



## Alumni Spotlight — The 2020's



### Alumni Spotlight: Faryaal Alam '20

Faryaal Alam graduated from Pitt-Greensburg in 2020 with a BA in biological sciences/healthcare management.

#### **What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?**

The friendly atmosphere of the campus brought me to Pitt-Greensburg. When I toured it, all of the students, faculty, and staff were so eager to help out and answer all of my questions.

#### **Were you a commuter or a resident?**

Resident

#### **What activities were you involved with as a student?**

As a student, I was involved in the Student Activities Board and Health and Rehabilitation Science Club. I was also a Pitt Pal in the Office of Admissions.

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

Each and every professor and staff member who I came across during my time at Pitt-Greensburg has really impacted my life, gave me valuable advice and were excellent mentors to 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?**

I would recommend everyone take Special Topics of Healthcare with Ron Ott. It is a great way to learn more about the challenges facing healthcare systems.

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

The thing that I remember most vividly from my time at Pitt-Greensburg would be how caring and genuine all the staff and faculty members were. I also recall all the excellent events I attended such as Up All Night, the Moonlight Breakfast, and Career Panels from the Career Services Division.

**What have you been up to since graduation?**

I am currently pursuing my master's degree at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health.

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

My experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg have helped prepare me to be a well-rounded student and to always take advantage of each and every opportunity.

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

I participate in many of the events through the Pitt-Greensburg Alumni Association such as serving as a judge for the resume contest and participating on career panels.

**What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?**

I recommend all students to get involved in leadership on campus and to seek out internships.

**For fun:**

**What is your favorite food?**

Pizza

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

1. I love to watch movies on Netflix.
  2. I read and do arts and crafts in my free time.
  3. My favorite color is pink.
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### **Alumni Spotlight: Mya Cole '21**

Mya Cole graduated from Pitt-Greensburg in 2021 with a BS in biology and minors in chemistry and psychology.

#### **What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?**

I knew that I wanted to go away to college, but did not want to be too far away from home. When I toured the campus, I got the instant feeling that Pitt-Greensburg could be my home away from home.

#### **Were you a commuter or a resident?**

Resident

#### **What activities were you involved with as a student?**

I was highly involved in the Academic Villages all four years. I participated in campus activities such as Fall/Spring Into the Streets, Pitt Make a Difference Day, the Blue & Gold Celebration festivities, Relay for Life, Up All Night...you name it, I was there! During my senior year, I was President of Tri-Beta, Gamma Sigma Epsilon, and Habitat for Humanity. I participated in a lot of fun activities within those clubs.

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

Mrs. Barnhart will always be the most impactful professor/mentor I had as a student. Mrs. Barnhart took me under her wing during my freshman year and continues to be a very important person in my life today.

#### **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?**

Genetics was my absolute favorite class. At the time, Dr. McClendon taught the class, and she was absolutely fantastic. People automatically assume that learning science is all technical and boring,

however it is really cool to learn the science behind why we are who we are, and it is fun! I think more people would be more intrigued than they think they would be.

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

The thing I remember most vividly about my time at Pitt-Greensburg is the constant feelings of having a second home, feeling welcomed, and most importantly, feeling safe. The transition into college life is scary, but Pitt-Greensburg makes it easy to pave your way into adulthood and college life. The warm and open campus environment is constantly maintained, which provides constant reassurance.

**What have you been up to since graduation?**

Funny thing...I am actually now an employee at Pitt-Greensburg! While I await my graduate program to start, I have been teaching Biology and Anatomy labs. I was fortunate enough to be personally thought of for the position. I am enjoying my time as a Pitt-Greensburg employee and continuing to learn from my fellow professors.

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

My personal and academic experiences at Pitt-Greensburg prepared me to be ready to conquer anything. My personal experiences helped me to grow personally and as a leader. My academic experiences prepared me with the knowledge I will need to further my education and grow as a scientist.

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

I am a member of the Pitt-Greensburg Alumni Association Board of Directors and a 2021 Class Agent. I keep up with the alumni news. I help plan alumni-sponsored events. As an employee, I also keep tabs with my former clubs and do what I can to support them.

**What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?**

Do not be afraid to break out of your shell! Make yourself known on campus. Get involved, make friends, and put yourself out there! Pitt-Greensburg is like one big family; become part of the family.

Get to know your professors. Earn their respect from day one and do not lose it. Your professors will be your biggest advocates as long as you show them respect and that you are ready for what challenges lie ahead.

**For fun:**

**What song do you always sing along to?** *It's All Coming Back to Me Now* by Celine Dion

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

1. I was honored as the Senior of the Year for the Class of 2021.
2. I have been a dancer since I was two.

3. I can play the violin.

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### **Alumni Spotlight: Alexis Hepler '20**

Alexis Hepler graduated from Pitt-Greensburg in 2020 with a BA in Spanish and has returned to pursue her nursing degree.

#### **What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?**

It was super close to my house, and I really liked the atmosphere when I took a tour.

#### **Were you a commuter or a resident?**

Commuter

#### **What activities were you involved with as a student?**

I was involved with Student Alumni Association, Spanish Club, and Student Activities Board. I was also a Pitt cheerleader, a commuter mentor, and a class agent. I was involved with many other clubs and activities on campus and became really engaged with my peers. I am still involved in many of these activities on campus and have become a member of the Student Nursing Association and Pi Gamma Mu.

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

My favorite professors were Elizabeth Contreras and Dr. Stacey Triplette. They watched me flourish for four years, and any time that I had a question or wanted more input on a discussion, I knew that I could reach out to them.

#### **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 recommend everyone take any class that is taught by Elizabeth Contreras. She can make any Spanish class fun and enjoyable to listen to in another language. I think it is important to take a language class because we have more and more people coming to this country who do not have

English as their first language, and knowing another language will help to eliminate that language barrier.

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

A time that I remember most vividly was graduation because 2020 was a very weird time with COVID-19. We started the spring semester in person and then transitioned to online classes. Our graduation was also online, and then it was held in person during the Fall 2021 semester. It was a very weird time to have graduation, but I am very glad that I had went and got to experience a Pitt graduation.

**What have you been up to since graduation?**

Since graduation, I became an esthetician and am back at Pitt-Greensburg as a nursing student. I will graduate in 2025.

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

My experiences and education at Pitt-Greensburg prepared me for the next chapter in my life. It helped me realize that I wanted to have more education and to grow further as a person.

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

I am still involved with PGAA and many other activities and organizations on campus.

**What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?**

Become involved in clubs, activities/organizations, and make friends!

**For fun:**

**What is the last book you read?** *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

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

1. I LOVE Disney.
  2. I am a 2016 World Champion for Cheerleading.
  3. I have a geographic tongue.
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### **Alumni Spotlight: Jared Hoffman '20**

Jared Hoffman graduated from Pitt-Greensburg in 2020 with a BA in Communication.

#### **What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?**

I came to Pitt-Greensburg as a transfer student. After my first year of college, I felt really defeated and lost. I looked up communication programs since I knew that was the major I wanted and saw that Pitt had a great program. Knowing that I did not want to go to a large campus, I looked at Pitt-Greensburg. One day I was driving home from my previous college and decided to stop at Pitt-Greensburg. I walked the entire campus myself, and it just felt like home. I came to campus without an official tour or really meeting with anyone, but an admissions counselor. To this day, it was the best decision I have ever made. Pitt-Greensburg gave me a great degree and a place to call home for the rest of my life!

#### **Were you a commuter or a resident?**

Resident

#### **What activities were you involved with as a student?**

Pitt Pal, Presidential Ambassador, Lambda Pi Eta, Ski Club, and Study Abroad.

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

There were so many people who impacted my experience. I am not sure I could narrow it down to one favorite. The people who impacted me the most are Dr. Ghilani, Dr. Prellwitz, Dr. Czerwinski, Dr. Underwood, Dr. Kimball, Dr. Confer, and Joani Pletcher, who was my supervisor in the Admissions office!

#### **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?**

American Revolution and History 1865 to Present with Dr. Kimball. These classes taught me more about the history of our country than any other history class I have ever taken. Dr. Kimball focuses on challenging your beliefs on what you have learned in the past, and shows you many truths. Everyone should take one of these history classes because not only will you know much more about the history of the United States, but you will be equipped with knowledge that will forever impact your future and how you perceive the United States.

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

All the leadership opportunities I had on campus. I served as a Pitt Pal for two and a half years, which helped me impact so many different students' lives. It was the best thing to know you made a difference when you saw a student who was on your tour of campus. I also got the honor of being a presidential ambassador which I loved because I was able to develop great relationships with both Dr. Smith and Dr. Gregerson. These were invaluable. On top of that, it was the best feeling to put on that blue blazer and represent campus. I met my best friend Brandon through that program as well. I also had the opportunity to lead a club and to study abroad which equally shaped my experience. I loved talking with other students about different opportunities and trying to make a difference in our community.

**What have you been up to since graduation?**

Since graduating, I started working as a recruiter for a local business; however, I just recently landed my dream job of being an educational tour consultant with Education First Tours in Denver. I will now be able to bring the world of going abroad to high school students across the United States. Without Pitt-Greensburg, this dream would have never been a reality.

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

Pitt-Greensburg helped me get where I am today. It taught me passion for study abroad. Finding that passion and now working with in the educational travel field has changed the game for me. Pitt-Greensburg also taught me to be a leader through many professional development programs offered through Career Services and my major. These skills have helped me to excel in the workplace. I think the biggest takeaway is that many of our professors teach us to be resilient and adaptable. That has been ever important during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

Right now, I am still learning about how I can support Pitt-Greensburg; however, I hope to get involved with the alumni association and would love to be a resource in any way possible in the future.

**What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?**

Take all the leadership opportunities that you can, and study abroad. There are so many resources for the program at Pitt-Greensburg, yet so few people do it. I assure you that if you study abroad, it will broaden your horizons and give you a whole new outlook on life.

**For fun:**

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

The Office

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

1. I am an avid lifeguard who has still worked after college.
2. I am moving to Denver without ever going there!
3. I am a huge local news junkie (My favorite reporter is Mike Holden).
4. I have watched The Office series from start to finish more than ten times!



**Alumni Spotlight: John Kerlicker '21**

John Kerlicker graduated from Pitt-Greensburg in 2021 with a BS in Secondary Education and a BS in Biology.

**What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?**

I had close family who lived on Mount Pleasant Road. They always talked about Pitt-Greensburg being a great school and drove me through campus a few times. Joyce from Admissions came to my high school and told me how great the education program was and that I would likely qualify for a scholarship. That was enough to sell me.

**Were you a commuter or a resident?**

Resident

**What activities were you involved with as a student?**

Student Government Association, RHA/RSC, Res Life, SPSEA a bit, and Habitat for Humanity.

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

I'm fortunate that many people impacted my life at Pitt-Greensburg. I could never just name one person, but I appreciate these people for caring for me: Al Thiel, Dr. Marks, Brian Root, Troy Ross, Kearsten Adams, and Vicki on the maintenance staff.

**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 say Strategies of Education with Dr. Marks. It was the one class where I felt a genuine connection with all of my classmates. We learned a lot. It challenged us, but not more than it needed to. And, we had fun every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for those 50 minutes as one group with Dr. Marks leading the way.

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

I have many fond memories, but for me it's really many of the moments with my friends that I remember most vividly. We were lucky to all meet each other in Robertshaw Hall our first year and share lots of great moments together. The Big Bang is always a vivid memory for me because I never realized the people who I sat with that first night would stay so long with me in my life. I always looked forward to it every year because of the first one having a symbolic significance to us.

**What have you been up to since graduation?**

I currently teach 8th grade science and high school earth science at Jeannette Junior-Senior High School. I was fortunate to be there since the January following graduation as a sub and now as a full-time teacher. The students took well to me, and I'm happy I get to play a small role in their lives. It's been amazing to take all of the skills I learned at Pitt-Greensburg and transition them easily into my career.

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

I've been transitioning easily into my career, and it's mostly because I had a support system of such great people at Pitt-Greensburg. I feel like the education program prepared me extremely well for the difficult profession of being an educator, but I also had so many opportunities to grow and develop as a young person at Pitt-Greensburg that I was able to carry that experience with me too.

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

I recently joined the Pitt-Greensburg Alumni Association Board of Directors. I am thankful to stay connected and to help out in small ways.

**What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?**

If you are kind to Pitt-Greensburg, Pitt-Greensburg will be kind to you. If you take advantage of as many opportunities as possible, for social, personal, and educational growth, I think you will find that there are many things that Pitt-Greensburg can provide for you. I treated it like a home, and it was a home for me, but I know that some people don't need or expect that. If you look hard enough, whatever you are looking for at Pitt-Greensburg, you'll find before you graduate. You just have to keep your eyes open!

**For fun:**

**What series do you recommend alumni binge watch?** Popular choice now, but *Stranger Things* is incredible. The hype is well understood!

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

- My favorite song is "Sleeptalking" by Jake Scott (He's incredible!).
  - Twin Lakes is my happy place!
  - My favorite athlete is Pirates rookie Oneil Cruz.
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**Alumni Spotlight: Melissa Paravate '21**

Melissa Paravate attended Pitt-Greensburg from which she graduated in 2021 with a BS in management.

**What brought you to Pitt-Greensburg?**

The affordability and proximity to home.

**Were you a commuter or a resident?**

Resident

**What activities were you involved with as a student?**

- Student Government Association (Member Sept. 2018 - April 2019 / Senate President April 2019 - Dec 2020)
- Residence Hall Association (President May 2020 - Nov 2020)
- Phi Eta Sigma (Member April 2019 - April 2020 / President April 2020 - April 2021)
- Spanish Club (Treasurer · Aug 2019 - Nov 2020)
- Sigma Beta Delta (co-founded the Pitt-Greensburg chapter in 2021)
- PittPAL (2018-2020)
- Community Assistant in University Courts & Robertshaw Hall (2019-2021)

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

Joani Pletcher (Admissions Office), Katie Byers (Career Services), Michael Pry (Professor) and Elizabeth Contreras (Professor) all had a huge impact on my time as a Pitt-Greensburg student. I cannot thank them enough for their support and encouragement throughout my time as a student and even after graduation.

**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?**

The class that will forever stick out to me was Healthcare Process with Mr. Pry. He made the class engaging for all students, and I loved the hands-on interaction that it offered as a supplement to the lecture portion of the class.

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

During my first two years at Pitt-Greensburg, I worked as a PittPAL for the Admissions Office. I loved connecting with prospective students and sharing the campus and my experiences with them.

**What have you been up to since graduation?**

Upon graduation, I took a job as a project manager at Smith Micro Software, Inc. My role has introduced me to the telecommunications and software development industries, where I work across teams to coordinate the project schedule, monitor overall progress, communicate milestones, and work collaboratively to solve issues that arise. Outside of work, I coordinate the staffing, lessons, and activities for the weekend retreats at Camp Sunrise Mountain and actively volunteer with the Mount Pleasant Church of God youth group.

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

The leadership roles that I held in the various clubs at Pitt-Greensburg helped mold the organization and leadership skills that I used every day at work. Working as a PittPAL helped improve my public speaking skills and allowed me to become comfortable speaking in front of crowds. Working as a CA also molded life after college for me - as a counselor at Camp Sunrise Mountain, a lot of the training I received as a CA has been applicable as I work with campers in grades 6-12.

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

I volunteered with an Admissions event and Professional Impressions.

**What advice do you have for your fellow Bobcats?**

Get involved!

**For fun:**

**What is your favorite food?** Pasta Salad

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

1. I served on several mission trips both domestic and international prior to graduating from high school.
2. I volunteered as the women's basketball team manager during my freshman year of college.
3. I worked as a recreation coordinator during my last year of college.