

**Viner Scholar Alejandra Rodriguez on speaking at the Jewish Community Relations Council and applying for internships**



**1. What is your current major?**

“My major is Political Science with minors in Spanish and Arabic. I'm currently a senior here at FAU.”

**2. What are some of your goals?**

“I know for sure that wherever I end up, I want to be serving the United States in some way, whether it be through federal agency service or through a political career.”

**3. What made you choose your major?**

“When I first chose my major, I was planning on going to law school after getting my Bachelors degree. Ever since I was little, I wanted to be a lawyer because I knew I wanted to serve people. However, as I got invested in the Political Science community at FAU, I realized there were a plethora of other ways that I could do so, and on a much larger scale too. My major became even more relevant, but my ambitions following my degree shifted drastically.”

#### **4. Is there any teacher that has impacted your life?**

“One of my old professors, Craig Agranoff, was one of the first people on campus that was adamant about my potential and passionately opened up doors for me. I was a scared freshman when we first met but Professor Agranoff saw something different.”

#### **5. Was college everything you imagined?**

“College has been *even more* than I imagined. I knew I wanted to get involved and make the most out of any opportunity that came my way, but I've done just that and more. I've had the opportunity to serve thousands of students, form bonds and relationships I never would've thought possible, and found some of my greatest passions. College has been amazing to me.”

#### **6. What's the most surprising thing you've learned in college?**

“The most surprising thing I've learned in college is that adaptability is essential. College is such an inconsistent time in your life, and being able to adjust to new environments and situations is a key component to productivity and success.”

#### **7. What's your advice to new scholars?**

“My advice to new scholars is to be particular with who you spend your time with. College has enough distractions, so making sure you're befriending people who are goal-driven and motivated will help you stay focused and achieve your goals as efficiently as possible.”

#### **8. Who is your mentor? What are some events you've done together?**

“Laurie Carney. She works at FAU for the College of Arts & Letters. She introduced me to our Model United Nations Diplomacy Program here on campus. Laurie has been such a big supporter of all of my endeavors and has seen me at my best and my worst times. Ultimately, she's always been there for me and has been a reassuring voice whenever things looked grim.”

**9. Have you gotten involved in any campus organizations? If so which?**

“Student Government. I serve on the executive branch as the President's Director of Governmental Relations. Leon Charney Diplomacy Program, the program that competes at National Model United Nations competitions, Elite Owls, a leadership and service ambassador program, Business and Economics Polling Initiative, a research program where I presented my year-long research project at the Florida state conference and the annual national conference [NCUR].”

**10. What is your role in each organization?**

“Student Government = Director of Governmental Relations / Diplomacy Program = Student Delegate / Elite Owls = Elite Owl Ambassador / Business and Economics Polling Initiative = Undergraduate Researcher.”

**11. You went on a trip to Israel, how did that opportunity come about? And what was your biggest takeaway from the trip?**

“This year was the first year that FAU's Hillel center had received funding from Maccabee Task Force to sponsor a trip to Israel for 20 non-Jewish student leaders. I had been nominated by a friend in Student Government to go through the interview process to be selected as one of the participating students. After the interviews, I found out I was selected and ended up on a life-changing trip to Israel with (what were) 20 strangers! The trip was very political in nature and opened up my eyes to the true complexity of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.”

**12. What's the most recent internship you've done? What did it consist of?**

“The last internship I completed was at the United States Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. In this role, I worked in the Administrator's Office of Public Affairs. Every day, I worked with the appointed staff to learn about the media, handle media inquiries, and even help with the roll out of big projects like the ACE Rule this summer. Since being back in Florida, I'm currently working for Marco Rubio out of his Miami office.”

**13. What are your tips for scholars who apply for internships?**

“My internship at the US E.P.A. came about because I simply asked one day while meeting the press secretary -- no formal application involved. Networking, especially in the fields of liberal arts, is so important. Throw yourself out there, and don't underestimate the power of personability and taking a risk by doing things untraditionally. The worst they can say is no!”

**14. What was the recent event you spoke at? What was that experience like?**

“I recently visited the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) to speak to them about my experience in Israel. Though I had talked about the trip extensively to my friends and family, this was my first time discussing it in front of people who know Israel very well and had strong emotional ties to it. Speaking about something political to a group of people is always tricky, but they were so welcoming and loved hearing about the trip from a non-Jewish student perspective.”

**15. You also work with McGraw Hill, how did you learn about them? What are some of the tasks you do with the company?**

“I learned about McGraw-Hill from Sydney, a good friend and coworker for Amazon. Sydney and I collaborated really well together as soon as we met, so she recommended me to McGraw-Hill. Since working with McGraw-Hill, I've been a keynote speaker at their National Sales Meeting, been the subject of commercial marketing material, and now work as a Student Leader of Affordability Partnerships. In this role, I train student ambassadors from all over the country to propose affordable options to their campuses in order to help their students save money on course materials. This is one of the most fulfilling jobs I've ever had.”