

# Featured Alumni - Joseph (Joey) Arora (PLC '09)

## December 2018

*Director of Community Development for AFWERX*

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Captain Joseph Arora (Joey) wants to understand how the world works through entrepreneurship and innovation. In fact, this class of 2008 PLC alum says he is, “Hellbent on making our government innovative”. He has progressed through a demanding career that requires sharp skills in leadership and has grown to foster the innovation he values so highly.

In May 2012, Joey graduated from CU Boulder with a degree in Business Management and then entered the Air Force where served five years of active duty. As a Leeds School of Business student, Joey was deeply involved in his academics as well as Air Force ROTC, the Honors Program, Presidents Leadership Class, and the Diverse Scholars Program on campus. After graduating it was clear to him that he was meant to pursue his lifelong dream of a career in the Air Force. During his active duty in Afghanistan, Joey realized his true passion was innovation, especially for how it related to the military and government. After a phone interview, while stationed in Afghanistan, Joey was named the Director of Community Development for AFWERX, Headquarters Air Force, Pentagon, DC. His current title allows Joey to innovate and solve problems, big and small. He feels lucky

to be involved with the implementation of solutions on day-to-day Air Force operations and large-scale mission-based operations. He describes his time in the Air force as having, “transitioned from defending our freedoms, to improving them through innovation.” Joey has also been involved with the DC Startup Weekend as a facilitator and speaker supporting entrepreneurship for the past two years. He is excited for the upcoming event this year as he will continue his tenure in the community. He is passionate about the idea that creating pathways to capital and jobs through entrepreneurship is critical to our success as a society.

Joey demonstrates strong leadership which he partially attributes to his time spent in PLC as an undergrad. He says that the program taught him lessons about taking care of people through leadership and how to view the “bigger picture” of the problems leaders face in the world. He firmly believes that, “PLCers get stuff done. They are executors who have the skill-set to jump into a situation and solve problems.” Joey embodies this belief in his career every day. He also continues to be involved with PLC by mentoring current students through the alumni mentor program.

His advice to current PLC students is to travel as much as possible. Traveling is one of his favorite things to do and it has enhanced his leadership skills and world view immensely. Joey has been to nineteen different countries, Spain being his favorite, and plans on seeing many more in the coming years. Beyond traveling Joey enjoys soccer, reading, making connections, and fostering a successful career for himself. He defines this success as, “some combination of finding happiness while doing meaningful, impactful work and also enjoying my day-to-day life by taking care of the people around me and having fun.” Between balancing an impactful career, many meaningful relationships, and practicing leadership, Captain Joseph Arora is making big change in the world today.

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