

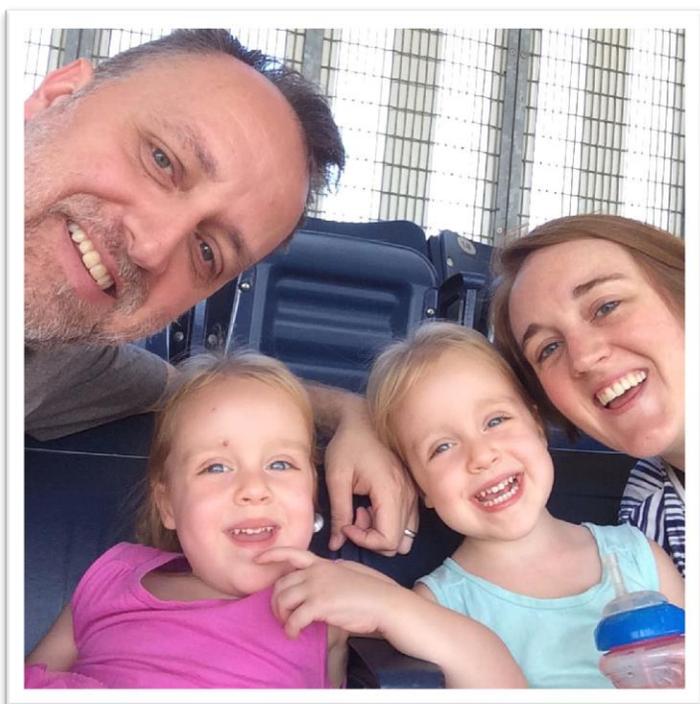
If you are an alum of the CSPA Program, drop us a line at psmith@uca.edu to give us an update on where you are now.

Amanda Allen graduated from UCA's CSPA program in 2008. For the last two and a half years, Amanda has served as the Grants Manager at New York University (NYU).

According to Amanda, the CSPA program gave her the skills she needed to launch her career in grant writing, but through the program she also acquired active and mindful listening skills from the counseling courses that she uses daily in her professional work.

When asked about her proudest moment in her career so far, Amanda said that her career has been full of small victories. She said she takes the most pride in the moments when faculty find true value in her services; when sitting down to a budget or timeline helps them process their ideas into a quality project plan, or when reviewing a proposal she is able to translate the science into an engaging pitch!

Amanda is a proud member of the NYU Naughty Knitters, a group that specializes in making hand-knit items for local charities. She is also a mentor for a high school sophomore through the iMentor program.



Amanda is interested in making the services of her office more proactive. She said that they are constantly working with faculty members during stressful deadlines and reacting to the fires that crop up on a daily basis. She hopes to increase the interactions the office has with faculty that are low-stress and high-benefit by offering more training opportunities and to improve project development. She sees the benefit to helping faculty make more connections and introductions to increase collaboration among them. She would also like to see the office focus on greater discussion of research concepts rather than guideline requirements.

Mike Allen also graduated from the UCA CSPA program in 2008.

He is currently employed at Columbia University in the city of New York, where he has served as the Senior Assistant Dean of Student Assessment and Analytics and Co-Director of the Academic Resource Center for the last four years.

Mike said that he finds fulfilling all of the small connections that he helps students to make for themselves and watching "the light bulbs grow slowly brighter." He said that each time a student reaches out to him after they have left the institution to tell him that he had some effect on their experience, it provides a wonderful moment of validation.

Mike said that the CSPA faculty's emphasis on outcomes-based decision making is one of the most powerful things he received from his graduate education at UCA. He learned the benefits of proactive assessment as a long-term strategy for success, "both individually as well as programmatically." He also stated that his training in leadership and counseling theories and "the chance to put them into practice during the program" were also of great benefit.

Mike advises a cohort of undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students and serves on the institution's premedical committee. He also serves on the school's committee for retention/attrition. Outside of Columbia, he works with a couple of different summer/bridge programs working with high school students from underrepresented/underprivileged backgrounds giving workshops on study skills and the college application process.

Mike says that he is incredibly thankful for the UCA CSPA program. He says that he has worked with a lot of colleagues who attended CSPA programs from more "recognizable" institutions, but he has yet to find anyone as happy with the level of preparation that they received as he and his wife, Amanda, are with theirs. Mike and Amanda are proud parents of twin girls who will turn four-years old this May.