

## **Lauren Johnston graduated from the Master in International Security**



Lauren Johnston graduated from the Master in International Security with concentrations in Human Rights and Middle Eastern Studies. She is currently working as an Operations Director at Patronus Medical LLC in San Diego, USA.

## **What is your current role about and what are your main responsibilities?**

I am the Operations Director for a private health protection company. Many of our clients are private individuals with unique lifestyles that require adaptable healthcare solutions on account of frequent travel, a high-profile career, or other non-traditional circumstances. We also provide these services for companies with the same types of needs.

My primary responsibilities are threefold: One, I am the operational manager for a local concierge clinic in California and maintain a staff, oversee daily operations, and seek new business opportunities. Two, I develop the strategic business direction for the West Coast Region and provide company-wide guidance across all divisions regarding the creation and implementation of policies and procedures. Three, I maintain an international situational awareness of our clients' locations, provide location-specific risk assessments, and help establish our business in different countries by securing visas, licenses, and certificates that allow us to conduct medical operations overseas.

## **How did you secure this role?**

After Sciences Po, I secured a fellowship in the U.S. Senate working on foreign policy and defense. It had been my intention to stay in the public sector, but fate seemed to have other plans as a government hiring freeze coincided with the end of my fellowship. I decided to pivot toward the private sector and began filling my schedule with informational interviews. I also let my friends know that I was looking for a job in the private sector and asked them to send job postings my way. I applied for a position as an analyst in the very niche sub-sector of healthcare called private health protection.

The application process was lengthy and required several writing samples, interviews, and on-site tests; however, I would say that exposure to a wide breadth of international political science concepts (and the all of the papers I was required to write on them) at Sciences Po more than adequately prepared me for the hiring process. Although the initial move out of the government wasn't in my plan, finding a position that still encompassed my interest and training helped in the transition to the private sector.

## **Has your workplace been affected by COVID-19?**

As we are primarily a telemedicine based company, not much changed for us; however, we saw a significant increase in demand for COVID-related solutions. For example, prior to the outbreak I might write a location-specific medical risk assessment once per month. Now, that demand has increased to nearly three per week.

What is the most fascinating and/or surprising aspect at your role?

When I first started with this company several years ago, I didn't realize how much planning went on behind the scenes to ensure that people are safe and secure while traveling. Everyday I am amazed at the level of detail that goes into accounting for all types of scenarios. I very much enjoy the contingency planning element of my job, finding nuggets of information can mean all the difference in keeping someone safe.

## **How did your PSIA experience help you with the role?**

A prime lesson I learned at PSIA was that decisions have

consequences across many sectors, but also that this means there are always many solutions to any given problem. I work primarily with US-based staff and being able to orient situations in a different lens allows me to present reports that gives our company the ability to be dynamic in environments very different than we are used to in the United States.

One thing I am truly grateful for with my experience at PSIA were the relationships I made. I met people from all over the world that genuinely challenged me and my way of thinking. I am still in touch with many of the friends I made and often call on them for advice when approaching a problem at work.

## **What advice would you give to others?**

Be persistent and adaptable. I understand entering the job market might seem daunting at this time, but all skills levels and experience are needed to conduct business and government even during the outbreak. Demonstrate flexibility to work on projects that may not be exactly in line with your course of study. Finally, take time to enjoy where you are - take in the whole experience, the courses, the people, the opportunities, the 16 square meter studentette, and France - it is truly a unique time in your life!

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