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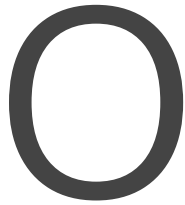
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GGC English Grads Discuss Their Experience in the Field

📅 March 22, 2021 ⌚ 4 min read 👤 Charlotte Reames



On March 4th, two Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) Alumni discussed their experience in the workforce post-graduation at an English Degrees at Work event, focusing on marketable skills, internships, and resources for job opportunities for English majors outside of the traditional academic and teaching avenues.

“For me, it was really about trying to show students what those opportunities are, and to be very frank, for me to learn more about [it] myself,” Benjamin O’Dell, Assistant of English Professor, said.

Professor O’Dell hosted the presentation for his English Experiential/Service Learning class but opened it up to all students. Alexa Elliott, technical writer and editor for ProEdit, and Victoria Larson, senior search engine optimization specialist at Nebo Agency, are GGC English graduates who answered questions about their work experience during the event.

Part of the goal of the event was to expel the assumption in students that opportunities with an English degree are limited to teaching, graduate school, or unemployment.

“I was hesitant [to study English] because there is a stereotype of ‘the only thing you’ll do with an English degree is tell people about it while you make their coffee,’” Elliott said.

“It’s nevertheless true that there are a lot of positions out there, interesting positions, well-paying positions, that people with an English degree are poised to take on,” Professor O’Dell said in a statement to the Globe.

Elliott (‘15) worked at an internship with the Gwinnett Daily Post as well as copyediting for the original Globe team while at GGC. After her internship ended,

she was hired as a copy editor. Through her internship, she found an opportunity for full time work.

“I really struggled with, like, ‘is there anything for me besides graduate school or teaching?’” Elliott said in a statement to the Globe. “What’s really great about having that English degree is it gives you that critical thinking and research and analytical skills, and those will set you apart in whichever [industry] you end up in.”

Larson (‘15) worked on campus as a copywriter and student assistant on the GGC web team. After she graduated, Larson was hired by her internship and quickly moved up the ranks. She now works in management for one of Atlanta’s highest rated companies in her field.

“I feel like what I paid for in terms of tuition was less about the book knowledge I got and more about the skills I learned...When it comes to classic literature, that stuff comes up maybe in trivia,” Larson said in a statement to the Globe.

“However, the ability to argue a point and do it in a clear way and a lot of those... soft skills are the things that I learned especially in the English program...It’s not necessarily the stuff you’re getting out of the books themselves but the skills in how you’re approaching that and how you’re communicating that that are the real value of college.”

When asked about what resources were the most helpful in their job searches, Elliott and Larson both agreed that relationships with colleagues and professors are essential.

“[I’m] not just talking about the typical networking buzzword, the surface level relationships you build to get your name out there,” Larson said. “[The internship] found me valuable, because I found them valuable, and I worked to foster those relationships. I cannot [overstate] how important that is.”

Elliott reflected on the connections that she made in college and maintained after graduating.

“I was as successful as I was because I cultivated professional relationships with my professors, and that’s really helped me post graduation,” Elliott said in a statement to the Globe.

There will be a second presentation for English Degrees at Work on April 5th with Ida Harris ('17) and Marendra Scales ('20).

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