

Meet International Security major T. Brett Wallnutt

What brought you to Korbel?

I was working in real estate as a broker. As the housing market began to collapse I decided that I wanted to change careers and pursue one in the realms of national security and international affairs. The first option I pursued was to become a Naval intelligence officer but as I was going through the application process I discovered the Josef Korbel School of International Studies.



I decided to apply to the Josef Korbel School because of the specificity of its international security master's degree, as well as the relevance of its curriculum. I liked that the school offers courses that cover the most salient security issues of the day and that the program follows a policy-oriented approach. I was also attracted by the vast real-world experience of the professors. Because the program fit my interests and desired career path so well, Josef Korbel School is the only graduate program to which I applied.

What classes and professors have inspired you?

Strategic Intelligence Data Collection and Analysis was one of the most interesting classes I have taken at the Josef Korbel School. It was taught by CIA Officer- in-residence Hal Gregory, who has a fascinating perspective on intelligence and security issues that was highly influential in shaping my world view.

The analytical approaches I learned in that class have also been incredibly useful in my academic pursuits and will continue to be so when I begin my career.

What academic or extracurricular activities have you taken part in and how have they influenced you?

During the summer of 2009 I participated in the Jerusalem Program, organized with the Minerva Center for Human Rights at Hebrew University in Israel. This program allowed me to study with two internationally renowned professors, intern at the Israeli Ministry of Justice's Office of the Coordinator in the Battle against Trafficking in Persons, and live and travel throughout Israel, Jordan, and Egypt.

This program has given me experience working and living in a foreign country and is the type of practical professional development that I was hoping to gain.

Also, because of my involvement with the International Association of Emergency Management student group, I completed training with the Denver Office of Emergency Management's Community Emergency Response Team in the summer of 2008.

This training included search and rescue, triage, first aid and understandings of the emergency response system and disaster psychology

I also participated in the Washington, D.C. Career Connections Trip in December 2008 and will repeat that this winter. We attended meetings with government agencies, private think tanks and non-governmental organizations. Most interesting were the meetings at the Pentagon, CIA, and the U.S. State Department as well as opportunities to network with alumni and other people working in Washington

What makes Korbelt distinctive?

I have studied under respected academics as well as a former federal prosecutor, intelligence officials, people from think tanks and others from a variety of backgrounds. This exposed me to a many perspectives. The policy-oriented approach and the diverse faculty make the academics distinctive.

The academics are accompanied by a variety of opportunities like the D.C. Semester, while the internship opportunities helped me gain experience in my field. This balance between academics and professional development is a distinctive approach.

Tell us something about your internship.

My internship, organized through the Jerusalem program, was with the Israeli Ministry of Justice's Office of the Coordinator for the Battle against Trafficking in Persons. I wrote two research reports that were used as part of an on-going criminal investigation. I also wrote briefs on a variety of human-trafficking issues; contributed to the creation of educational video to help train Israeli law enforcement, prosecutors, and other government agencies; and attended meetings at the Knesset and the Ministry of Justice. My internship gave me experience in human-trafficking issues and the opportunity to witness the functioning of a foreign government and Israeli politics.

What do you consider the most pressing security problem today?

Nuclear proliferation at the nation-state level and preventing the acquisition of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors.

Favorite Starbucks?

Call me boring, but I like Starbucks' regular old black coffee.

Where are you from?

I was born in Colorado Springs, attended boarding school in Minnesota. After graduating from college I returned to Colorado Springs to work in real estate.

--Reported by Shane Eric-Eugene Hensinger