

# UVSC SUCCESS!

## Luke Peterson



Someone once told UVSC senior Luke Peterson if no one represented his position in government, he had a duty to run for office: So he did. Right after graduating from Payson High School in 2000, Peterson campaigned for a spot on the Nebo School Board.

"I had a lot of things I wanted to change," Peterson said. Although he didn't win the elections, he came out with 2,000 votes and a newfound appreciation for the efforts behind political campaigning.

His initial attempt at politics eventually led Peterson to his present course – the Master of Public Policy program at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government complete with a \$47,000 fellowship. Graduating from UVSC in April with a bachelor's degree in history and minor in philosophy, Peterson hopes his experience at UVSC and Harvard will help him achieve his goal to advocate political campaign finance reform, lobbyist reform and increased ethics in government.

Harvard's program was a perfect fit; he could tailor his degree towards campaign finance and government ethics and it happens to be the best program for public policy in the nation. Without his experience at UVSC and encouragement from UVSC faculty and staff, Peterson says he never would have attempted to apply at Harvard.

"There are so many opportunities for students here," Peterson said. "The instructors are excited to hear your input and help you gain experience. And you can create your own opportunities."

Peterson knows this firsthand. As a research assistant for UVSC's Ethics Center (a job created just for him), Peterson had the opportunity to investigate grants on issues in applied ethics. He wrote grants and assisted in securing \$120,000 from the Daniels Fund for scholarships to Native American students. He has presented at several campus conferences and was project director for the third annual UVSC Public Policy Symposium.

In fall 2005, Peterson interned in the Campaign Legal Center in Washington, D.C. where he conducted research on voting rights and electioneering activities by non-profit organizations, in addition to drafting an ordinance for publicly financed election campaigns in Ocean City, N.J. He was also the principle researcher for the recently released study, "Money in the Bank: An Analysis of Campaign Expenditures by Utah

State Legislators 2002-2004.” He is also founder and executive director of Utah Students for Clean Elections.

Even with all this experience, Peterson is still surprised at getting into Harvard’s master’s program.

"It’s weird to think of little me from Payson, Utah going to Harvard,” he said. "But I can’t wait to get started."