

Law school to partner with DC program

By **RACHEL MILLER**
COPY EDITOR

After 20 years, the Washington, D.C., Internship Program will expand its opportunities to law school students, a decision that has been a long time in the making.

Executive Director Khalil Jahshan explained that the program is currently utilizing three of the eight floors of the building Pepperdine owns on Pennsylvania Avenue, though they plan to expand to a fourth floor in approximately eight to 12 months. He said the program's intention to expand has always been an overarching goal.

"From the very beginning, President Andrew K. Benton has made clear [the intention to expand]. This has been a historic dream for Pepperdine."

During his seven years as executive director of the program, Jahshan has focused on learning opportunities for students. However, prior to his position, his attention was primarily on activist efforts in regard to Middle East politics. He served as the president of the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) and the executive vice president of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) from 2001 to 2003. He then came to Pepperdine in 2004.

"I've always had an interest in academia at heart," Jahshan said. "When I retired in 2004 and was doing some international consulting work and this opportunity presented itself, I welcomed this second career related to academic work. It's been rewarding for me in working with students and helping them expand their horizons in coming to Washington."

The type of learning Jahshan works toward is "experiential learning," where students grow from a job offer or from being denied an opportunity. No matter the outcome, they have gained viable experience and gotten a glimpse of real-life work.

Benton expanded on the idea of international work for students. "I think it's important for all students to have a global perspective. It's hard for me to imagine a professional career today that does not involve international travel and, even more importantly, international understanding."

Over the years, Jahshan has seen hundreds of students undergo internship opportunities, learn invaluable work skills and have unique opportuni-

ties presented to them. But one favorite story of his involves a student who was interning at the White House.

"One of our students a couple years ago was interning in the scheduling office at the White House, scheduling the president's activities and schedule. When it came time for the educational field trip in the middle of the semester, we were getting ready to go and she asked for permission not to go because she felt it was important for her to stay on the job, because it impacted the president's schedule," Jahshan said with a laugh.

As far as his place in the D.C. program and the experience that one can gain from the internships offered, Jahshan explained that life in Washington is a fast-paced training ground for work experience. Between all of his ventures, he said that hard work has helped him to keep his activities in order.

"Life in D.C. is totally different from life in Malibu. We tend to be very workaholic here. It's normal for us to work 15, 16 to 18 hours a day, and that's how you manage to fit most of these things in place."

He continued by explaining that it is because of the hard work performed by Pepperdine that the program has been so successful.

"The leadership at Pepperdine is committed to availing all kinds of new experiences. When you add this together with all the international programs and campuses, that shows you that it's not accidental that Pepperdine is viewed as the second university in the nation, in terms of its outgoing approach to education and sending students to all these different facilities to continue their education."

Along with Benton and Jahshan, School of Law Dean Deanell Tacha is excited for the many opportunities that will be presented to law students.

"I am so pleased that Pepperdine law students will have the opportunity to participate in the Washington, D.C., program. This meaningful way to be involved with issues of national and international policy importance will add very significant dimensions to their legal education. Lawyers have been, and are now, significant contributors to developing policy, lawmaking, and all aspects of government. This program will expose our law students to the many professional and service opportunities for lawyers in government and related activities."

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Jahshan
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