

SMITH COLLEGE'S PICKERING FELLOWS AND 2019 FINALIST

January 10, 2019

Maria Alejandra Moscoso '15

Awarded a 2019 Pickering Fellowship.



[Photo of Maria Alejandra Moscoso]

What have you been doing since graduation?

After graduating from Smith College in May 2015, I was selected as a 2015-2016 Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) Public Policy Fellow. Here, I worked with the U.S. Senate Committee of Foreign Relations supporting initiatives related to security, human rights, and democracy on the Western Hemisphere, East Asia and the Pacific. Through this fellowship, I also worked with the office of Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, providing constituent support and facilitation for the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee. After this experience, I traveled to Salzburg, Austria to work in the international non-profit organization, Salzburg Global Seminar, as a Program and Development Intern until returning to Miami, FL to work as a Media Associate for the international media agency, Publicis One. I now work with the international

development agency, Creative Associates International, providing day-to-day backstopping support to Department of State and USAID-funded high-volume projects located in active conflict environments.

Why did you apply for the Pickering, and what it will permit you to do?

My greatest dream was to become a U.S. Foreign Service Officer and represent the U.S. around the world, but as a former DREAMER, an undocumented student, I sometimes doubted the possibility of reaching this goal. However, I didn't let my fear deter me from at least trying and knew that as soon as I became a U.S. citizen, I would do what I could to make it possible. That was exactly what I did. I applied for my U.S. citizenship as soon as I was qualified, with the sole purpose of reaching eligibility for this opportunity. I learned about the Pickering and Rangel Fellowships after thorough research and conversations with past fellows, including Smith alum Marichuy Gomez, and received a lot of mentorship and advice during this process. This fellowship will not only provide a pathway to becoming a foreign service officer but would also provide the mentorship and financial assistance needed to complete a two-year U.S.-based graduate degree program.

Did Smith faculty or staff mentors help you in the process of applying?

I received an immense amount of support from my Smith community throughout this process, and I am truly grateful for that. My greatest support came from my former advisor and economics professor, Prof. Randy Bartlett, and my Portuguese professor, Prof. Marguerite Itamar Harrison. They provided great guidance and encouragement during this process, and I believe they are both key figures in my success during this application process. I hope they know how imperative their support was for me, and that they will always be a reason for my success.

Marichuy Gomez '14

Awarded a Pickering Fellowship in 2017.

What have you been doing since graduation?

As a young professional, I worked on restorative justice initiatives for juveniles at the Los Angeles Superior Court and volunteered to increase access to education for Latino communities in Los Angeles and Syrian communities in Turkey.

Why did you apply for the Pickering, and what it will permit you to do?

While representing the US as a 2015-2016 Fulbright English Teacher in Turkey, I became motivated to join the Foreign Service after I realized how terrorism and political instability negatively affect the lives of many. The Pickering

Smith College Fellowships Program

Fellowship provided the means and mentoring to become a Foreign Service officer. Currently, I am a graduate student at Georgetown University, studying global politics and security in the Master of Science in Foreign Service (MSFS) Program. After graduating in May 2019, I will join the US Department of State as a Political Foreign Service Officer.

In Summer 2018, I interned in the Economic and Business Bureau, Office of Investment Affairs, at the US State Department in Washington DC (see photo), where I analyzed acquisitions of U.S. companies by foreign entities.



[Photo of Marichuy Gomez]

Did Smith faculty or staff mentors help you in the process of applying?

I would like to thank professors Velma Garcia, Helen Visentin, Alfonso Procaccini, Gary Lehring, and Jennifer Guglielmo for their support and advice. Thank you to Fellowships Advisers Don Andrew, Ryan Lewis, and Amy VanderLaan. I would also like to acknowledge the support from the four Smith women who made my time at Smith even more wonderful: my sister Cynthia Gomez and my friends Salma Hussain, Danielle McColgan, and Shonty Shroff. Finally, thank you to the donors that funded programs that directly impacted my professional and academic life, such as the Global STRIDE and the Praxis and International Experience grants.

Symone Gosby '15

2019 Pickering Fellowship Finalist with plans to re-apply in the near future.



[Photo of Symone Gosby]

What have you been doing since graduation?

Directly after graduating from Smith in 2015, I attended Middlebury College's Intensive Korean Language School to prepare for ten months of research as a Fulbright Junior Researcher. I really enjoyed researching and presenting my finding on the human rights of people with disabilities in South Korea, but ten months did not satiate my desire to live abroad. So, I found a job in Seoul as a digital content writer and video editor at an entertainment company, and used that time to gain new experiences and step outside of my comfort zone. After 1.5 years of working in Korea, I decided to return to my hometown, Washington, DC, to pursue a career in human rights. Currently, I am the Program Assistant, Asia on the Human Rights Team at Vital Voices Global Partnership, a women's empowerment NGO.

Why did you apply for the Pickering, and what it will permit you to do?

While working as a Student Ambassador at the 2012 World Expo in Yeosu, South Korea, I heard for the first time the phrase "people-to-people diplomacy" and it stuck with me ever since. Building bridges between people, communities, and cultures is something I am very passionate about. After learning about the Foreign Service, I realized Foreign Service Officers are in a unique position to utilize people-to-people diplomacy to build understanding between people, and ultimately create stronger relations between nations. I applied to the Pickering Fellowship because it not only would allow me to turn my passion into a career, but also because it cultivates fellows through 1:1 mentoring, hands-on internships, and professional development opportunities in order for them to be the best diplomats they can be.

Did Smith faculty or staff mentors help you in the process of applying?

Although she does not work at Smith anymore, I want to thank Professor Jina Kim, former assistant professor in the East Asian Studies Department. After so many years, she was enthusiastic to write a letter of recommendation and, even though I ultimately did not receive the fellowship, she continues to be my cheerleader and encourages me to reapply. I also want to thank Professor Suk Massey who wrote my letter of recommendation for the Yeosu World Expo. That experience kick-started my journey to become a Foreign Service Officer and it's all thanks to her.