

## Featured Alumna: Laila SORURBAKHSH Antenangeli, Class of 2001



**Dr. Laila SORURBAKHSH Antenangeli '01**, Assistant Dean of Academic Programs and Assistant Professor of International Affairs at George Washington University's Elliott School, is a dedicated educator and public policy expert. In her current role, she instructs graduate students in the areas of public policy, leadership, and data analysis.

Teaching wasn't always in the cards for Laila, but dedicating her career to the greater good was. "Since I was a kid, I always wanted to help people." As Laila matured, politics presented itself as the most viable option. "I realized that influencing policy would have the biggest impact on the largest number of people."

Duchesne, with its training in critical thought coupled with its focus on global social awareness, was "super influential" in shaping Laila's perspective. Involvement in STUCO provided early exposure to government structure, though Laila admittedly "didn't take the roles [of secretary and vice president] too seriously."

Thanks to seven AP courses, Laila entered the University of Texas at Austin with two years of college credit. She was twenty when she graduated from the Honors program with a dual degree in Government and English. Next came a Master's of Political Science from the University of Houston. In graduate school, her time as a teaching assistant reshaped her career aspirations, steering her towards the doctoral studies necessary to become an educator at the highest level.

After earning her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Houston, Laila led the Master's of Nonprofit Management program at the U of H Downtown campus. The move was a natural fit: her doctoral research had centered on interest groups, which are often

## Featured Alumna: Laila SORURBAKHSH Antenangeli, Class of 2001

nonprofit organizations that engage in political lobbying and advocacy. Her research on the topic has been published in scholarly journals and she has presented her work at conferences nationally and abroad.

Among her many career accomplishments, the one Laila is proudest of is shepherding the next generation of public service leaders. Two years ago, George Washington University introduced Public Service Weekend. The program offers undergraduates a weekend of workshops where they learn about careers in public service. Last summer's topic, "Advancing Equity Through Inclusive Leadership and Policy Making," caught the attention of several Ivy league institutions, which are now modeling their own programs after the one that Laila leads. "It's a great opportunity that is now available nationwide."

As the program's faculty advisor, Laila teaches undergraduates both the hard and soft skills needed for a career in public service. It's an echo of the instruction she received at Duchesne, where "the faculty was interested in my growth as a human being and a member of society."