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Professor Could Have Gone Anywhere – But Happily Chose El Camino College Compton Center

Jesse Mills had multiple visiting professor offers from prestigious universities throughout the nation four years ago when he finished his Ph.D. at USC – offers that would have likely lead to tenure-track teaching positions.

He instead chose instead to accept an offer from El Camino College Compton Center to teach political science – and he’s very happy he did.

“I came to ECC Compton Center because I was more interested in being an educator rather than a researcher,” the award-winning professor said. “But beyond that, the student body seemed very special to me. A lot of the students here are first-generation college students, and some of them do not arrive particularly interested in academics. I find it really, really satisfying to turn these students into scholars.”

The Los Angeles native also finds it rewarding that he has developed personal relationships with some of his students – something that would have been more difficult at a four-year university or even a large community college.

Notably, one of his students – who wants to transfer to USC next spring – was an accomplished athlete who offered to teach Mills how to box. Mills accepted the offer and is enjoying his new athletic pursuit.

“I’ve been able to enter circles that I would never have had access to,” he said.

Mills said some of his fellow graduates from USC were surprised at his choice of teaching at Compton Center.

“But others who’ve seen how much I’m enjoying it are actively applying to community colleges,” he said.

Mills received his B.A. from Loyola Marymount University in 2004, graduating with honors in political science, and his doctorate from USC in 2012.

He teaches several classes, including Government of the United States and California, Introduction to Principles and Methods of Political Science, and Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. He also is an instructor in the First Year Experience program, a specialized program for highly motivated incoming freshmen that groups students together, exposes them to an integrated curriculum, and fast-tracks them to transfer to a four-year university.

In addition, he has been active on campus committees, and is currently serving as Program Review Coordinator and Student Learning Outcomes Facilitator.

His academic credentials are unimpeachable. He's received several awards, grants and fellowships, including the USC Department of Political Science Outstanding Teaching Award in 2007, and he has been a lecturer at Scripps College, USC and LMU.

Mills has presented papers at conferences throughout the world – including Toronto and Ireland – primarily on the role of media and emotions in U.S. presidential elections, the topic of his Ph.D. thesis.

In publications, he is the co-author of a chapter in the book *iPolitics: Campaigns, Elections, and Governing in the New Media Era*. The chapter is entitled “YouTube and TV Advertising Campaigns: Obama vs. McCain in 2008.”

“I had a wonderful experience as an undergraduate and graduate student, but Compton Center has opened up a whole new and exciting world for me,” he said.

Photo Available:

<http://www.compton.edu/campusinformation/currentnews/Photos/2017/JesseMills2014.JPG>

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About El Camino College Compton Center

El Camino College Compton Center is the community's education solution offering a full complement of transfer and degree courses, as well as career and technical education. Students may earn an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a four-year university or train for a career. El Camino College Compton Center is located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA 90221.

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