

# JALEN WARD, MA

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## Education

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### University of California, Davis

Davis, CA

*Ph.D. in Political Science, Department of Political Science (POL)*

In Progress

Provost Fellow in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

CSU Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) Fellow

**QE Chair:** [Dr. Erik Engstrom](#) **QE Committee Members:** [Dr. Amber Boydston](#), [Dr. Bianca Vicuña](#), [Dr. Jaeho Cho \(CMN\)](#)

### California State University, Fullerton

Fullerton, CA

*M.A. in Political Science, Division of Politics, Administration, and Justice (PAJ)*

August 2021 – May 2023

Thesis: "Political Applications of Agnotology and Constructed Ignorance"

**Advisor:** [Dr. Brian Lovato](#) **Committee Members:** [Dr. David Traven](#), [Dr. Scott Spitzer](#)

### California State University, Fullerton

Fullerton, CA

*B.S. in Psychology, Department of Psychology (PSYC)*

August 2018 – May 2020

**Undergraduate Project:** "Re-examining the HIV+ Stigma: Structuration Approach as a Framework to Social Stigma"

Minored in Political Science (POSC)

### Irvine Valley College

Irvine, CA

*A.A. in Psychology, Teacher Education, Natural Science & Mathematics*

August 2015 – May 2018

## Research Interests

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Political Communication, Race and Ethnic Politics, Political Psychology, Social Media, Computational Social Science, Health Politics and Policy, Agnotology, Misinformation, Conspiracy Theories, Health Economics, American Parties

## Professional Experience

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### UC Davis Graduate Student Association

Davis, CA

*GSA Executive Council*

December 2025 – Present

#### *External Vice President*

- Lead external affairs for the GSA executive council and Grad Student Assembly
- Create and produce informative content such as one-pagers and newsletters detailing pertinent policy within the California Legislature and US Congress for GSA members, GCR teams, and UCGPC
- Work alongside UCOP External Relations offices and community agencies to formulate advocacy strategies
- **Committee Membership:** Finance, Healthcare, Basic Needs, and Public Engagement & Campus Partnership

*Office of the External Vice President*

October 2024 – March 2026

#### *Legislative Affairs Director – State and Federal Policy*

- Co-lead advocacy efforts in service of the GSA membership for the Sacramento and Washington D.C. events alongside the EVP
- Create and produce informative content such as one-pagers and newsletters detailing pertinent policy within the California Legislature and US Congress for GSA members, GCR teams, and UCGPC

**Excelera Health (via MacArthur Court Acquisition Company)**  
*General Counsel for Managed Care Operations and Compliance*  
*Senior Corporate Development Analyst*

**Newport Beach, CA**  
November 2021 – February 2024

- Aided in the public company readiness of a health technology startup with a \$300MM valuation and multiple Medicare contracts in both Fee-For-Service and Medicare Advantage models
- Manage the corporate insurance portfolios and auditing schedules of five entities
- Construct and implement managed healthcare workflows within the CMS Innovation Center’s MA HMO, GPDC, MSSP, and ACO REACH models
- Work with government agencies like Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC)

**Connected Care Health Services (Subsidiary)**  
*Finance & Enrollments and Eligibility Department*  
*Finance Project Analyst, Interim Project Manager*

**Newport Beach, CA**  
April 2020 – November 2021

- Led as Interim Manager for MAPD Enrollments and Eligibility Dept and Prescription Drug Reconciliation
- Ran “The Golden Gazette,” a quarterly member-facing newsletter on navigating Medicare Advantage and elderly health behavior, alongside the Marketing Director
- Served on the Social Analysis & Minority Health Team and developed a Medicare SDOH Program and CRCCP
- Worked alongside the CFO and Health Plan Pharmacist on MAPD Financial Operations, including PBM Auditing, Plan-to-Plan Part D Payment Reconciliation, and Financial Information Reporting (FIR & Nx) transactions

**Radiant Health Centers**  
*Under the Services Lead, Tammy Nguyen*  
*Facility Intern*

**Irvine, CA**  
August 2019 – February 2020

- Booth and advocate on behalf of Radiant Health to provide the public with accurate information about HIV/AIDS at corporations, churches, health fairs, and other community events.
- Recognized in the Open Door OC Black Community Heroes for excellence in care delivery and HIV/PLWHIV & LGBTQ+ health advocacy in policy and community networking

## Teaching Experience

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**University of California, Davis**  
*Department of Political Science*

**Davis, CA**  
September 2023 – Present

*Teaching Assistant*

**Supervisor(s):** Dr. Erik Engstrom, Dr. Mark Verbitsky, Dr. Jordan Kujala, Dr. McCage Griffiths, Dr. Daniel Kono

- Responsible for exam preparation, writing workshops, and grading for a class of 120+ major-track students
- Developed an Excel-based grading method that automated student roster management, tracked non-submissions, and integrated participation scoring with Canvas SpeedGrader through CSV import/export.

**UC Center Sacramento**  
*UCCS Academic Team*

**Sacramento, CA**  
June 2025 – August 2025

*Teaching Assistant*

**Supervisor(s):** Dr. Jordan Kujala, Cindy Simmons

- Aid in the development of student-led policy research projects analyzing aspects of California politics, governance, and legislature

**California State University, Fullerton**  
*Division of Politics, Administration, and Justice*

**Fullerton, CA**  
August 2021 – June 2023

### *GSA/Teaching Assistant*

**Supervisor(s):** Dr. Robert Castro, Dr. Brian Lovato, Dr. Merriam Doucette

- Create engaging course content for undergraduate students in the PAJ Department
- Collaborate with full-time faculty and professors to address student academic needs
- Lectured Topics: CA 2021 Recall Election, Financial Incentive within Interest Groups & Parties, De Facto and De Jure Policy Diffusion during the Civil Rights Movement, Confirmation Process of a SCOTUS Nominee, and History of American Parties

**California State University, Fullerton**

**Fullerton, CA**

*Division of Politics, Administration, and Justice*

January 2022 – June 2023

### *Academic Advisor*

**Supervisor:** Dr. Matthew Jarvis

- Advise current and prospective undergraduate students enrolled in any of the nine degrees offered within the PAJ Department
- Train and onboard incoming graduate advisors

## Research Experience

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**California State University, Fullerton**

**Fullerton, CA**

*Department of Political Science (POSC)*

August 2022 – June 2023

### *Master's Thesis – POSC 498*

- Examining Agnotology within Platonian and Machiavellian philosophy, Arendtian Phenomenology, Public Health & Business, the Nixon Presidency, and Nuclear Epistemology

**Excelera Health**

**Newport Beach, CA**

*Quality Department*

July 2022 – January 2023

### *Population Health Program Developer*

Advisor/Supervisor: Dr. Diane Pham, CQO & Monique Patil, MPH

- Develop a Health Equity Plan, Patient Demographic Data Reporting Program, and Social Determinants of Health Program for an ACO REACH of 20,000+ beneficiaries

**Connected Care Health Services**

**Newport Beach, CA**

*Finance Department (in conjunction with Discovery Genomics)*

September 2020 – December 2021

### *Cost Control & Program Developer*

Advisor/Supervisor: Holly Brenier, CFO & Dr. Brian James, CSO

- Ran cost analyses and program evaluations on a Medicare Advantage HMO Colorectal Cancer Screening & Control program
- Research findings resulted in an optimization of internal care delivery workflows, cutting program costs by 82% and expanding reach within the denominator population by 93%

## Papers & Projects

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### **Corporate White Papers**

Ward, J., "dxCOVID: A Framework for Comprehensive Pandemic Testing" Connected Care Health Services & Discovery Genomics, Inc, Nov 2020.

Ward, J., "The Fault in Our Stars: CMS's Star Rating System and How COVID-19 Will Affect Health Plans in 2021" Connected Care Health Services, May 2020.

### **Undergraduate Capstone Research Projects**

Ward, J., "Coattails Effect in the 2016 Presidential Election: The Impact of Presidential Candidate Likeability on Down-Ballot Voting" POSC 401, Dec 2019.

Ward, J., "Political Perception and Cognition: Prediction of Illusory Correlation and Political Ideology as a Social Category" PSYC 305, May 2019.

Ward, J., "Perceived Prejudice: Political Ideology, Implicit Bias, and Negative Preferential Consumption" PSYC 2, May 2018.

## Invited Talks & Presentations

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**Poster Presentation**, "Does She Pivot? Identity Constraints and Ideological Messaging on Social Media" Comm Horizons Conference, May 15, 2026.

**Panel Presentation**, "Running with the Double Bind: Exploring Ideological Moderation in Black Women Candidates," Midwest Political Science Association, April 24, 2026.

**Panel Presentation**, "Ideological Moderation in Black Women Candidates on Twitter," Southern Political Science Association, January 16, 2026.

**Invited Lecture**, "Literature Review Development for Policy Research Projects," University of California Center Sacramento, quarterly since Summer 2025.

**Poster Presentation**, "Post-Truth Pandemic: Agnotology and Epistemic Sources within Political Science and Public Health," HSS Student Research Symposium, April 7, 2022.

**Poster Presentation**, "What Do We Owe Each Other: Society, Aesthetics, and the White Moderate on Black Issues," HSS Student Research Symposium, April 7, 2022.

**Presentation**, "The Actor and the Audience: The Consummation of Political Freedom through Arendt, Veblen, and the Athenians," POSC 541, May 2022.

**Presentation**, "The Political Influences on the Implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," POSC 528, May 2022.

**Presentation**, "The Art of Revenge, Discourse, and Secrecy: Russian Revanchism & Irredentism," POSC 551, May 2022.

**Presentation**, "Critique on Marxist Theory of Teleology: Negro Exclusion and Expendability," POSC 340, May 2020.

## Honors & Awards

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<b>MPSA (SCGSM) Graduate Student Travel Award (\$500)</b>	<b>2026</b>
<b>SPSA Prestage-Cook Graduate Student Travel Award (\$500)</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>APSA Political Communications Section Spark Award (\$600)</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>APSA Health Policy &amp; Policy Section Travel Grant (\$300)</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>UC Davis Political Science Summer 2025 Fellowship (\$6,000)</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>UC Davis Political Science Summer 2024 Fellowship (\$5,000)</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>UC Davis Fall 2023 Graduate Student Fellowship (\$5,000)</b>	<b>2023</b>

<b>California State University Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) Fellow</b>	<b>2023</b>
The Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) is designed to support doctoral students who demonstrate promise as CSU faculty. Fellows utilize grant funds to further their doctoral training and to attend professional conferences and workshops that can enhance their professional development. The goal of the grants is to support fellows by awarding them seed funds to enhance their skills and experience to teach a diverse student body at the CSU.	
<b>UC Davis Provost’s Fellowship in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (\$51,178.17)</b>	<b>2023</b>
The UC Davis Provost's Fellowship is an initiative that distributes funding to competitive first-year Ph.D. students chosen based on academic performance within their programs of study. Funding aims to help the graduate recipients focus more on their coursework and research goals by relieving them of teaching assistant duties.	
<b>CSU Fullerton PAJ Division Outstanding MA Student in Political Science Award (Certificate of Recognition)</b>	<b>2023</b>
This award is given to one student per academic year whose overall academic performance, including grades and performance on the written and oral exams, distinguishes them as academically outstanding. The student is nominated and selected upon the advice of Political Science faculty serving on student graduate committees and the program adviser.	
<b>APSA Diversity Fellowship (\$5,000)</b>	<b>2022</b>
A fellowship competition sponsored by the American Political Science Association for APSA members from underrepresented backgrounds applying to or in the early stages of doctoral programs in political science.	
<b>CSU Fullerton Pa'lante Fellowship (\$1,000)</b>	<b>2022</b>
A fellowship program that builds a network of social support, faculty mentoring, and research co-curriculars for current graduate students. Part of Project upGRADS and funded under the U.S. Dept. of Education’s Title V, pt. B, PPOHA program.	
<b>CSU Fullerton Graduate Equity Fellowship (\$1,000)</b>	<b>2022</b>
A fellowship program seeking to increase the diversity of students completing graduate degree programs at the CSU, encouraging continuation toward doctoral programs, and promoting consideration of university faculty careers.	
<b>USC POIR Pre-Doctoral Institute for First-Gen Scholars of Color Fellowship</b>	<b>2022</b>
A fellowship institute targeted towards first-generation and minority graduate students interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in political science.	
<b>CSU Fullerton Project upGRADS META Scholar (\$100 academic stipend)</b>	<b>2021</b>
Master's Early Transition & Access Summer Bridge Program is a summer bridge program to support underrepresented graduate students by providing discipline-based workshops on graduate writing and research.	
<b>Orange County Black Community Heroes</b>	<b>2020</b>
For excellence in volunteering and HIV/PLWHIV & LGBTQ+ health advocacy in policy and community networking on behalf of Radiant Health Clinic.	

## Professional Memberships

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**Southern Political Science Association, 2025 – Present**

**Midwest Political Science Association, 2024 – Present**

**American Political Science Association, 2020 – Present**

- American Political Science Association Diversity Fellow, Fall 2023

**International Political Science Association, 2022 – 2024**

**Pi Sigma Alpha Honors Society, 2020 – Present**

- Chapter activity organizer during the 13<sup>th</sup> straight award year for the Epsilon Eta Chapter at CSU Fullerton
- Serving as Secretary-Treasurer of the CSUF Chapter for the 2022-2023 academic year
- Led the creation and development of two campus fellowship programs targeting student scholars in the department IHO of retiring professor and advisor Dr. Valerie O'Regan
- Established the Programs Committee to oversee fellowship programming

## Academic & Community Involvement

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*President (2025), Vice President (2024 – 2025), Social Coordinator (2023 – 2024)*

### **Graduate Association of Political Science Students (GAPSS) UC Davis, August 2023 - Present**

- Lead departmental RSO operations in collaboration with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and Department Co-Chairs, overseeing programming, budgeting, advocacy, and graduate engagement efforts
- Led a crowdfunding campaign during the UC Davis DEVAR 25-26 cohort to support RSO initiatives (\$1,835)
- Secured a total of \$3,600 in awarded grant funding for the GAPSS RSO accounts

*Graduate Student Coordinator*

### **UC Davis Political Science Research Workshop, August 2025 – Present**

- Organized the recurring workshop series which features job market talks and research presentations
- Coordinated room scheduling, presenter engagement, and department-wide announcements

*Graduate Student Representative*

### **UC Davis Academic Senate – Academic Planning and Development Subcommittee, August 2024 - Present**

- Attend monthly committee meetings and collaborate with faculty members and Lead Analyst Kelly Adams, PhD
- Respond to RFCs by commenting on systemwide and local policies and new degree proposals
- Report back to the Graduate Assembly each quarter with a summary of committee agenda items

### **University of California Academic Senate – Committee on Coordinating Graduate Affairs, August 2025 – May 2026**

### **University of California Office of the President – Academic Planning Council, August 2024 – June 2025**

- Contributed to discussions on broad academic policies and initiatives with multi-campus & systemwide impacts.
- Ensured graduate student perspectives were included in systemwide academic planning and policy formulation

*Event Coordinator & Host*

### **“All Politics is Local,” a speaker series by Pi Sigma Alpha, 2022**

- Moderated a speaker event with invited speakers Raphael J. Sonenshein and Jodi Balma

*Moderator*

### **Annual CSUF Political Town Hall Conference, 2022**

- Moderated undergraduate policy research groups along with Buena Park Council Member Conner Traut
- Discussed the role of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in providing health care services and policy rollouts during the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency

*Health Conference Ambassador*

### **OC Free Health Fair, 2019**

- Represented and spoke on behalf of Radiant Health and RADAR at the 2019 OC Free Health Fair in Fountain Valley, CA.

## Computer Skills

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**Project Management** for administrative process, mergers, go-lives, and vendor onboarding

**Software and application** experience in data validation, network analysis auditing, workflow and operations development

**Statistical Analysis & Research** comprehension in statistical methods and research methodologies for social science

**Programming:** SPSS, RStudio, Python, SQL (novice)

**Applications:** Power BI, SAP, Gephi, Canva, Microsoft Office, G Suite, ClientTrack, EZCAP, Epic EHR Systems