

Ingram Scholar Alumni Spotlight



NICK HALL, Class of 2013

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DEGREES

B.S., Human and Organizational Development, Corporate Strategies; Vanderbilt University
J.D., University of Pennsylvania Law School

CURRENT LOCATION

Alexandria, Virginia

CURRENT EMPLOYER

U.S. Department of Labor

CURRENT OCCUPATION

Attorney

DESCRIBE YOUR CAREER PATH

During my senior year, I completed my HOD internship at the Davidson County District Attorney's Office as a Victim-Witness Coordinator. I loved the direct service component of

preparing witnesses for trials and connecting them with resources after their hearings. I decided then that I wanted to be an attorney and started studying for the LSAT. But, I somehow got on the HOD consulting train and ended up with a job offer at Deloitte in DC, so ditched the LSAT classes and postponed my applications.

At Deloitte, I worked with federal agencies to improve their human capital and operational problems. I had a great team and learned a ton about how the federal government works. But, I still had the itch to get back in the courtroom, so after two years at Deloitte, I applied to law school and ultimately decided to attend Penn Law in Philly. At Penn, I interned at the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of Virginia (Alexandria) and the Philly District Attorney's Office.

After graduating from Penn, I clerked for a federal judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, where I helped manage my judge's criminal and civil docket, research legal issues, and draft legal opinions. It was a great opportunity to learn how judges evaluate and handle cases. After clerking, I ended up at the U.S. Department of Labor, where I currently work on a wide array of litigation and regulatory issues ranging from employee benefit protections, whistle-blower complaints, international child labor agreements, and civil rights/ discrimination matters.

It hasn't been a straight line, and every day I'm learning new things about myself, the world, and the legal industry that keep me excited about going to work!

HOW DID THE INGRAM SCHOLARS PROGRAM PREPARE YOU FOR WHAT YOU ARE DOING TODAY?

It gave me the confidence to be inquisitive - an essential trait for being an effective advocate. I appreciated the meaningful collective conversations that challenged some of the values and ideas that I thought were normal or inherently "right." I was able to ask questions, voice my opinion, disagree with others, learn from others, and still be cordial with everyone. The program both exposed me to different ideas/philosophies and created an inclusive space for free speech and open debate about issues that people really cared about. Ingram was a space where I could disagree fundamentally with a person during an All Scholars Meeting, and then go grab a margarita with that same person at Taco Mamacita to continue the conversation or to talk about something completely unrelated. We were able to disagree with the idea, but still understand the human. Those experiences have helped me to ask questions in a way that helps me gain more intel rather than immediately cancelling folks or their ideas. As a result, I've been able to advocate for issues that I care about with people/organizations that might not have initially been on board.

Also, that etiquette course has been a lifesaver. I now know to never salt my food before tasting it if I'm ever on a job interview. Never assume!

IF YOU COULD DESCRIBE THE INGRAM SCHOLARS PROGRAM IN THREE WORDS WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

Explore Your Why

WHAT DOES THE INGRAM SCHOLAR COMMUNITY MEAN TO YOU?

First, it is an ENORMOUS privilege to have an entire program that has chosen to invest in this group of students. It's a privilege that I probably didn't fully appreciate until post-graduation. With that privilege comes a responsibility to make good on the Ingram investment. As a result, I'm very conscious of the work that I do and want to ensure that it's purpose-driven and honors the values that Ingram helped to instill in me. On a more collective note, it means being part of a diverse group of talented and purpose-driven individuals who shared a really special space at Vanderbilt together. Though we all move into our different spaces post-graduation, I know that an Ingram Scholar will always pick up the phone, answer a knock at the door, or answer a question if I need them for work, service, or personal reasons. And, I'll be that same resource for them, too. That's a huge privilege and responsibility.

BEST INGRAM SCHOLAR MEMORY

Doing my service project in Kampala, Uganda with Michael Feldman (who I just FaceTimed during this social distancing quarantine - my new gauge of true friendship). Together, we worked with an NGO that served vulnerable children to develop logic models to measure their outcomes. Aside from the travel and cultural component of the trip, it was so cool to have just learned about theories of organizational management and human development as an HOD student and then to apply those concepts to a real-life situation. Shout out to Bryn Sierra for all of her mentorship throughout the process!

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT SCHOLARS WHO WANT TO MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR INGRAM SCHOLAR EXPERIENCE?

Take advantage of your summer projects! It's very rare that someone will give you a large sum of money to do whatever you want wherever you want. The summer project experience is a great chance to explore something new and build new relationships with folks. I highly recommend going with a partner if you can, as it's nice to be able to reflect with someone during and after the summer experience.