

# spotlights

## Alumni spotlight: Mindy McLaughlin

### *Through the eyes of a political and business filled career*



SUBMITTED BY MINDY MCLAUGHLIN  
Mclaughlin was a 2001 graduate of Ashland University and is currently the Senior Director of International Business Development at Team NEO.

**ZACH READ**  
Managing Editor

While at Ashland University, every student discovers his or her own niche. Whether it be athletics, theatre, education, fraternity and sorority life or many other groups, every student is bound to find their interest that will catapult them into the real world after leaving AU. For 2001 AU graduate Mindy McLaughlin, her niche was found in the political campaign world. She pursued that niche and was able to use her passion and drive to set herself up for an exciting, adventurous and challenging career. McLaughlin was a student at Ashland from 1997-2001 and graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science with minors in economics and french.

She was an Ashbrook scholar and involved with student senate and the college republicans group, which initiated and drove her passion into the political world. McLaughlin discovered that Ohio was a great place to become involved politically because there was always an event going on in what she would call a strong political structure in the state. She used this resource to her advantage by attending and volunteering at various political events around the state during her free time and on weekends while a student at AU. "For me to get that extra certain knowledge that I wanted to pick up, I just found to do that on my own by volunteering and organizing different events for the college republicans group," McLaughlin

said. Strong connections where McLaughlin was able to meet professionals and learn the craft of politics led her to receiving a job in the political campaign world directly after graduation. After serving in a few various political positions, McLaughlin found herself in Washington D.C. at the age of 26 serving under the Bush administration as an associate director. McLaughlin said it was a very intense job where she had to be on top of her game every day, working 12 hour days and around 65 hours a week. On her LinkedIn profile, it says that while she worked at the White House McLaughlin "... coordinated administration surrogates (cabinet secretaries, cabinet officials, and White House senior staff) to attend events in support of the President's domestic agenda, including policy events relating to energy, trade, and health." McLaughlin would describe her two and a half years at the White House as surreal, knowing she was in the same room with generals and foreign powers who were doing something incredibly important and complicated for America and the world. "To think a girl from Ontario, Ohio was going to be in the same room... that's what was surreal about it, history was happening in front of me," McLaughlin said.

In the summer of 2007, McLaughlin was offered the opportunity to go abroad and work for the state department in Pretoria, South Africa. Through two years at the U.S. Embassy she was a foreign service officer advising former U.S. Ambassador Eric Bost on major foreign policy initiatives for the region. "I pretty quickly figured out through the experiences there that my passion was quickly changed from really caring about politics to really caring about international relations," McLaughlin said.

focuses on foreign owned businesses in the 18 counties of Northeast Ohio, including Ashland County, and works to bring in new companies into the area. Moving away from her career-filled life, McLaughlin has found joy in traveling the world, having been on five of the seven continents and has visited over 30 countries. "For me, what has been the most rewarding about it was picking up different aspects of another culture and having more of an understanding of how the rest of the world looks at life and how the rest of the world looks at the US," McLaugh-



SUBMITTED BY MINDY MCLAUGHLIN  
McLaughlin posing for a picture with former U.S. President George W. Bush during her time working as an associate director for the Bush Administration from 2005-2007.

McLaughlin said she realized the difference between helping America win in a very competitive global climate versus one political party in American winning over another and understood that her passion was changing from one thing to another. When the Obama administration took over the White House in 2009, McLaughlin's time in South Africa came to a close and so she moved back to Ohio. After working for JobsOhio for five and a half years, she found her current niche in 2017 with Team NEO as she essentially works in the same line of work when she was with JobsOhio, but just on a more regionalized scale. As the Senior Director of International Business Development at Team NEO, a regional economic development office, McLaughlin

lin said. McLaughlin also recently completed a three-year term on the AU board of trustees as a part of the Ashbrook Center representative. Coming from a career that has had many changes and moves, McLaughlin leaves AU students with powerful advice that she has learned in her career. "You need to have an open mind and be flexible that as you build your career you may have to take jobs that are not your dream jobs," McLaughlin said. "A career is not made in the first couple of years, it's a lifetime, it's the project of your life to build your career and there is no shortcut to it."



SUBMITTED BY MINDY MCLAUGHLIN  
McLaughlin posing for a picture in Pakistan.

## Department chair spotlight

### *Dr. Victoria Kaskey: Chair of accounting/management information systems*

**CHRISTINE JENKINSON**  
News Editor

The next four issues of The Collegian will be focused on the College of Business, featuring the chairs: professors Victoria Kaskey, Daniel Fox, Robert Stoll and Lance Kaltenbaugh. Breaking down each department within the college will serve to obtain an insight on how much the College of Business offers to students. Dr. Victoria Kaskey is the chair of two rapidly growing programs: accounting and management information systems. Kaskey said that while management information systems is a great minor to pair with the other business degrees offered, it is geared to business data and interpretation, not computer science. In accounting, students learn about credits and debits, producing financial statements, auditing, cost accounting, managerial accounting and taxation. This knowledge is used for students to figure out where they want to go career-wise. In management information

systems, students learn programming, information on databases, network security and system analysis. Again, this basic knowledge is to direct students towards their career. "According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, accounting has an expected 6% 10-year growth rate, while management information systems is expected to have a 12% growth rate," Kaskey said. "Both programs provide great career paths for students, especially since obtaining a job in either of the fields is not as difficult as other occupations. Kaskey has been the chair of this department for three years after Dr. Kris Parsons made the decision to be a professional instructor across the country. Kaskey always wanted to be an educator, so she contacted Baldwin-Wallace about teaching part-time. She taught there for one year in entry-level accounting. B-W taught her that this job was for her, and after reaching out to other universities, Dr. Pittenger (then-Dean of COBE at Ashland

University) told her to call back as nothing was available. Kaskey called once a month for three months. "[The] poor woman must've been so sick of my calls so she gave me



SUBMITTED BY VICTORIA KASKEY  
Dr. Victoria Kaskey, chair of accounting/management information systems in the college of business.

a part-time teaching opportunity in the correctional program in Grafton, Ohio, and the next year, I filled in for someone on sabbatical full-time," Kaskey said. Later that year, she was told that someone was retiring and if she wanted to be in the running for the full-time position a doctorate degree was needed. Kaskey hurried through the program, defended her dissertation and "never looked back." All College of Business and Economics (COBE) students are required to complete an internship. Fortunately, AU has options for students with the J.M. Smucker Company, Cintas and many more firms. COBE holds two events on the first Thursday in September, both showcasing students and prospective interning companies. The first is Career Day. During the day, students attend panel discussions from several employers to learn about their companies. Kaskey is in charge of the second event: Meet the Accountant Night, from 5-7 p.m. Students come to the

event with resumes ready to pass out and speak with 15-20 employers such as Rea & Associates, the J.M. Smucker Company, as well as local firms such as Whitcomb and Hess. Many students gain their internship through this event. In accounting, one graduate got a job on an auditing team that audited a coal mine and had to travel deep into the coal mines to see the inventory. Management information systems is focusing on promoting it as a minor in COBE, while introducing new Data Analytics courses. "Accounting gets a bad 'rap,'" Kaskey said. "So many people think that accounting is sitting behind a desk pumping numbers all day, but that is often further from the truth. Yes, that is probably true at public firms during tax season, but not all careers have desk jobs in accounting." Any questions can be emailed to Kaskey at vkaskey@ashland.edu.