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Ben Nunn

Political Science BA (2008)

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Where are you working now and what are you doing?

I am working as a Consultant for the public affairs consultancy MHP Communications. I specialise in their health practice, working with clients from across the voluntary, public and private sector to provide them with strategic policy advice and to positively influence government policy.

How has your career developed since graduating from the University of Birmingham?

Before graduating I knew I wanted to work in politics. I started off doing a three month internship in the Policy and Research Unit of the children's charity Barnardo's doing policy research and organising campaign events.

I then went on to work for a Labour Member of Parliament in Westminster as their Parliamentary Researcher until the General Election. Working in the House of Commons gave me a greater insight to the workings of government and gave me the opportunity to work in the heart of British politics during a really interesting time. A cliché, but working in the House of Commons never got old – going down an escalator with the Prime Minister or watching a Cabinet Minister trip over a bucket is something you never forget!

After nearly two years in Westminster and working on the General Election campaign I began working for MHP Communications in September 2010 and have been there since.

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

I really do love my job and the huge variation in the work that comes with it. From setting up meetings with government ministers to drafting election manifestos, everyday I have the opportunity to use the skills I learnt while at university and help to improve the profile of clients with government. I am also hugely privileged to have colleagues who are some of the best in their fields and are a real support and great fun.

Why did you originally apply to do your course at Birmingham?

For me, it was the campus. Before I applied, and with some influence from my parents, my impressions of Birmingham were of a concrete jungle in the middle of England. However, on visiting the university, I was certain it was the place I wanted to go.

There is a great atmosphere around the campus and Birmingham, as a city, is fantastic. On top of this, the POLSIS department is really well established and has a great course to offer.

What did you think were the best points of the course and the University?

Birmingham was a fantastic place to spend my three years as a student. On the one hand you have the amazing social life, a great city, and a brilliant university; on the other hand you have a challenging and interesting course.

Did you find your degree at Birmingham challenging or easy?

Nothing during the course was easy – be that 9am lectures or the amount of coursework and difficult deadlines. However, the benefit of the course was the fact that it was challenging and it really did put me in good stead once I left.

What advice would you give to current students?

Plan early. Everyone says it, and it's true, but while three years feels like a really long time when you first become a student, you will not believe how fast it flies. Make sure you start thinking about where you want to go afterwards early on.

One of the really important things to do is to get some good experience under your belt before leaving – whether that is doing canvassing for a local political party or doing an internship during the holidays. It can be a challenge when trying to balance university work, but it does pay off in the long-run.

It is also important that you do the modules and the dissertation you want to do, rather than the ones you think you should do. You're going to spend three years doing this stuff and you're not always going to love it, so make sure you are at least interested in it!

What are your plans for your future career?

I know I want to stay working in politics and in the sort of sector that I am in at the moment. Politics is a large industry and I would like to go back to the charity sector and possibly working in Westminster again at some point.

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