FSU Communication Studies Major Helps to Create a Sustainable Department Community

Frostburg, MD, April 30, 2012- Frostburg State University (FSU) Senior Brittany Morrison, of Baltimore, MD, completed her Communication Studies Capstone this spring semester. For the past 15 weeks, Morrison served as the Communication Studies Department assistant under the supervision of Department Chair Dr. Elesha Ruminski. As department assistant, Morrison aided the department with internal and external communication on and off campus. Morrison is a Communication Studies major with an interdisciplinary track in Event Planning, and she has a Marketing minor. She is also president of the department’s chapter of the national honor society, Lambda Pi Eta.

The Communication Studies Capstone that Morrison completed was a 3-credit experiential learning opportunity with an approved organization. For Morrison’s experience, she focused on building the department’s community. Morrison says, “Outside of the people you have class with and any friends you might have that are also in the major, you don’t really know all of who else is in the same discipline as you. That’s not how a department should be.” She worked toward the goal of community-building by supporting all aspects of the department, including the student organization Student Communication Studies Association (SCSA). She pitched the idea and began to organize a mid-semester “meet and greet” gathering where majors, minors, SCSA members, and faculty and staff could all come and meet and socialize with one another as well as learn about different aspects of the department and ultimately develop a closer bond with everyone. Although there wasn’t enough time allotted for this event to happen this semester, Morrison looks forward to helping her successor ensure that the event happen next semester. Morrison developed and implemented a new way to improve and maintain contact information for alumni.

She advanced the sixth edition to the department’s newsletter Communication Connection. Also as a part of Morrison’s Capstone, she co-coordinated the end of the semester colloquium. Morrison wrote a number of the articles for the department newsletter. This required interviews, developing survey and reflection questions, and attending Communication Studies events and reviewing them. This volume of the newsletter is all about shining spotlights on the positive successes of the department. For example, the newsletter has a section dedicated to its seven graduating seniors. It also brings attention to Professor Sheri Whalen’s branch into the theatre arts, Dr. Ruminski’s promotion to associate professor, and the success of the three sessions of the Sustaining Campus and Community Dialogue Series. “Working on this newsletter has helped me improve not only my communication skills but also skills that I will use every day. For example, my time management skills have grown and matured significantly,” Morrison says.

Reflecting back on her Capstone experience, she comments “Making the Practicum a requirement for the majors is one of the best things for the students. I have learned so much about working with people in different situations as well as about myself and my communication styles and work effort. One of the things I learned is I have Rockefeller dreams, and I try to accomplish them all by myself. I learned that I have to open up to people and allow them to help me to accomplish my goals. It would have taken me years of stress to figure this out if it wasn’t for this experience. I am so grateful to have had such a supportive team in Dr. Elesha Ruminski and Professor David Stern and a wonderful, accommodating site to work in.”

For more information on the Communication Studies major at FSU, please contact Ruminski, Communication Studies Department Chair, at 301-687-4480 or elruminski@frostburg.edu. The newsletter and information about the major can be found at the Department’s website at http://www.frostburg.edu/dept/cmst/.

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