

**Name of alumnus:** Luke Yingling, Master of Public Administration, Penn State Harrisburg.

**Where are you currently working?** Rhetoric

**What is your job title?** CEO

**What inspired you to pursue your MPA degree?** I wanted to understand how governments work at a practical level. I wanted the freedom to explore diverse topics of interest, like federalism, accounting, and politics while tying it all together by focusing on how governments work and how to help them work better.

**How has your MPA/MPP degree helped you in your career?** I was able to chart my own path, focusing a lot of time on research projects for class credit. That experience and the knowledge gained was foundational to the creation of my company. Without the flexibility to pursue my interests, including things like judicial politics and research methods, I would have lacked the know-how to develop the algorithms I used to serve as the foundation of my company's products, which are now used nationwide by lawyers. Plus, because of the program's focus on practical experience, I spent 18 months working in Pennsylvania's government. During that time, I created hundreds of millions of dollars in budget and grant proposals, made preliminary budgets, helped manage state-wide resources, made policy proposals, and presented research findings to cabinet secretaries. Those experiences made me confident to later pitch investors, raise capital, create company budgets, and fulfill lots of my other current responsibilities.

**What do you love about being an MPA/MPP alumni?** I am still able to connect with faculty who mentored me during my time at Penn State and rely on their input, even long after graduating. Since graduating, I have published two articles and several blog posts with my former advisor, who has now become a valued friend.

**What advice would you give to persons pursuing a career in public service?**

Service takes many forms, but it always requires competent people with many talents and skills. The program at Penn State will expose you to the challenges you need - both inside and outside of the classroom - to hone a diverse set of skills and talents needed for service.