside the EVP
- Create and produce informative content such as one-pagers and newsletters detailing pertinent policy within the California Legislature and US Congress for GSA members, GCR teams, and UCGPC
- Work alongside UCOP External Relations offices and community agencies to formulate advocacy strategies

Excelera Health (via MacArthur Court Acquisition Company)

Newport Beach, CA

General Counsel for Managed Care Operations and Compliance

November 2021 – February 2024

[Senior Corporate Development Analyst](#)

- Aided in the public company readiness of a health technology startup with a \$300MM valuation and multiple Medicare contracts in both Fee-For-Service and Medicare Advantage models
- Manage the corporate insurance portfolios and auditing schedules of five entities

- Construct and implement managed healthcare workflows within the CMS Innovation Center's MA HMO, GPDC, MSSP, and ACO REACH models
- Work with government agencies like Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC)

Connected Care Health Services (Subsidiary)

Newport Beach, CA

Finance & Enrollments and Eligibility Department

April 2020 – November 2021

Finance Project Analyst/Interim Project Manager

- Led as Interim Manager for MAPD Enrollments and Eligibility Dept and Prescription Drug Reconciliation
- Ran "The Golden Gazette," a quarterly member-facing newsletter on navigating Medicare Advantage and elderly health behavior, alongside the Marketing Director
- Served on the Social Analysis & Minority Health Team and developed a Medicare SDOH Program and CRCCP
- Worked alongside the CFO and Health Plan Pharmacist on MAPD Financial Operations, including PBM Auditing, Plan-to-Plan Part D Payment Reconciliation, and Financial Information Reporting (FIR & Nx) transactions

Radiant Health Centers

Irvine, CA

Under the Services Lead, Tammy Nguyen

August 2019 – February 2020

Facility Intern

- Booth and advocate on behalf of Radiant Health to provide the public with accurate information about HIV/AIDS at corporations, churches, health fairs, and other community events.
- Recognized in the Open Door OC Black Community Heroes for excellence in care delivery and HIV/PLWHIV & LGBTQ+ health advocacy in policy and community networking

Teaching Experience

University of California, Davis

Davis, CA

Department of Political Science

September 2023 – Present

Teaching Assistant

Supervisor(s): Dr. Mark Verbitsky, Dr. McCage Griffiths, Dr. Daniel Kono

- Responsible for exam preparation, writing workshops, and grading for a class of 120+ major-track students
- Developed an Excel-based grading method that automated student roster management, tracked non-submissions, and integrated participation scoring with Canvas SpeedGrader through CSV import/export.

UC Center Sacramento

Sacramento, CA

UCCS Academic Team

June 2025 – August 2025

Teaching Assistant

Supervisor(s): Dr. Jordan Kujala, Cindy Simmons

- Aid in the development of student-led policy research projects analyzing aspects of California politics, governance, and legislature

California State University, Fullerton

Fullerton, CA

Division of Politics, Administration, and Justice

August 2021 – June 2023

GSA/Teaching Assistant

Supervisor(s): Dr. Robert Castro, Dr. Brian Lovato, Dr. Merriam Doucette

- Create engaging course content for undergraduate students in the PAJ Department
- Collaborate with full-time faculty and professors to address student academic needs
- Lectured Topics: CA 2021 Recall Election, Financial Incentive within Interest Groups & Parties, De Facto and De Jure Policy Diffusion during the Civil Rights Movement, Confirmation Process of a SCOTUS Nominee, and History of American Parties

California State University, Fullerton*Division of Politics, Administration, and Justice***Academic Advisor**

Supervisor: Dr. Matthew Jarvis

- Advise current and prospective undergraduate students enrolled in any of the nine degrees offered within the PAJ Department
- Train and onboard incoming graduate advisors

Fullerton, CA

January 2022 – June 2023

Research Experience

California State University, Fullerton*Department of Political Science (POSC)***Master's Thesis – POSC 498***Examining Agnotology within Platonian and Machiavellian philosophy, Arendtian Phenomenology, Public Health & Business, the Nixon Presidency, and Nuclear Epistemology***Fullerton, CA**

August 2022 – June 2023

Excelera Health*Quality Department***Population Health Program Developer**

Advisor/Supervisor: Dr. Diane Pham, CQO & Monique Patil, MPH

Projects:

- Develop a Health Equity Plan, Patient Demographic Data Reporting Program, and Social Determinants of Health Program for an ACO REACH of 20,000+ beneficiaries

Newport Beach, CA

July 2022 – January 2023

Connected Care Health Services*Finance Department (in conjunction with Discovery Genomics)***Cost Control & Program Developer**

Advisor/Supervisor: Holly Brenier, CFO & Dr. Brian James, CSO

Project/s:

- Ran cost analyses and program evaluations on a Medicare Advantage HMO Colorectal Cancer Screening & Control program
- Research findings resulted in an optimization of internal care delivery workflows, cutting program costs by 82% and expanding reach within the denominator population by 93%

Newport Beach, CA

September 2020 – December 2021

Papers & Projects

Corporate White Papers

Ward, J., "dxCOVID: A Framework for Comprehensive Pandemic Testing" Connected Care Health Services & Discovery Genomics, Inc, Nov 2020.

Ward, J., "The Fault in Our Stars: CMS's Star Rating System and How COVID-19 Will Affect Health Plans in 2021" Connected Care Health Services, May 2020.

Undergraduate Capstone Research Projects

Ward, J., "Coattails Effect in the 2016 Presidential Election: The Impact of Presidential Candidate Likeability on Down-Ballot Voting" POSC 401, Dec 2019.

Ward, J., "Political Perception and Cognition: Prediction of Illusory Correlation and Political Ideology as a Social Category" PSYC 305, May 2019.

Ward, J., "Perceived Prejudice: Political Ideology, Implicit Bias, and Negative Preferential Consumption" PSYC 2, May 2018.

Posters & Presentations

Poster Presentation, "Post-Truth Pandemic: Agnotology and Epistemic Sources within Political Science and Public Health," HSS Student Research Symposium, April 7, 2022.

Poster Presentation, "What Do We Owe Each Other: Society, Aesthetics, and the White Moderate on Black Issues," HSS Student Research Symposium, April 7, 2022.

Presentation, Ward, J., "The Actor and the Audience: The Consummation of Political Freedom through Arendt, Veblen, and the Athenians," POSC 541, May 2022.

Presentation, Ward, J., "The Political Influences on the Implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," POSC 528, May 2022.

Presentation, Ward, J., "The Art of Revenge, Discourse, and Secrecy: Russian Revanchism & Irredentism," POSC 551, May 2022.

Presentation, Ward, J., "Critique on Marxist Theory of Teleology: Negro Exclusion and Expendability," POSC 340, May 2020.

Honors & Awards

APSA Political Communications Section Spark Award (\$600) 2025

APSA Health Policy & Policy Section Travel Grant (\$300) 2025

UC Davis Political Science Summer 2025 Fellowship (\$6,000) 2025

UC Davis Political Science Summer 2024 Fellowship (\$5,000) 2024

UC Davis Fall 2023 Graduate Student Fellowship (\$5,000) 2023

California State University Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) Fellow 2023

The Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) is designed to support doctoral students who demonstrate promise as CSU faculty. Fellows utilize grant funds to further their doctoral training and to attend professional conferences and workshops that can enhance their professional development. The goal of the grants is to support fellows by awarding them seed funds to enhance their skills and experience to teach a diverse student body at the CSU.

UC Davis Provost's Fellowship in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (\$51,178.17) 2023

The UC Davis Provost's Fellowship is an initiative that distributes funding to competitive first-year Ph.D. students chosen based on academic performance within their programs of study. Funding aims to help the graduate recipients focus more on their coursework and research goals by relieving them of teaching assistant duties.

CSU Fullerton PAJ Division Outstanding MA Student in Political Science Award (Certificate of Recognition) 2023

This award is given to one student per academic year whose overall academic performance, including grades and performance on the written and oral exams, distinguishes them as academically outstanding. The student is

nominated and selected upon the advice of Political Science faculty serving on student graduate committees and the program adviser.

APSA Diversity Fellowship (\$5,000)

2022

A fellowship competition sponsored by the American Political Science Association for APSA members from underrepresented backgrounds applying to or in the early stages of doctoral programs in political science.

CSU Fullerton Pa'lante Fellowship (\$1,000)

2022

A fellowship program that builds a network of social support, faculty mentoring, and research co-curriculars for current graduate students. Part of Project upGRADS and funded under the U.S. Dept. of Education's Title V, pt. B, PPOHA program.

CSU Fullerton Graduate Equity Fellowship (\$1,000)

2022

A fellowship program seeking to increase the diversity of students completing graduate degree programs at the CSU, encouraging continuation toward doctoral programs, and promoting consideration of university faculty careers.

USC POIR Pre-Doctoral Institute for First-Gen Scholars of Color Fellowship

2022

A fellowship institute targeted towards first-generation and minority graduate students interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in political science.

CSU Fullerton Project upGRADS META Scholar (\$100 academic stipend)

2021

Master's Early Transition & Access Summer Bridge Program is a summer bridge program to support underrepresented graduate students by providing discipline-based workshops on graduate writing and research.

Orange County Black Community Heroes

2020

For excellence in volunteering and HIV/PLWHIV & LGBTQ+ health advocacy in policy and community networking on behalf of Radiant Health Clinic.

Professional Memberships

Southern Political Science Association, 2025 – Present

Midwest Political Science Association, 2024 – Present

International Political Science Association, 2022 – Present

American Political Science Association, 2020 – Present

- American Political Science Association Diversity Fellow, Fall 2023

Pi Sigma Alpha Honors Society, 2020 – Present

- Chapter activity organizer during the 13th straight award year for the Epsilon Eta Chapter at CSU Fullerton
- Serving as Secretary-Treasurer of the CSUF Chapter for the 2022-2023 academic year
- Led the creation and development of two campus fellowship programs targeting student scholars in the department IHO of retiring professor and advisor Dr. Valerie O'Regan
- Established the Programs Committee to oversee fellowship programming

American Psychological Association, 2019 – 2022

Academic & Community Involvement

President (2025), Vice President (2024 – 2025), Social Coordinator (2023 – 2024)

Graduate Association of Political Science Students (GAPSS) UC Davis, August 2023 - Present

- Lead departmental RSO operations in collaboration with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and Department Co-Chairs, overseeing programming, budgeting, advocacy, and graduate engagement efforts

- Led a crowdfunding campaign during the UC Davis DEVAR 25-26 cohort to support RSO initiatives
- Secured a total of \$2,800 in awarded grant funding for GAPSS

Graduate Student Coordinator

UC Davis Political Science Research Workshop, August 2025 – Present

- Organized the recurring workshop series which features job market talks and research presentations
- Coordinated room scheduling, presenter engagement, and department-wide announcements

Graduate Student Representative

University of California Academic Senate – Committee on Coordinating Graduate Affairs, August 2025 – Present

UC Davis Academic Senate – Academic Planning and Development Subcommittee, August 2024 - Present

- Attend monthly committee meetings and collaborate with faculty members and Lead Analyst Kelly Adams, PhD
- Respond to RFCs by commenting on systemwide and local policies and new degree proposals
- Report back to the Graduate Assembly each quarter with a summary of committee agenda items

University of California Office of the President – Academic Planning Council, August 2024 – June 2025

- Contributed to discussions on broad academic policies and initiatives with multi-campus and systemwide impacts.
- Ensured graduate student perspectives were included in systemwide academic planning and policy formulation

Event Coordinator & Host

“All Politics is Local,” a speaker series by Pi Sigma Alpha, 2022

- Moderated a speaker event with invited speakers Raphael J. Sonenshein, Executive Director of the Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs at Cal State Los Angeles, and Jodi Balma of Fullerton College

Moderator

Annual CSUF Political Town Hall Conference, 2022

- Moderated undergraduate policy research groups along with Buena Park Council Member Conner Traut
- Discussed the role of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in providing health care services and policy rollouts during the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency

Health Conference Ambassador

OC Free Health Fair, 2019

- Represented and spoke on behalf of Radiant Health and RADAR at the 2019 OC Free Health Fair in Fountain Valley, CA.

Computer Skills

Project Management for administrative process, mergers, go-lives, and vendor onboarding

Software and application experience in data validation, network analysis auditing, workflow and operations development

Statistical Analysis & Research comprehension in statistical methods and research methodologies for social science

Programming: SPSS, R, Python, SQL (novice)

Applications: Power BI, SAP, Canva, Microsoft Office, G Suite, ClientTrack, EZCAP, Epic EHR Systems