

 University of
Pittsburgh | Greensburg
Alumni Spotlight — The 2010's



Alumni Spotlight: Jason Atwood '11

Jason Atwood graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2011 with a BA in Political Science. Read more about his life during, and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was...the location as a commuter student.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was... the campus was beautiful and quiet.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was...being active in Student Government.

The faculty member(s) who had the greatest influence on me was/were...Dr. Manning, Dr. Poke, Dr. Kelly, and Parris Carter.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to...the corporate world.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association/staying connected to the University is...I want current students to have a great experience like I did.

In my spare time, I like to...spend time with my family and volunteer at Calvary Church in Irwin, PA.

My family/friends are ... the most important thing in my life. They make me want to be a better man. I met my wife, Heather (Waldrop), in Dr. Kelly's Comp 3 class during my second tenure at Pitt-Greensburg. We were married in September of 2013 and had our son Maxamiel in January of 2015.

Tell us something we didn't ask...I ran for Westmoreland County Commissioner in 2015. You may see my name come up again in political races in the future.



Alumni Spotlight: Courtney Brant '17

Courtney Brant graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2017 with a BS in Management.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

I had always wanted to attend The University of Pittsburgh. I realized in high school that the Oakland campus was a little much for me because my graduating class was not that big. Pitt-Greensburg was only a short drive from my house, but it let me have that “true college experience.”

Were you a commuter or a resident?

Resident

What activities were you involved with as a student?

SAB President 2014-2015, SAB General Member 2012-2017, SAB TNDR 2013-2014, SAB Weekends Chair 2013, Village Senate 2015-2017, Bowling Club 2016-2017

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

During my time at Pitt-Greensburg, I worked very closely with Al Thiel while I was in SAB. He was such an awesome mentor and advisor, and he really allowed me to show my true colors.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take? Who taught the class? Why would you recommend it?

Personal Financial Planning with Sharon Turchick. I wasn't able to take a class like that in high school, and Professor Turchick was such a great person to instruct it. I'd recommend that class to anyone, regardless if they took something similar in high school!

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

I remember meeting my best friend in 2013. She lived in Athens House, and I was in Apollo House. She transferred to WVU for pharmacy, and left Pitt-Greensburg, but we stayed in contact. She's getting married in May 2021, and I will be in her wedding as a bridesmaid!

What have you been up to since graduation?

I am currently working for the University (H2P!) in Oakland in Radiation Safety as a department administrator. It will be 3 years for me in August!

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college? I believe all of my leadership positions I held at Pitt-Greensburg helped me in the person I've become. Al and Sheila were awesome advisors, and I can't thank them enough for making me into that person.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I like to attend the off/on campus alumni events. My sister will be attending Pitt-Greensburg this fall, and I, as an alumni, hope that she'll ask me questions about how to get involved and what classes to take.

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Don't give up if something doesn't go your way. Take life one step at a time, and make the best of whatever situation gets thrown at you. Allow yourself to try new things, and meet new people. Your best friend may in fact be a future roommate!

For fun:

What is your favorite food?

Sushi

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. I've been bowling since I was 4 years old (I'll be 26 in July).
 2. My high game is a 290.
 3. My high series is an 826.
-



Alumni Spotlight: Carrie Bush '14

Carrie Bush graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2014 with a BA in Psychology. She also minored in History and earned a Children's Literature certificate. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The things that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg were ... how close the campus was to my home and how beautiful the campus was. Pitt-Greensburg was the only college that I applied to because I was determined to go there.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg ... the campus had so much to offer. I started out my freshmen year working in Student Services, so I was exposed to everything that the campus had to offer.

My favorite thing as a student was ... getting involved in Psi Chi, Commuter Mentor, and Peer Leading. All of these gave me experiences that made going to Pitt-Greensburg even more worthwhile. Peer Leading, especially, provided me with leadership experience, but it also allowed me to make many lifelong friends.

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were ... Dr. Maloy and Dr. Phillips. Both of these professors provided me with many skills that I still use in my everyday life. Dr. Maloy was my composition teacher. When I came into her class I thought that I knew a lot about writing. Little did I know, I had a lot more to learn. By my senior year of college, I felt that I had a great understanding of writing papers and using the correct grammar. Dr. Phillips was also a big influence on me while I was at Pitt-Greensburg. He provided me with the opportunity to work one-on-one with him and another fellow student to research. This was an eye opening experience for myself. I truly enjoyed the research aspect of Psychology.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... work at Today's Learning Childcare for almost a year. In April of 2015, I accepted a position at a local insurance agency, W.N. Tuscano Agency. I am now in the Personal Lines department. I have my Pennsylvania license in Property & Casualty and also Accident & Health.

My reason for staying connected to the University is ... that I enjoyed my time at Pitt-Greensburg, and wanted to give back to it. I want future students to enjoy Pitt-Greensburg as much as I enjoyed it.

In my spare time, I like to ... watch hockey. I am one of the biggest hockey fans that you will meet. I also enjoy just reading or spending time with my friends and family.

My friends and family are ... a large part of why I am where I'm at in my life. I was the first person in my immediate family to go to college and obtain a degree. This was a complete learning experience on everything dealing with college. I know that I made my family proud for sticking through it and obtaining my Bachelor's Degree.

Tell us something we didn't ask ... In May of 2016, I had the opportunity to run the relay for the Pittsburgh Marathon with my work. This was the first race that I competed in. It was a huge accomplishment to run 4.9 miles and finish my leg of the race.



Alumni Spotlight: Justin Cannalley '15

Justin Cannalley graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2015 with a BA in anthropology and a minor in history. Read more about his life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was... the distance from home. I wanted to become more independent; however, the deal breaker had to be the beauty of the campus.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was... this is going to be my home for the next four years.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was... working with Residence Life. Before becoming a CA, I was relatively shy, but it allowed me to meet people with the same interests and also allowed me to help direct those that were in the same shoes as me.

The staff members who had the greatest influence on me were... Brian Root and Troy Ross. Brian was the first person I interacted with on campus, and we instantly bonded. He started out as my direct RD my freshman year and my supervisor my sophomore year, but he became a dear friend. Troy was my Freshman Seminar instructor and later became my supervisor. I'll never forget when he showed up to our Hobgoblin Hikes event, and everyone thought he was a student.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to... serve with AmeriCorps in Park City, Utah as a construction crew leader with Habitat for Humanity and serve with AmeriCorps as a forestry technician in the Great Smokey Mountains. I now work with the Army Corps of Engineers.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association/staying connected to the University is...that I want to tell my story so that incoming students can experience the full experience of college and don't miss out on anything awesome.

In my spare time, I like to... hike, geocache, and watch football and hockey. I am a diehard Philadelphia fan and I'm proud of it. Go Eagles and Flyers!

My family and friends are... my support system. I tend to get lost in work at times, but they are always there to talk when the going gets tough.

Tell us something we didn't ask: I took advantage of Pitt-Greensburg's study abroad program twice while in school. I visited India my sophomore year and Australia/New Zealand my senior year. Both trips were eye openers for me.



Alumni Spotlight: Alicia DiPaolo '14

Alicia DiPaolo graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2014 with a BA in psychology and a BA in visual and performing arts (theatre concentration), and a minor in Spanish. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was...the atmosphere. The main reason I chose Pitt-Greensburg is because I could get to know my professors, and they could get to know me – I didn't want to be just one student out of thousands in a classroom.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was...the campus was beautiful, and the people were positive. Everyone was willing to help one another in their own journeys.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was...the opportunity with the Pitt Greensburg Media to travel to Honduras and film a documentary with UPMC and Shoulder to Shoulder. It was eye opening and expanded my cultural understanding, and it gave me the opportunity to educate others about the world.

The faculty member(s) who had the greatest influence on me was/were... are a group together in similar fields – Dr. Stephen Schrum, Dr. Amber McAllister, Professor Chris Bartley,

and Dr. John Prellwitz. They all helped me discover my skills and push myself further than I thought I could reach.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to...work at Excelsa Health in Human Resources as a Talent Acquisition Representative. I also continue my love of theatre and arts by participating in community theatre around the area, as well as take on the duties of secretary for the Greensburg Civic Theatre board. For some side projects, I still do some filming and editing for the Red Cross and the Blackburn Center.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association/staying connected to the University is...that I feel as though it's my turn to give back to the university and make the new students have an amazing time while they are at Pitt-Greensburg like the alumni before have done for me.

In my spare time, I like to...read, play video games, paint, and watch TV

My family/friends are...extremely supportive of me and everything that I choose to do.

Tell us something we didn't ask: I just recently went to Disney for the first time this past April, and it was amazing!



Alumni Spotlight: Joseph Ferrante '17

Joe Ferrante graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2017 with a BS in biological science and minors in chemistry and psychology.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was... individual academic attention and a small, close-knit campus community.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was... a very positive and memorable one. I remember arriving to the campus, and taking in the true beauty of it. I could immediately imagine myself at the campus because of the at-home feel that I felt right from the beginning.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was... being a part of the Pitt-Greensburg Ice Hockey team in 2014 and 2015 when we appeared twice at national championships, and won a

national championship in 2014. Another fond memory is when I was selected to the leadership roles of Community Assistant and Peer Leader. I remember both days very well, and I still have both original letters that informed me I received the positions. In 2016, I was also honored by being crowned Homecoming King.

The faculty member(s) who had the greatest influence on me was/were... Professor Barnhart, Ms. Jen Paul, Dr. Byrns, and Dr. Phillips

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to...work in the University of Pittsburgh Oakland Admissions department as an Admissions Processor.

My reasons for becoming active with the alumni association/staying connected to the University are... the many tremendous opportunities the university enabled me with throughout my four years there. I also like to stay connected to see how the university will grow and change throughout the years.

In my spare time, I like to... hike, bike, geocache, camp, volunteer, and watch anything Philadelphia sports related.

My family/friends are ... very important in my life. My family has given me a solid foundation of faith, love, motivation, and good examples which have helped me reach all of the goals I have set for myself thus far. They continue to encourage and help me in all that I do. I am blessed to have the greatest parents, brother, sister, grandparents, and extended family who I know I can always count on. My friends from back home and the ones I've made at Pitt-Greensburg have always stood by me, and offered me advice and support when I needed it. They've helped me in more ways than they know. My four years at Pitt-Greensburg would not have been the same without them. I am fortunate to have a close bond with them and look forward to many good times down the road. There have been so many fellow students, faculty, and staff who I've crossed paths with at Pitt-Greensburg that have changed me, and helped me grow into the person I am today. I take all of those lessons with me, and I wouldn't trade any of it for the world.

Tell us something we didn't ask: I am looking to pursue a master's degree part-time while working at Pitt, and I am still currently deciding what area to pursue. I am also obsessed with Jeep Wranglers, and cannot wait until the day I am able to officially join the Jeep community.



Alumni Spotlight: Amanda Girdwood '18

Amanda Girdwood graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2018 with a BS in psychology. She is also a 2018 Class Agent.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was... how pretty our campus is. From my first tour to graduation, Pitt-Greensburg's beauty never failed to amaze me.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was... was how welcoming the campus was. From getting involved, to professors, to making friends everyone always had a smile on their face and were happy to talk to you.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was...if I had to choose, Harry Potter Up All Night in the winter of my fourth year. It's hard to choose a favorite memory because I really loved all of my time at Pitt-Greensburg. The time and dedication I put into that event and watching it succeed was really "magical" to see.

The faculty and/or staff member(s) who had the greatest influence on me was/were...Sheila Confer and Al Thiel. They were really instrumental throughout my career at Pitt-Greensburg. They both always pushed me to be my best and never doubted my abilities even when I doubted myself. They're both so supportive of their students, and they will do whatever it takes to help them succeed.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to... land a full time job, and I just graduated in April. I work for JusticeWorks YouthCare with youth from juvenile probation and the foster system and help them reach their goals for the future. I really love it so far, and I can't wait for the many opportunities and experiences to come with them.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association/staying connected to the University is... that I really found a family at Pitt-Greensburg. I made friends who will absolutely last a lifetime, and being actively involved with alumni will help me stay in contact with the school that really helped me grow to be the best me I can be.

In my spare time, I like to...read and kayak. I'm a huge fan of reading.

My family/friends are... my biggest support system, and I don't know if I could properly function without them.

Tell us something we didn't ask: Next on the horizon is graduate school to get an MSW and we'll see where I go from there.



Alumni Spotlight: Patrick Kiss '17

Patrick Kiss graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2017 with a BS in chemistry.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was... the small campus. The small campus and smaller class sizes also allowed me to have a lot of interaction with faculty. It really is an amazing campus.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was... that the campus is really nice. It's surrounded by nature, and there is plenty to do. People are very friendly, and I think this was a big reason for me being drawn to this campus. I'm not very outgoing and coming to Pitt Greensburg was really the perfect place for me.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was... that I always enjoyed finals week, not for the exams as much, haha, but I really liked all the events they hosted during the week. The stress relieving activities always seemed to calm me down. You can tell that Pitt-Greensburg really cares about their students with how much they try to help them during the trying times of finals week.

The faculty member(s) who had the greatest influence on me was/were...many. I had a few great faculty members influence me to obtain my bachelor's degree. Dr. Luderer, Dr. Stauffer, and Miss Mamros were all huge factors in me getting my chemistry degree. They inspired me even when I would be down on myself and truly are amazing professors. Without them, I don't know if I would be where I am today.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to...working within a month after graduation at United Sciences Testing Inc. as a technician for American Electric Power. There, I perform various EPA methods to test the emissions of power plants.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association/staying connected to the University is... that I really had a great time there as a student and would like to remain connected and visit when possible.

In my spare time, I like to... golf, fish, and spend time with my family and friends.

My family/friends are... are the other part of why I was able to graduate and obtain my bachelor's degree in chemistry. My girlfriend especially was a huge factor in me getting my degree, as well as pushing me to be the best I could be. Without them and the excellent faculty, I don't think I would be where I am today.

Tell us something we didn't ask: Currently, I have passed 2 of the 4 EPA group tests, which certify me to perform the EPA methods under group 1 and group 2. I achieved this in about 8 months, and only have 2 left to pass.



Alumni Spotlight: Mike Krzanowski '11

Mike Krzanowski graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2011 with a BA in history.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

I actually applied to University of Pittsburgh in Oakland, but I was placed in Greensburg. I had plans to transfer after two years; however, I fell in love with the campus and wanted to stay.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

I was a resident all four years.

What activities were you involved with as a student?

I was in SGA, Habitat for Humanity, Pi Sigma Alpha, Student Pennsylvania State Education Association (SPSEA), and a Resident Advisor.

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

I had a few staff and faculty members who have greatly impacted my life. I still keep in contact with most of them. They are Troy Ross, Brian Root, Dr. Marks, Dr. Adams, and Dr. Kimball. Each of them helped me learn countless life and educational lessons that helped me grow as an individual.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take?

I would recommend World Geography with Dr. Adams. It was a fantastic way to learn about different areas of the world.

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

The great sense of community on campus with fellow students.

What have you been up to since graduation?

I work for the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB). Most importantly, I love seeing Broadway shows in Pittsburgh, trying new wines and beers, and reading.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

My experiences and education prepared me for life after college by teaching me patience, tolerance, acceptance of others, and how to research information instead of just taking what people say for granted.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I support Pitt-Greensburg by being a vocal advocate for the University and by attending events on campus to support the students and university. I am also on the PGAA Board of Directors.

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Reach out to someone who is different from you and make friends with them. Also, remember your general education classes are just as important as your courses within your major.

For Fun:

What series do you recommend alumni binge watch? *Lincoln's Last Trial: The Murder Case That Propelled Him to the Presidency*

List 3 to 5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. I'm a pretty good cook.
 2. I know every country's flag.
 3. I'm an Eagle Scout.
-



Alumni Spotlight: Sarah Menzler '11

Sarah Menzler graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2011 with a BA in history.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

I originally applied to main campus, but was accepted to Pitt-Greensburg. When I went for a tour, I loved the campus and smaller class sizes.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

I was a resident and lived in the Academic Villages.

What activities were you involved with as a student?

Student Government, Presidential Ambassadors, SPSEA.

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

Dr. Marks – I met her during an orientation weekend with my mom. I attended a session about the Education program & SPSEA. I immediately felt like this was where I belonged.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take?

I loved Geography with Dr. Adams.

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

The sense of community. You rarely went somewhere on campus where you didn't run into someone you knew. That was something I always loved, since I was away from home.

What have you been up to since graduation?

Since graduation, I got married. My husband Bob and I have two children, Teagan (3) and Connor (1). We also have a chocolate lab named Tinsley. We live in Shaler Township, where we just bought our first home. I teach US History for Agora Cyber Charter School.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

I felt that my classes at Pitt-Greensburg prepared me for my Masters Program at main campus.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I like to attend the interview event, and for a few years I served on the Pitt-Greensburg Alumni Association Board of Directors.

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Enjoy it! It may not seem that way now, but it goes by so fast. Make sure you take advantage of opportunities, classes, and resources that will help you reach at ultimate career of your dreams.

For Fun:

What is your favorite food?

My favorite food is macaroni & cheese.

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. Despite being the oldest of my siblings, I am the shortest in height.
 2. I was born on my parents' wedding anniversary. They were married in 1986, and I was born in 1988.
 3. My dream job would be a wedding planner.
-



Alumni Spotlight: Mike Mercea '17

Michael “Mike” Mercea graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2017 with a BS in management.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

Prior to attending Pitt-Greensburg, I actually attended Pitt-Johnstown for a year. However, I grew up in White Oak, and it was quite close to Pitt-Greensburg and much more convenient. I wanted to continue my Pitt degree and also play soccer at Pitt-Greensburg. Additionally, I wanted to get my real estate license nearby because I knew the market well, so I ended up at Coldwell Banker only 15 minutes from the Pitt-Greensburg campus. It all worked out really well.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

I commuted from my apartment in North Huntingdon.

What activities were you involved with as a student?

Soccer was my main involvement outside of classes and work.

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

I would say Professor Hauser and his business law class stuck with me the most. At the time that I took the class, I was starting up our company, Wandrblu, and he was a big help with understanding the legal side of the business. This can really make or break a business, especially down the road as you grow.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take? Who taught the class? Why would you recommend it?

Professor Hauser’s business law course

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

I really remember the times with my soccer teammates the most. Traveling to games, practicing, and hanging out outside of school were all memorable times.

What have you been up to since graduation?

For senior project, I started Wandrblu to create a more personalized travel experience for young adults looking to explore. After graduation, our team started focusing more on the marketing aspect of the travel and tourism industry because that’s where our experience was. We knew how to monetize it. We eventually expanded our marketing services to other industries where we saw an opportunity. Today, our niche is primarily social media marketing, content creation, and

website design. It's been an amazing experience so far, and we've met countless like-minded individuals along the way.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

Understanding a variety of subjects relating to business was definitely important, but I'd say the biggest factors are time management, discipline, and relationships. You'll meet some people through those years that you'll keep in touch with for life.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I still keep in touch with some students attending Pitt-Greensburg and am always happy to offer some advice on what to expect after graduating. It's important that students hear it from someone who has just been through both the failures and the successes.

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Get real life experience and test different careers out as much as possible before graduating. The real world can be a rollercoaster.

Don't expect things to fall into place immediately. It takes time.

For fun:

What is the last book you read? *Sell or Be Sold* by Grant Cardone

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. My biggest fear is spiders.
2. I don't sleep with a pillow.
3. At 16-years-old, I lived in Romania for a couple months. My family is from there, and I considered staying to play soccer. I decided to come back here and attend college instead. Who knows what would have happened if I had decided differently.



Alumni Spotlight: Heather Metro '14

Heather Metro graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2014 with a BS in biology and chemistry with a minor in psychology.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

When I was applying to the University of Pittsburgh, I initially ranked Oakland as #1 and Greensburg as #2. I started out in Greensburg with plans on transferring after two years, but after my first year, I fell in love with the campus, activities, students, professors, and faculty.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

I was a resident the whole time I was a student. I am glad I was able to be a resident because it gave me the opportunity to have the college experience away from home and be close to campus happenings.

What activities were you involved with as a student?

I felt as the years went on I acquired more activities! I was involved with SGA for four years. I started out as a House Rep, then I became Vice Speaker, and finally I spent two years as Speaker of the House. I was involved with Village Senate for five years. At first, I was a member, then I became Vice-President, and then I was President for three years. I was a cheerleader for five years and served as a captain for three of those five years. I was an actress in four theater productions and was on makeup crew for three years. I was Homecoming Queen my senior year. As a member of Delta Psi Omega (Theater Honor Society), I served as Secretary and Vice President. I was a member of Beta Beta Beta (Biology Honor Society) and served as Vice President and then President. I was also a member of Gamma Sigma Epsilon, Rho Theta chapter (the Chemistry Honor Society). I was picked by faculty to be a student representative at Pittcon teaching children about light and color. I also served as a Presidential Ambassador.

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

Through my involvement, so many people from Pitt-Greensburg have really helped to shape me into the adult I have become. All of my science professors, really, have impacted me with their knowledge and guidance in the field, particularly Mrs. Barnhart, who once I decided on being a science major, helped me plan out my class schedule until I graduated, and Dr. Long, who was my mentor for both of my independent senior researches. Sheila Confer was also someone who impacted me on the campus-involvement side. All of these women provided their support and lent their ears to my troubles in and out of the classroom/activities. They taught me that learning doesn't just stop when college is over, but that your goals can be achieved whenever the time is right for you.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take?

For a class everyone could take, I would recommend Intro to Theatre Arts Part 1 with Dr. Schrum. He was always so engaging in his class and not all of his assignments were papers. You were able to learn about different types of theatre performances and even learned about how some modern movies were actually twists on Shakespearean works.

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

I remember most vividly the close bonds I formed with the students, not only in my classes, but in my activities as well. I am still good friends with most of them today, and I owe that to Pitt-Greensburg being a welcoming and open campus community.

What have you been up to since graduation?

After graduation I took a few more classes to pursue more education, but I thankfully was able to find a job in my major as a Clinical Laboratory Scientist at Perkin Elmer Genetics where I worked for a little over two years doing newborn blood screen testing. Now, I am working at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center as a Medical Technologist doing dendritic cell culture and immunotherapy work for cancer.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

My experiences and education prepared me for life after college by instilling the use of good time management. For me, it was/is about how to have a healthy balance of working and being social. It also taught me responsibility and independence to get your work completed and the importance of knowing your deadlines for staying on track to get things done.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

As an alum, I started out by visiting campus for events that I either participated in or enjoyed while I was on campus. I also was a cheerleading coach for three years which kept me more active following graduation. This is my first year serving on the PGAA Board of Directors, and I love being able to give my input on how to get more alumni involved so they can see how the campus has grown.

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

To my Bobcat students, enjoy your time in college. It's not only about working hard in academics, but also take some time to get involved, to have fun, and to make memories. You never know if trying something new could help leave your mark on Pitt-Greensburg! To my Bobcat Alumni, check out campus every once in a while to see how it's grown. It was amazing to see the changes even a year after I graduated.

For fun:

What is our favorite food?

It is so hard to pick just one since I love it all, but my favorite type would be dessert. I have a weakness for anything sweet!

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. I have never broken a bone.
 2. My first time out of the country was October 2018 to Canada at 27-years-old.
 3. I am the first person from my family to graduate college with a 4-year degree.
 4. I have crowd surfed at almost every concert I've been to where I was able, even when Mayday Parade came to Pitt-Greensburg!
-



Alumni Spotlight: Madalyn Minahan '15

Maddie Minahan graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2015 with a BS in early childhood education.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

I loved the small campus and how close it was to Pittsburgh.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

I lived on campus for most of my time at Pitt-Greensburg. I commuted for two semesters.

What activities were you involved with as a student?

I was a Community Assistant for three years and was also involved with the Student Pennsylvania State Education Association (SPSEA).

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor who really impacted your life?

I loved working with all the education professors, especially Dr. Hardy and Dr. Barnot!

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take? Who taught the class? Why would you recommend it?

My education classes were my favorite! I enjoyed my children's literature course with Liz Jones because we got to read different books and talk about them with one another! I have been working on my classroom library ever since!

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

All the friends that I made and people with whom I got to work. I am still in touch with many of the professors, peers, and campus faculty members that I worked with during my time as an undergrad.

What have you been up to since graduation?

After graduating, I enrolled in a master's program at Pitt Oakland and earned my reading specialist certification working as a reading intern in a local elementary school. I am currently in my third year of teaching kindergarten for the Greensburg Salem School District.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

My time at Pitt-Greensburg allowed me to grow as an educator, a professional, and a leader. I was given many opportunities to practice my teaching in different settings, work with other professionals in my chosen field, and work in varying leadership positions.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I work with the Pitt-Greensburg education program as a mentor teacher and district facilitator for an afterschool program. I love partnering with my past professors and future educators! I will host my first student teacher in the fall!

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Enjoy your time at Pitt-Greensburg! Seek out every opportunity possible to grow!

For fun:

What is the last book you read?

Becoming Michelle Obama – she is amazing!

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. Popcorn is my favorite snack.
2. I've recently started training Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.
3. I travel to Washington, D.C. every year for the Cherry Blossom Festival.



Alumni Spotlight: Kiera Mudry '14

Kiera Mudry graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2014 with a BA in Communications & Rhetoric.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was... the campus size and the location, close to the small city of Greensburg.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was... a good impression. I lived in the University Courts my first year on campus, and it felt like an authentic college experience.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was... meeting all the wonderful classmates that I graduated with and experiencing college with them.

The faculty and staff members who had the greatest influence on me were...to name a few who I valued and were influential during my time at Pitt-Greensburg: Dr. John Prellwitz, Dr. Anne Czerwinski, Dr. Gretchen Underwood, Dr. Jessica Ghilani, Lori Jakiela, Elizabeth Contreras, Dr. Stephen Schrum, Chris Bartley, Amanda Folk, and Michele Shuey.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to... pursue a master's degree in library & information sciences (MLIS) and became an academic librarian for a few years, until finding my current position as a librarian in a non-profit organization.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association/staying connected to the University is... I'm still living locally and hope to stay connected to the university while I'm ready and able.

In my spare time, I like to... binge-watch full TV series, go to the movies, and read for pleasure.

My family/friends are... very supportive of my career path and personal goals.

Tell us something we didn't ask: I'm engaged and planning a wedding for next October, and we are hoping to adopt a dog within the next year!



Alumni Spotlight: Megha Pai '13

Megha Pai graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2013 with a BA in Political Science, a BA in English Writing, and a minor in Philosophy. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was...the ability it gives students to be part of a small, close-knit campus community in the suburbs, while earning a Pitt degree.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was...that campus is picturesque and beautiful.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was...living on campus all four years was my favorite thing as a student—some of my fondest memories were created when Pitt-Greensburg was my home.

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were...Judith Vollmer, Lori Jakiela, Paul Adams, and Beverly Gaddy. All of them helped me refine my research and writing skills. They taught some of the best classes I've ever taken. They also wrote excellent letters of recommendation when I was applying to various grad school programs.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to...earn my MBA at Duquesne University, where I graduated in 2017. I now work at the Pittsburgh branch of Havas PR North America—Havas is one of the largest global communications groups in the world!

Additionally, I've been nominated for Best Local Poet in the *Pittsburgh City Paper's* Best of Pittsburgh 2017 poll. My creative writing has been published in the *Route 30 Anthology*, *Pressure Gauge Journal*, *Lexicon Journal*, and *Pendulum Literary Magazine*.

My reasons for becoming active with the alumni association/staying connected to the University are...the caliber of the education I received from the University, as well as the lifelong friendships that began at Pitt-Greensburg: I want prospective students to choose our campus to begin their academic journeys, their careers, and the rest of their lives.

In my spare time, I like to...catch up with my family and friends, shop, explore Pittsburgh, write, and travel.

My family and friends are...immensely supportive, extremely insightful, and always there for me.

Tell us something we didn't ask: I couldn't *not* say this...in 2016, I was in a photo shoot for a marketing campaign promoting Duquesne University's MBA program. So, you may have seen my face in MBA ads on the sides of busses, floating around Pittsburgh.



Alumni Spotlight: Jennifer Paul '11

Jennifer Paul graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2011 with a biology major and a chemistry minor. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... the value. I originally toured the Pitt Oakland campus with my father as a senior in high school. Although I was impressed by the visit, the expense of living in the dorms wasn't something that appealed to us (sorry, Litchfield Towers!). My dad suggested Pitt-Greensburg, if I was still interested in attending a more affordable Pitt campus. I did; I really enjoyed the idea of being closer to home but still having the prestige and legacy of Pitt attached to my degree.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was ... that it was a beautiful campus. It literally is "Greens"burg.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was ... Science Seminar. During my first year at Pitt-Greensburg, I was a member of the "Science Learning Community" and enrolled in a science-majors only freshmen seminar (which still exists today). This course allowed me to truly get to know others in my major and the professors who really made an impact on me. Assigned to the course was a "Peer Leader" who attended the class as a teaching assistant and organized outside class projects. At the end of the course we were asked if anyone was interested in applying to become a "Peer Leader," and I did so thinking it would be an appropriate way to give back to a course that provided so much to me. I credit the seminar for my involvement on campus as a sophomore, junior, and senior and the reason I didn't transfer to any other Pitt campus.

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were ... Barbara Barnhart and Kristina Pazehoski.

When I returned as a “Peer Leader” the following year I was assigned to a class taught by Barbara Barnhart. Over the course of four years at Pitt-Greensburg, I believe I have taken 6 (Seminar (first time), Seminar (second time), Biology 1 Lab, Biology 2 Lab, Embryology Lab, Senior Capstone) courses with Barb. She’s a wonderful instructor who really cares about her students, not just academically but personally. Her hope for me succeeding made me feel like I couldn’t disappoint her and motivated me to put forth more effort.

As a senior, I took on an independent capstone project with Kristina Pazehoski (Dr. Paz). She helped me understand the application of science in terms of graduate schools, conferences, and research presentations. Dr. Paz showed me the more professional aspects of earning a degree. Like Barb, I knew I could go to her for any issue whether science-related or not and that meant a lot to me.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... obtain my Masters of Science in biology from Chatham University. When I graduated in 2013, I applied for a faculty position at Pitt-Greensburg and received it. I’ve been here since 2013!

My reason for staying connected to the University is ... to give back to a University that has provided so much to me.

In my spare time, I like to ... hang out with my corgi (Reggie), find foodie activities, discuss Game of Thrones in all forms, visit with my family, and cheer on the Pens, Buccos, and the Pitt Panthers!

My family/friends are ... the most important part of my life. They are always there to support me, and I am so grateful.

Tell us something we didn’t ask ... College is truly what you make of it. It doesn’t have to be all about the end-game of receiving a degree and moving onto the next milestone in your life. I think that the best way to experience it is to get involved on campus!



Alumni Spotlight: Kelsey Pierchoski '13

Kelsey Pierchoski graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2013 with a BA in communication.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

I was always dead set on going to Pitt since my dad and other family members did. I was originally going to attend Pitt-Johnstown, but then I got a partial scholarship to the Greensburg campus for my high school GPA, and I also could commute to campus.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

Commuter

What activities were you involved with as a student?

In my freshman year, I was a cheerleader, and during my sophomore year, I was in SGA. I was in Lambda Phi Eta and Sigma Tau Delta in my junior and senior years.

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

I had two professors who I really enjoyed because of their vibrant personalities: Dr. Eric Kimball and Michael Lucci. They were both just hilarious, fun people.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take? Who taught the class? Why would you recommend it?

Honestly, I would probably recommend the U.S. History elective I took with Dr. Kimball my junior year that covered everything up until the 1860s. Not only is understanding the nation's beginning and founding really important, but the way Dr. Kimball taught it really captured my attention, kept me engaged, and made me think of various historical figures in a more human way, rather than just figures in a textbook. It was a class I genuinely looked forward to.

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

I remember the relationships I developed, some of which left impressions for life. Most of my favorite memories are the everyday things like sitting outside getting sun and eating ice cream with friends in between classes, the way my heels echoed walking through the hallways, the homecoming and spring dances, the freezing walk in the winters from Powers to Smith, the specific way the buildings smelled, and the way the clock's chimes would echo over the whole campus (usually telling me I was running late).

What have you been up to since graduation?

I've worked for a couple nonprofits in marketing and TV production, I wrote for a few newspapers, and currently I work at Pitt-Greensburg as an event coordinator. I've traveled a lot (about 20 countries since graduation!), and continued to serve/bartend part-time too. I have started my own photography business, Kelsey April Photography, and published my first book, a nonfiction humor title about the service industry, *Would You Like Some Salad with Your Ranch?*, available on Amazon.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

It was a well-rounded education in a beautiful outdoor environment where I learned some skills, like writing press releases, which I later used in jobs. My freshman year I went on the Fall Arts Trip to Boston. Knowing no one, it was terrifying at the time, but I ended up having a blast. That was my first travel experience without family, and it really boosted my confidence and took away my fear of group and even solo travel. As a result, I've taken multiple solo and group trips with strangers through which some of my best life experiences have come.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I work here!

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Find some way to stand out and be noticed for something positive. Put effort into your GPA – wearing one of those honor cords at graduation isn't overrated. Be involved in meaningful things that will impress on your resume and make friends with at least one of your professors.

For fun:

What is your favorite food? Blueberries!

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. I golf, bat, and hold a broom left-handed even though I'm right-handed.
2. I grew up eating all the healthy "trendy" foods like quinoa before they were fads, thanks to my mom who was always way ahead of the time.
3. Spring is my favorite time of year, and when my birthday falls.
4. I have a distant family connection to Princess Diana's ancestors.
5. I love sloths and think they're adorable.



Alumni Spotlight: Doug Raible '15

Doug Raible graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2015 with a BS in management-accounting.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

I loved the campus, and it was a perfect distance to commute and save money on tuition.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

Commuter

What activities were you involved with as a student?

Basketball Intramurals and Accounting Club

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

Sharon Turchick

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take?

Financial Accounting. I'm not sure who the professor actually was, lol, but I believe everyone should understand how basic financials of companies work. If you can have an understanding of what people owe versus what they own, it is very helpful, especially, when it comes to qualifying for loans. These skills can be used on a personal level so it's not strictly related to businesses. Accounting is basically the backbone of business and can be used in many different ways.

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

The tight-knit community feeling where everyone knew everyone, and it felt like a big family.

What have you been up to since graduation?

Building a financial services firm and a real estate investment company.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

It helped me with my time management. Managing a lot of credits while commuting to school as well as working part time taught me how to prioritize and have a strong work ethic. I also received a great foundation in the accounting major to use as the backbone for all my business and investment ventures.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

Try to attend the annual meetings for the accounting majors to keep in touch.

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Focus on whatever career you'd be willing to work for free. Act as if money is not an object. Doing what you love will not only make you happier, but you'll have much higher chances of success because you'll be willing to put in extra effort as it won't feel like work to you.

For Fun:

What series do you recommend alumni binge watch? *Entourage*

List 3 to 5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. I love to travel.
 2. I love to play acoustic guitar.
 3. I collect watches.
 4. I once had an e-mail conversation with Mark Cuban.
 5. I was selected to be in Pittsburgh's Top 20 in their 20s.
-



Alumni Spotlight: Andrew Reese '13

Andrew Reese graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2013 with a BS in Business Management. Read more about his life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... the distinction of being “military friendly.” Being a non-traditional student transitioning from the military, I was looking for a place that provided a challenge academically, allowed me to have work/study balance, and permitted me to commute back and forth easily. I scheduled an admissions visit. After the meeting with the staff, I realized it was a perfect fit.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg ... was the cleanliness and commuter friendliness of the campus. I was impressed with how accommodating and welcoming the staff were, from registrar to admissions to academic advising to professors. It made for an easy transition which allowed me to focus on balancing work/life and put me on a path for success.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memories were ... meeting new friends and receiving the guidance that I was able to get over the course of my studies. I was really able to develop great relationships with so many people because of the close-knit community. I was able to develop more than I had ever imagined, both personally and academically, and it has carried over into my professional career.

Also, being a food guy, I can't forget how surprisingly good the meals were—especially the breakfast, as I was a morning commuter!

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were ... numerous. There were so many great professors—Dr. Rudnicka, Professora Contreras, Dr. Vallano, Mrs. Jones, Dr. Rechter, Mrs. Smith, Mr. Kimball, Dr. Krisner, Mr. Gaal, and Dr. Vollmer, who tremendously helped me through emails and the time spent during advising.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I ... took an opportunity with HJ Heinz as senior analyst within their North American Supply Chain and continued my military career as an operations manager through the US Air Force at the 911th Airlift Wing within the Civil Engineering Squadron as a reservist. After about a year in my role at HJ Heinz, I was selected to manage the merger and acquisition, as well the overall accountability, of the HJ Heinz and Kraft Foods Global Military Accounts. Post-merger, I transitioned to senior manager of the Supply and Operations Planning for the KraftHeinz North America Food Service Distribution and Supply Chain.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association is ... the incredible experiences that I was able to accrue over my time at Pitt-Greensburg. It was this experience that helped

me find my passions and develop myself. I hope to support and continue to help bridge the next group of future leaders who find themselves in a position similar to me.

With that, I hope to bring some professional experiences and leadership back to help foster continued success and improvement within the University, as well as, the community.

In my spare time, I like to ... volunteer with a variety of veteran's initiatives and local community organizations, in addition to golf, run, travel, watch Pittsburgh sports, and eat out at great local restaurants—I'm open to suggestions!



Alumni Spotlight: John Paul Ritchey '19

John Paul Ritchey graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2019 with a BA in visual and performing arts.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

My college journey started when I was placed on disability. I had the desire to reenter the workforce. Like many Bobcats, I came to Pitt-Greensburg after finishing my associate work at WCCC. While I arrived prepared to finish my psychology degree, The Arts had other plans.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

Commuter

What activities were you involved with as a student?

Chorale, Chamber Singers, and The Performing Arts Society

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

There are many people from the Bobcat family who I admire, respect and appreciate for their efforts, educational and otherwise during my time there. Drs. Schrum, McAlister, Asplin, Confer, and professor Bartley were invaluable to my experience as a student, person, and artist.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take? Who taught the class? Why would you recommend it?

There are many. The entire VAPA program is an incredible treasure in the Pitt-Greensburg community, and its faculty are dedicated to impressing the importance of the Arts in a person's journey. Having now worked professionally in the Arts I can attest that this program is fantastic, I cannot say enough about it. The psychology program with special emphasis on the child developmental studies of Doctor Asplin has been very rewarding in my work as a writer and actor. As challenging a teacher as they come, I don't think I've ever had a more rewarding English class than Comp III taught by Professor Gary Lutz, who is another treasure in the land of the Bobcats.

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

The other artists and actors in the Pitt-Greensburg community, who would be working The Ferguson Theater, and my time on the stage. Shout out to the cast of Young Frankenstein, the Pitt-Greensburg Spring 2019 performance!

What have you been up to since graduation?

We've developed and launched an arts non-profit dedicated to local economic development in under-served or neglected communities called Artistic Prosperity. Working with local entrepreneurs we rehabilitate public spaces for art and culture presentations that drive new consumer dollars to Main Street. Programming is designed to focus on the unique character of each community, limiting direct competition, and encouraging collaboration between facilities.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

As a non-traditional student, I arrived at Pitt-Greensburg disabled with over 20 years of work and military experience in a variety of disciplines, depressed about the idleness of long-term illness, and dealing with a great deal of confusion about who I was and how I would be spending my time. Today I am an artist, focused on helping others. It has been quite an evolution, and one that I will cherish moving forward.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I've tried to stay close to the VAPA program, and look forward to their performance efforts in the future.

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Dreams are reality without action. With Pitt-Greensburg being such a small community, the opportunities to learn and grow with this faculty and staff are incredible, invaluable, and very personal. They are collectively the most talented and resourceful group of people you may interact with during your life. Don't ever take it for granted. Whatever your dream or whatever your passion, there is someone at Pitt-Greensburg that feels it too, or can guide you to someone that does. Find them. Make it a quest, get an achievement, I don't care, just find them. It is your dream we are talking about. Make it a reality. Trust me, life has a way of moving faster than you expect, and if you don't take the time now, you may never get another chance.

For Fun:

What's the last book you've read?

Fundamentals of Music Composition by Arnold Schoenberg

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. I am a huge advocate for rescue animals in general, and I have fostered and rehabilitated abused, bait, and other injured dogs.
 2. As an actor, I volunteer in children's productions. It is very fun and rewarding.
 3. I'm a proud, total, and complete geek.
-



Alumni Spotlight: Elliot Sheedy '12

Elliot Sheedy graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2012 with a BA in Visual and Performing Arts. Read more about his life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... the complete randomness and faith in circumstance.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg ... was there's magic in this valley.

My favorite thing as a student was ... being in the theatre/music productions—unquestionably the best!

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were ... Stephen Schrum, Chris Bartley, and Amber McAlister. They are the pinnacle of an arts trifecta for me—it was a constant conversation between our cohort of what was art and how we should live with it.

Gary Lutz taught this class about "the sentence" that completely rewired my brain and how I approached artistic practice. Stephen Murabito taught me about this small-town sensuality that, I know, impacted my sensibilities dramatically. Sayre Greenfield, Kelli Maloy, Lipika Mazumdar—my library is still based on their syllabi.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... study filmmaking and media production at a graduate student level, create a feature film about a cult fitness instructor, embark on a music journey to liberate the world from top 40 radio, and travel to exotic lands in pursuit of the best espresso pour.

My reason for staying connected to the University is ... my love for the people at Pitt-Greensburg.

In my spare time, I like to ... produce media content at The Spectacular House.

My friends and family are ... simply exquisite.

Tell us something we didn't ask ... There is an underground tunnel between Millstein Library and the Office of the President—to accommodate her unquenchable reading habit. I saw an aquatic window one evening while I was wading in the creek.



Alumni Spotlight: Michael Spadafore '18

Michael Spadafore Jr. graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2018 with a BS in management and a minor in actuarial science.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

I wanted to play baseball in college, and I also wanted to go somewhere that wasn't close to home. I looked at a few branch campuses since I wanted a Pitt degree, and I ended up falling in love with Pitt-Greensburg the second I stepped foot on campus.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

I was a resident all four years.

What activities were you involved with as a student?

I was a member of Spanish Club my freshman year, Resident Student Council for two years, a three-year member of the baseball team, and a Community Assistant. I was Vice President of the Student Athlete Advisory Council my senior year.

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

Definitely Professor McCarthy. I had him for Business Ethics, and believe me, I wasn't a fan of ethics, but he made it so easy to understand. The passion he has in making sure he is available to all students is admirable.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take? Who taught the class? Why would you recommend it?

Business Writing with Professor Lutz. It was a tough class for sure, but it taught me how to sound professional when I send emails to co-workers, clients, bosses, etc. It also helps you construct the perfect resume and cover letter with the changing technology that big-name companies use to narrow down their search for the right candidates.

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

It was the Spring of my Freshman year, and we were down in North Carolina for a baseball trip. It was around the time when they were releasing who got hired to be a CA for the 2015-2016 year. I got an email from Sarah Young that said I was hired for Westmoreland Hall, and I remember I was more excited for that letter than I was to be playing baseball.

What have you been up to since graduation?

I've been working in financial services helping the people I grew close to over my four years at Pitt-Greensburg manage their debt, as well as educating them on the importance of saving for retirement. I've also been coaching a lot of baseball. In the Fall, I coach at Seneca Valley; in the Spring, I coach JV baseball at Plum High School; and in the Summer, I help coach a 15U travel baseball team called the Steel City Select.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

Juggling the duties of a CA and student-athlete in addition to being involved outside of these two time-consuming activities was very tough at times, but that has helped me manage my time with my job and coaching.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I follow all sports and watch the live feed when I have free time. I also was recently elected to the Pitt-Greensburg Alumni Association Board of Directors, so I am excited to give back and help put on great events for other grads.

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Get involved in extracurricular activities early on. Do more than just go to class, eat, sleep, and then do it all over again. College was the best four years of my life so far because of all the people I met, and that doesn't happen by staying in the resident halls.

For fun:

What series do you recommend alumni binge watch?

I'm throwing it back a little bit, but (assuming everyone has seen *The Office* which is the greatest show of all time), I would say *Breaking Bad*.

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. I can kind of sing... not too well, but if peer pressured into doing karaoke with a group I would step up and take one for the team.
2. I am a Dunkin addict. My favorite flavor is Butter Pecan.
3. Although I like the Pens and Steelers, I was born and raised a Boston Red Sox fan.



Alumni Spotlight: Meghan (Powell) Sperdute '12

Meghan (Powell) Sperdute graduated from Pitt-Greensburg in 2012 with a BA in Spanish.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

The beautiful campus and the Spanish department.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

Resident

What activities were you involved with as a student?

Spanish Club and SPSEA

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

Dr. Nancy Estrada

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take? Who taught the class? Why would you recommend it?

I would have recommended any classes with the late Dr. Nancy Estrada. The classes were so much fun, and she was truly one of the best!

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

How our professors really got to know us and care about us, and how pretty campus was, regardless of the season.

What have you been up to since graduation?

I moved to NYC in 2016 and got married in 2018.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

I learned that it was ok to feel good to be in your comfort zone, but that it is so much fun to push yourself. Study abroad, which Dr. Estrada pushed me to do, changed my life.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I support Pitt as a whole. H2P!

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Enjoy your time on campus – it'll go so quickly!

For fun:

What series do you recommend alumni binge watch?

Schitt's Creek

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. I went to graduate school at Duquesne after graduating.
 2. My favorite TV show is *The Golden Girls*. I can't get enough of it.
 3. My favorite food is tacos. I'd eat them every day.
-



Alumni Spotlight: Casey Stanton '12

Casey Stanton graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2012 with a BA in communication. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... the location of the school, class size, and the athletic program. I wanted to attend a university that was known for its academic excellence while having smaller class sizes and a city close with a lot of potential opportunities after graduation.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was ... great! I felt as if I was part of something bigger than myself, and I would have the ability to make a difference. I had met with both the basketball and soccer coaches/teams and instantly knew this was the place to which I needed to transfer. Everyone was so welcoming and friendly. I knew this would soon be my home for the next three years.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was ... whether a practice or a game, on the court with my teammates!

The Pitt person who had the greatest influence on me was ... my coach of two years, Erin Eaton. Basketball and being part of a team taught me so much both on and off the court. Erin pushed and challenged me in ways that I had never been. She really grew into my biggest mentor.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... a career in the financial services industry in Pittsburgh. I started with Northwestern Mutual in October of 2012 as a recruiter and am now the director of recruitment for our South Hills District Office. I have recently taken on the role of associate financial representative for our managing director, as well. I owe a lot of my professional success to my experiences on the court and in the classroom at Pitt-Greensburg.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association/staying connected to the University is ... to share my past experiences with potential students and to give back to the establishment that gave so much to me.

In my spare time, I like to ... be active around the city, play PSL sports, and spend time with my fiancé Phil and dog, Kemba.

My family/friends are ... extremely important to me. Although we are all over the East Coast, we are very close. My brother just graduated from LaSalle University, and now lives in Philadelphia, and my sister just accepted an athletic scholarship to play D1 soccer at the University of Hartford.

Tell us something we didn't ask ... In May, I will be running my first half marathon in honor of my godmother and the American Cancer Society.



Alumni Spotlight: Jake Steele '14

Jake Steele graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2014 with a BA in visual and performing arts.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was... its intimate setting and peaceful campus. I felt comfortable learning and growing there knowing I was getting a rock-solid education without the disturbance of the city. It just made me feel at home.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was... great. Thinking about going to college was a scary thing for me at the time because I was very timid and shy. I felt an instant connection with the campus and the people, and I knew instantly it would be my new home.

My favorite thing/fondest memory as a student was... spending time in the theater. The time I spent learning, socializing, and performing with my peers truly had a significant impact on who I am today.

The faculty member(s) who had the greatest influence on me were... three great professors. While I was still majoring in chemistry, Dr. Matt Luderer made a huge impact on me. In my eyes, he is a rock star. Not only is he highly intelligent, but he's also a down-to-earth guy who truly wants to see his students excel. I am honored to have had the chance to learn from him. Dr. Amber McAlister is another amazing person who I had a great experience with. She is such a kind person who works incredibly hard at what she does. She helped me out a lot while I was a student and definitely helped grow my love for fine art. I'm truly blessed to have met her. My advisor, mentor, and good friend, Dr. Stephen Schrum was my top influencer throughout my

entire education. I am truly thankful that I got to work with him and study under his guidance. Dr. Schrum always supported my big dreams and helped light the way for my early career as an artist.

After Pitt-Greensburg I went on to... pursue my passion for art. I am a tattoo artist and painter by trade, and I am an adventurer by heart. My work can be found on Instagram @IamJakeSteele.

My reason for staying connected with the university... is that I believe in education, and I am very grateful for it. It is an absolute privilege to have access to a great campus such as Pitt-Greensburg. I have a lot of respect for the school and my former colleagues/teachers. I hope to one day return to the campus and give back what I can to the community that helped shape who I am today.

In my spare time, I love to... travel, perform my music, paint, work out, swim in the ocean, climb mountains, immerse myself in new cultures, juggle, and most importantly, spend time with my family.

Tell us something we didn't ask:

Some words of cheesy wisdom: Always follow your heart, never give up on your passion, and make love your first priority in life and you can achieve the impossible. More cheesy wisdom: Turn your education into a lifetime pursuit instead of a one-time experience, and you'll create the nourishment for a life of abundance.



Alumni Spotlight: Jo Tauber '11

Jo Tauber graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2011 with a BA in interdisciplinary arts.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

I liked the smaller class sizes as well as the comfortable feel of the campus.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

I commuted for two years and lived in the Village for 2 years.

What activities were you involved with as a student?

I was involved in theater productions, doing props and special effects. I was president of the Gay/Straight Alliance, and a co-founder and vice president of the Visual Arts Society. I was speaker of the house for SGA.

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

I had two in particular though the entire IA/VAPA faculty were incredible. The two are Dr. Amber McAlister and Dr. Sheila Confer, whom I am still in contact with, and who both continue to mentor, educate, and influence me.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take? Who taught the class? Why would you recommend it?

Basic Acting. Dr. Confer taught that class. It was a ton of fun and was a very good confidence builder. Between that and the Public Speaking class I took, I feel very confident getting in front of a large group of people and speaking or presenting information.

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

The incredible sense of community, especially among residents. I feel like I really got to know so many amazing people from all walks of life.

What have you been up to since graduation?

Working, mostly. I spent the first few years after graduation working in food service. The past 5 years I've spent at Carnegie Museum of Natural History working as an informal educator, caring

for, and presenting with our Living Collection of animals. I very recently began an online graduate program through Miami University of Ohio.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

I received such a well-rounded education that I found it fairly easy to end up working in a job that I love. As an IA/VAPA major, I picked up many great skills, like confidence (from taking Basic Acting), the ability to problem-solve quickly (from taking technical theater classes), and the ability to analyze information and explain it to others (from taking art classes.) My involvement in various activities and Student Government also encouraged me to come out of my shell and try new things.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I donate when I can, and I've also participated in professional development with students. I would like to be more involved!

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

For current students, every class you take has value, even if it's not part of your major or a subject you particularly like.

For fun:

What song do you always sing along to?

Any song by Dolly Parton!

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. I collect comic books, especially Marvel comics.
 2. My favorite place to visit is Stockholm, Sweden. I'm even trying to learn some conversational Swedish.
 3. I have a pet rabbit named Thor, who I adopted through Rabbit Wranglers.
 4. My favorite movie is *Mary Poppins*.
-



Alumni Spotlight: Benjamin Vasunda '10

Benjamin Vasunda graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2010 with a BS in management/accounting. Read more about his life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was ... the easy commute to campus. Initially I had only planned on staying at Pitt-Greensburg for a semester or two, then transferring to the Oakland campus. I had such a great experience my first semester that I decided not to leave.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was ... how easy it was to approach the professors outside of class, and I loved the community feel of the campus.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was ... free food week at Chick-fil-A. I think our Intermediate Accounting class went there each day.

The faculty member who had the greatest influence on me was ... Professor Pamela Ondeck. I credit her with helping me get to where I am today. She pushed me to do my best each semester and left me very well prepared for life after college.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... Washington, DC, and spent almost five years in public accounting working with a variety of not-for-profit organizations and employee benefit funds. In January, I moved on to a role with Marriott International on their financial reporting team.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association is ... to stay up-to-date with the future plans of the University and, if possible, to help create a better experience for current and future students.

In my spare time, I like to ... get outside as much as possible, whether that's golfing, playing softball, running, or just walking around my town. When time permits, I also like to travel and explore new places.

My family/friends are ... the most important part of my life. Even though I've moved out of the area, I try to get back as often as possible to see my family.



Alumni Spotlight: Huong Vo '14

Huong Vo graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 2014 with a BS in Natural Sciences. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The things that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg were ... the academic programs and extracurricular activities offered—and the location of the campus. The campus was located close enough for me to drive home but also far enough to live on campus for the full college experience. I transferred to Pitt-Greensburg my sophomore year of college after realizing that another school for not the right one for me.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg ... was the beautiful campus and the change from living in the city. While Pitt Oakland is just minutes away from home, it was not my first choice.

My fondest memory as a student was ... attending the Habitat for Humanity Collegiate Challenge spring break trips. It was such a great experience to be able to travel to different states (North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) to volunteer with their Habitat for Humanity Chapter in building affordable homes for low-income families.

The Pitt person who had the greatest influence on me was ... Brian Root. Brian helped me grow as a leader of different student organizations on campus, and he continues to be my mentor even after graduating.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to ... Robert Morris University for a degree in nursing. I am currently enrolled in an EMT course at MRTSA through CCAC and work as a full-time office assistant at MedExpress.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association is ... to give back to the campus and community, and to stay connected with my friends and other alumni.

In my spare time, I like to ... go shopping and spend time with my friends and family.

My family members/friends ... also enjoy Pitt-Greensburg as much as I did. With the wonderful experience I had, my brother, Quoc Vo, also transferred to Pitt-Greensburg his sophomore year. He is currently a senior majoring in criminal justice—and involved in Habitat for Humanity. My roommates and friends from Pitt-Greensburg are still my best friends today!

Tell us something we didn't ask ... While at Pitt-Greensburg, I was on the executive board for the Student Government Association, Habitat for Humanity, Village Senate, Resident Student Council, in addition to being an International Student Mentor.



Alumni Spotlight: Bobby Walch '15

Bobby Walch graduated from Pitt-Greensburg in 2015 with a BA in Communication.

What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?

My dad was a long-term, Pitt-Oakland employee working as an engineer in Scaife Hall. I knew for a long time that I wanted to go to Pitt, but I wasn't quite ready to commit to the large campus life in Pittsburgh.

Were you a commuter or a resident?

Resident

What activities were you involved with as a student?

My freshman year I was fairly uninvolved aside from doing a program called FYE (First Year Experience). Its goal was essentially to create a pod of students living and attending classes together to network and make connections. I also joined the Student Alumni Association (SAA) and became an officer. My sophomore year I founded the Pitt-Greensburg Nerdfighters club on campus, and was hired as a work study student for University Relations and Institutional Advancement (URIA) in Lynch Hall. Senior year I joined the UPG Insider and assisted with the social media.

Did you have a favorite professor, staff member, coach, or mentor that really impacted your life?

My favorite professors were Lori Jakiela, Dr. Melissa Marks, Dr. Jessica Ghilani. Staff members that inspired me would definitely be Al Thiel, Christina Guzik, and all of URIA.

Of all the classes you took, what is the one class you would recommend everyone take? Who taught the class? Why would you recommend it?

UPG Insider with Lori Jakiela. I think a lot of folks are scared to join the newspaper because they might not be the strongest writer, but I think as long as you are creative and willing to work in a team, you will do just fine.

What do you remember most vividly from your time at Pitt-Greensburg?

Weekends with friends in the Academic Villages, and going to SAB events such as dances, rollerblading in Latrobe, and Statlers.

What have you been up to since graduation?

I worked as a bookseller at Half Price Books in Monroeville for 3 years, and then came back to Pitt-Greensburg to work in Millstein Library as a library specialist. I handle all course reserves, Interlibrary Loans, and manage the library student workers. This semester, I began attending grad school at the Pitt School of Computing and Information for my MLIS Degree.

How did your experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepare you for life after college?

My experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg gave me my first realistic work experience, skills on how to work as a team in various organizations, and helped me make lifelong friendships and relationships that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

As an alum, how do you support Pitt-Greensburg?

I am a bit bias as a Pitt-Greensburg staff member as well as an alumnus, but I like to stay up to date with what's going on on campus. I think it's fascinating what the new generations are doing to build up this community, and I can't wait to see what great things come as time goes by. I also like to periodically attend various alumni association programs.

What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?

Get involved. There's a lot to do on campus, but you have to be resilient and look for it.

For fun:

What song do you always sing along to?

Anything by Lizzo, Lady Gaga, or Taylor Swift. Right now, I am binge listening Folklore by Taylor Swift.

List 3-5 fun facts about yourself that most people probably wouldn't know.

1. I was an extra in 2 Pittsburgh-based movies.
 2. I went Halloween costume shopping with Jojo (early 2000s singer).
 3. I drove from Pittsburgh to Florida by myself on my 25th birthday.
-



Alumni Spotlight: Zachary M. Weisner '13

Zachary M. Weisner '13, otherwise known as Zach or "Scrat," is pursuing his dream of becoming a doctor after majoring in Biological Sciences and Chemistry with a minor in Psychology here at Pitt-Greensburg.

He also is a Class Agent for the 2013 graduating class.

Weisner believes staying involved with the Pitt-Greensburg Alumni Association (PGAA) allows him to remain connected to Pitt-Greensburg. "I want to help future generations of students coming through Pitt-Greensburg recognize their potential," he explained.

Drawn to Pitt-Greensburg by the small class sizes, he felt it allowed for better discussion and therefore better understanding. "As a scientist, it's incredibly important to have a strong understanding for detailed and complex topics," Weisner said. "My professors were always willing to help."

Recalling how friendly everyone was, he said those who had the greatest influence on him were Barbara Barnhart, instructor in Biology and his Academic advisor; Olivia Long, PhD, assistant professor of Biochemistry and his Biology Research advisor; Mark Stauffer, PhD, associate professor of Chemistry and his Chemistry Research advisor; Diane Cheek, instructor in Biology and advisor of Beta Beta Beta National Biological Honor Society, for which Weisner served as president for two years; and Dorothy Zilic, assistant director of Career Services.

"While there were many other faculty members who played a key role in my development as a student and as a person, these professors went above and beyond to help me succeed," Weisner said.

As a junior, he had the opportunity to work at the Pittsburgh campus with Cecelia Lo, PhD, a developmental biologist who has been mapping the genes responsible for congenital heart defects.

"During my time with her, I analyzed genetic material and conducted studies on mutant mice to better understand heart disorders," Weisner said.

As a freshman, sophomore, and junior, Weisner served as a resident assistant. He especially enjoyed building community. "One of the biggest programs I planned was a Halloween party in

Apollo. Leading up to the party, I had my residents help decorate the hall. We covered the walls in garbage bags, made bloody handprints, and put up red Christmas lights. This was a great opportunity to get to know everyone and have a really good time.”

After Pitt-Greensburg, Weisner worked as a paramedic in Monroeville for a year. “It’s a true honor to serve and represent my community, and I’m very proud of that.” He then went on to earn a master’s degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Georgetown University.

During that time, he pursued a research project at the National Institutes of Health where he developed a 3D, high-resolution protocol to study pentalogy of Cantrell, specifically cases in which the heart is positioned outside of the chest.

Currently, he is in the process of applying to medical school. “My hope is to pursue a career as a physician with the US Navy and travel the world,” Weisner said, adding that he loves to cook and travel, and recently returned from a trip to Ireland.

As a Class Agent, Weisner hopes to keep the Class of 2013 connected and to help all members of the Pitt-Greensburg alumni network. He understands the importance of having a strong support system. “I have a very large family. There are about 70 of us—aunts, uncles, and cousins on my mom’s side,” he said. “My friends and family have always supported me in my endeavors, and I am forever grateful for that.”