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Patrick Stupfel soars in Salem intern role

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Seven PCC students are working as interns for various state legislators in Salem this session. The internships, established by the college to give interested students experience in government, are helping to broaden their skill sets as well as build awareness of the college with state leaders. Below is a profile of one of the interesting interns.

Patrick Stupfel

Age: 20.

Area of Study: Political science, law and business with hopes to attend law school, or become a professional voice actor.

Campus: Southeast Center/Cascade Campus.

Hometown: Southeast Portland.

Who are you an intern for and what are the things you do for them?

I am currently interning for State Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer who represents House District 46 which covers parts of Northeast and Southeast Portland. I love working for Alissa's office because they have me doing all sorts of exciting things; there really is no typical day at the Capitol. A large portion of what I do is constituent outreach. We highly value the ideas and voices of the district that Rep. Keny-Guyer represents, so I am frequently responding to emails, phone messages, processing meeting requests and coordinating community meetings. I also take part in meetings with constituents and lobbyists to take notes and learn how to effectively engage our representatives on a wide range of issues.

How are you liking the experience and what is your favorite part of the job?

I absolutely love this experience because I don't just learn how the the political arena works; I get to meet with all sorts of interesting people from a wide range of professions. It is a learning experience that I wouldn't trade for the world. One moment I could be learning about national security from a Commanding General, and the next minute I would be speaking with a major pharmaceutical company about the latest scientific breakthroughs in medicine. There is really no predicting what I will learn from the next person I meet and I think that is the truly fantastic part about this internship.

How will you use this experience for either your education or for your future career?

I have a strong interest in government, law and public policy, so this internship has provided me with a first rate experience that would directly relate to those fields. No matter what career I end up in, I have learned how to effectively engage with people on a personal yet professional level. Even people going into construction should learn how to engage other professionals because in today's 21st century world business is growing rapidly more competitive so it is crucial to have as many skills as possible. Communication is key in every aspect of life. I have learned how to build strong/meaningful relationships with professionals from all kinds of fields through this internship. Building professional relationships and knowing how I can be of service to others is a skill that will serve me not only in law and politics, but it will help me in every aspect of life. I plan to keep expanding on my professional development so I can face the business world with a sense of direction. Having a foundation of professionals that are willing to help me grow is a huge asset as well.

How did you hear about this opportunity, and why did you apply for it?

I heard about the internship when my Future Connect College Success Coach Jose Esparza reached out to me because he knew that this was a field of particular interest to me. The Future Connect Scholarship Program is a revolutionary program that was started with Portland Mayor Sam Adams and PCC. They wanted to provide

first-generation college students and low income families with an opportunity to get a degree, while eliminating barriers that would otherwise prevent students from having access to a college education. Future Connect not only provides students with some financial assistance, but they match each student with a college success coach, who helps each student navigate the tough barriers to their education and make sure that they are doing well in college. Jose reached out to me because he knew of my current involvement on the Multnomah Youth Commission, which is the official youth policy body for the City of Portland and Multnomah County. My fellow Youth Commissioners have been actively engaged with the commission of matters regarding education equity. The MYC advises local governmental officials on the ideas and issues youth in Multnomah County face today. Because of my passion for service and public policy, Jose connected me with this internship. I can't thank Jose enough for all of his dedication and support, not only for me, but all of the other Future Connect students he helps.

This seems very personal to you. Why is that?

The reason why this is so significant to me is because I used to be a high school drop out in 2010 with only five high school credits as a senior. Once I realized I had hit rock bottom I had a revelation and was inspired to change my life for the better and so I did. In July of 2010, I enrolled in a military high school in Bend, Oregon called the Oregon Youth Challenge Program. I was there for six months and gained 10 high school credits. That program gave me the self confidence and motivation to return to my school district, and not only graduate high school, but I graduated at the top of my class. I was also a member of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, a group of students that represented the views of students across the district and brought their views directly to PPS Superintendent Carole Smith. I was humbled to serve on that council, and all the other committees that I would later be a part of, because I had literally come from nothing and made the choice to be the best that I could be.

You're friends and family must surely be proud?

Now that I am interning in the State Legislature, people that have known me for years are so proud and impressed at the personal success I continue to achieve. I will always be looking for the next opportunity to help disengaged students because I know what is like to be at rock bottom and sometimes all it takes is someone to help pull you up.

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