



Meet Alum at ASA!

JESSICA (HERNANDEZ) WOOLEY
Student Support Specialist

ASA's newest Student Support Specialist is not new to ASA; Jessica Wooley grew up at Arizona School for the Arts. Being the child of an employee, her roots are deep and Jessica had exposure to the school's culture long before she began attending in sixth grade. Upon graduation in 2013, Jessica was awarded one of two National Hispanic Merit Scholarships and attended Barrett, the Honors College at Arizona State University where she received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology.

In 2018 there was an opening in the front office at ASA, and excited for the opportunity to return to what she considers home, Jessica joined our staff. During her tenure in this position, Jessica also filled in as Executive Assistant for six months. It was an opportunity to see Arizona School for the Arts from a different perspective, "In the front office I got the most opportunities to engage with all of the different stakeholders in our community (faculty, board members, community members, families, and students)," she says, "I really feel like my time in the front office gave me the strongest sense of the individuals that make up the fabric of ASA and I always enjoyed getting to learn everyone's names and faces. I also learned so much about the hard work and many hands that go into running the school."

Jessica's unique perspective – from family member, to student, to employee – has allowed her to see the school grow and evolve. "While I think our commitment to college prep informed by both academics and performing arts has remained over the years, it is constantly evolving to improve. I have seen so many incredible changes from 3QP topics, Capstone Projects, and the implementation of the Arts Seal and Conservatory Prep Program. One major difference I have noticed since working at ASA is the community's passion and commitment to activism. We have so many incredible student-led clubs that focus on activism within our community and wonderful staff to support those programs. It has been really cool to see how ASA has evolved to support the needs of our students and the community at large." But she is not just an observer, she is part of the change. At ASU Jessica minored in Women & Gender Studies, leading her to The Body Project, a group "dedicated to improving self-



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worth and body image". While working in the front office, she started the ASA Body Project Program and Club.

At the beginning of this school year, Arizona School for the Arts was committed to provide for the social and emotional well-being of our students who had spent so many months with online learning and without the in-person companionship of their classmates. We were fortunate to be able to expand out Student Support Services and even more fortunate to have Jessica transition from office support to student support. "Ultimately, my goal as an educator and Student Support Specialist is to continue to grow and strengthen my relationship with our students and let them know that they always have someone who is there for them and a safe space when they need one. Our students have been through so much over the past year and a half and I feel very fortunate that I can open both my classroom and my office to them as a respite from the chaos and hardships of their lives. I hope to provide our students with the tools and skills they need to navigate big feelings and make healthy and responsible decisions, and also be there for them in the moments that they can't do this alone." But lifelong learner that she is, Jessica still feels there is knowledge to be gained at ASA, "I also feel like I am constantly learning from our students -- they are so civically engaged, passionate, and empathetic and they constantly inspire me to be the best person I can be!"



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