

Why Might a Communications Degree be Right for You?

What do I want you want to be when I grow up? A question loaded with possibilities, and as we grow the opportunities only multiply. A communication studies degree can create a solid foundation to give a student the ability to choose. Communication skills are essential in any career, being able to effectively articulate and express an idea is an invaluable ability, just look at these success stories.

Nabiha Aziz is a current communication studies student in her senior year at UM. Beginning her college career as a business student, she quickly realized it was not the path for her. Like many students entering a university setting, the options can be overwhelming and the first choice is often not the right or the last choice. Luckily, she had a helping hand from faculty member Eva Alonso, the Director of Advising for the School of Communication. Aziz said that she would have never been able to successfully make the jump without the support of Alonso.

Aziz has not only gained skills within the classroom, but outside as well. With several internships with congress people, such as Congressman Joe Garcia in 2014 and Congresswoman Kathy Castor in 2015. She was also an active member of UDebate and a member of the Marine Mammal Rescue Team. Noting the importance to take advantage of all UM has to offer, the program, she explained, "is extremely well-rounded and creates a prepared and skilled student."

Following graduation, Aziz is planning on going to law school, though still not sure where she is will attend or what type of law she would like to practice. She explained how eager she is for her future. "I believe this program has made me a more confident and adept communicator. I am a stronger public speaker and can clearly articulate my thoughts. My professors have also inspired me to follow a career path that I am passionate about."

Emily Beltt, 2015 UM graduate, made her way from Minneapolis to Miami to double major in ecosystem science and policy and communication studies. Beltt's program required her to double major and she believed the greatest personal benefit to her would be something that allowed her to closely work with people.

"This program helped me better interpret the world around me," Belt said.

"Communications, especially the formal research side of this field, has a tangible use in any field past college. I have the ability to critically analyze not only the words we say, but how we say them in daily life."

After UM, Beltt spent a year as a farmer teaching sustainable agriculture to high school students in California at Lead Farmland. Now, back in her home town, she works for Target Headquarters as a renewable resource coordinator, coordinating with solar and refrigeration vendors to communicate the process of solar installation projects.

Beltt's advice for future students, "[I would] encourage that the students entering the program also has a specific passion they want to highlight through the communication school. For example, many of my peers wanted to go into sports communication or health communication. I wanted to do environmental communication. I noticed students without these focal points struggled to find meaning in the coursework itself."

Kailey Walsh, 2016 UM graduate, another dual major of economics and communication studies. Though she didn't have to stray far from home, Boca native thrived in the UM environment as student athlete, playing on the Women's golf team, where she was the active captain for 3 years.

Walsh was originally an economics major but after taking several classes in the School of Communication, realized this was the place for her. "The professors were so passionate about what they were teaching, it made me even more excited to learn," she said. Having begun with a separate major Walsh was unsure of what to expect. "I can say with full confidence that the School of Communication has far exceeded my expectations."

Walsh is currently obtaining her real estate license and recently complete a self-directed study to become conversationally fluent in Spanish, a plus if she plans to stay in Miami, known for its Latino influence. When reflecting on her time at UM she said, "I am most proud of my interpersonal communication skills. I have been able to use my communication skills in all of my business relationships" Walsh hopes future students will see all this program has to offer.

When each student was asked if they would recommend this program, they all had similar eager responses. This program shaped them far beyond academics, they were able to each better understand themselves and their individual passions. Whether it be from experience, the support of a mentor or relationships they built, this program has led to numerous success stories.