

Communication

April 19, 2013

Danielle Bina has been a Lecturer here at UW-Green Bay for six years. She has recently been promoted to Senior Lecturer and Internship Coordinator. We sat down with her to discuss her promotion and the recent changes to the Communication department.



Could you give us a little background on your career? My career has not developed through academia the way many of your professors have. I started out in college wanting to teach high school social studies. I ended up switching gears, having a double major, and went into journalism. I got my first job in television news, right out of school, and stayed with it for nearly 20 years. After being a news anchor for many years, I switched gears to become a news director, which is more of a managerial role. I've also consulted in public and media relations. This opportunity came up (at UW-Green Bay), and everything came full circle.

What attracted you to this position? They (the department) were looking for the full complement of field experience; someone with a television, radio, and public relations background, and those people are hard to find. I happened to have all three. The job description read like my resume.

How have your real life experiences influenced your teaching style? Definitely. I had just come from the real world, in the field of communication. I know where my students are going. I know the expectations when they get out of here. I'm able to tailor my teaching style to the students and what they need in the real world. As a news director, I hired UWGB graduates and interns, and I had a wish list of things that I wanted them to know.

What advice do you have for prospective Communication students? Understand the tremendous importance of human communication. Every organization has communication needs. It might be on the journalism end, on the organizational end, or the human resources end. Every organization has public relations needs, whether they recognize it or not. I want to stress the significance of human communication, effective communication. It's not just transferring information from one person to another. And don't be put off by people thinking it's an easy major. It's a very difficult major. How many people do you know who actually understand communication?

Could you tell us about the promotion that you have received? Senior Lecturer, yeah they gave that to me because I'm older now. (She laughs!) It's a very nice honor to be recognized, it

always is. The department has been very supportive, so all joking aside, as a lecturer really our main focus is teaching. So to be recognized for teaching is an honor for me, because I really love it. You know, it's kind of like the Academy Awards. You're recognized by your peers. It's not some committee that does it. It's your peers who vote for you within the department, and that's pretty cool.

Now that you are the Internship Coordinator, how would you like to enhance the internship program? We have one of the highest placement rates on this campus. So we are focused on attracting new opportunities. We are gauging business' interests in partnering with us. The other one is quality control, by gauging student feedback. I don't want our communication majors out there making coffee. A good internship has to be a valid opportunity, and fit within the guidelines of communication. Does it enhance the student's career? Lastly, there is some paperwork and accountability so that at the end students create a useful portfolio.

What insights do you have for students who seek internship opportunities? First and foremost realize that you're not only representing yourself; you're representing the University of Wisconsin Green Bay and its Communication Department. You are, in a sense, an ambassador, which lets the community know that we have excellent prospects when they're hiring. They should look at us and our graduates. An internship is a privilege, not an entitlement.

What do you see as the future of the Communication department? I'm really excited about our future. There's always an unknown with change, but all organizations have to change. No organization can stay the same forever. You're dead in the water if you think that's the safe way to go. We have two new faculty members coming in and I think they are going to bring energy and new ideas to the program. That is so healthy for any program. Second, I am really excited about our new curriculum. The way we have streamlined it, and the way we've designed the prerequisites, it's a one stop shop. What I am particularly excited about is that from here on students will all be on the same page. From an Instructor's point of view that is wonderful.