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'burg Blogs : 2013 : 04 : 11 : An Education through Experience

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'burg Blogs »

An education through experience

Posted April 11, 2013 at 3:23 pm by [Chelsea Tatham '14](#)

While finishing up with my internship at University Advancement on campus and working for The Crow's Nest, I think I have learned more in one semester than I did the previous two years combined.

My first two years of college were filled with prerequisites and general education requirements. There weren't many classes that actually held my interest for the entirety of a semester.

This year I finally started getting into classes pertaining to my major: mass communications and journalism. Yes, I learned AP style and interviewing and reporting skills in previous classes, but I actually got to put the things I learned into action.

Neighborhood News Bureau (NNB), a class required for a degree in mass communications, is a working newsroom set in the heart of Midtown in south St. Petersburg. In this class I learned what it takes to go out into a community and speak to strangers in order to get stories.

Stories from NNB are published on the bureau's online magazine and sometimes sent to local publications like The Gabber in Gulfport or St. Pete Patch. I was fortunate to be one of those published outside the campus system while in this class.

In news editing, students learn everything there is to know about AP style and how to recognize mistakes in journalistic writing. In this class, I also got the chance to meet some famous people in the journalism world from the Poynter Institute and the Tampa Bay Times.

While working for The Crow's Nest, I learned what it is like to run a newsroom. I learned the processes of story and photo selection, editing, and as the creative director I learned the layout process and basic design concepts.

A semester internship at University Advancement (formerly the Division of External Affairs) taught me public relations communication and networking. I learned about updating the USFSP website and keeping track of the social media outlets on campus.

During the course of the spring semester I wrote press releases, blogs and stories, and took and edited photos while creating connections with important people on campus.

I now have a body of published work.

An education from a classroom is essential, but I think it's important to complement those skills in a setting that is outside the walls of a classroom. In journalism, like other majors, it's essential

to network and to get in contact with the right people. Putting a degree on a resume looks great, but experience and letters of recommendation are even better.

About the blogger



I'm a senior majoring in Mass Communications. As a student journalist, I work for The Crow's Nest student newspaper as the Creative Director. I enjoy anything and everything that has to do with journalism, especially design and feature writing. Having been born and raised in Florida, I enjoy the beach, native wildlife, and learning about Florida's history. I'm also left-handed and an only child so I'm sort of an oddity.