

Students excel in Communication Dual Degree Program

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Senior Communication Major

The Department of Communication at Villanova offers students the ability to obtain a Master of Arts in Communication in conjunction with their Bachelor of Arts through the five-year BA/MA program. This dual degree accelerated program enables qualified undergraduate students to take graduate courses during their senior year and complete the remaining requirements during a fifth year. Once a student has completed the undergraduate requirements, they are awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree at the end of their fourth year. The student is then able to continue pursuing their graduate career at Villanova.

Two exceptional students involved in this five-year BA/MA program are Lauren Dugan and Evan McIntyre. Dugan, a communication major specializing in Journalism with a minor in writing and rhetoric, is currently a senior who will receive her Bachelor of Arts this December and will continue to work toward graduating with her Master of Arts in December of 2016. McIntyre, a communication major with a specialization

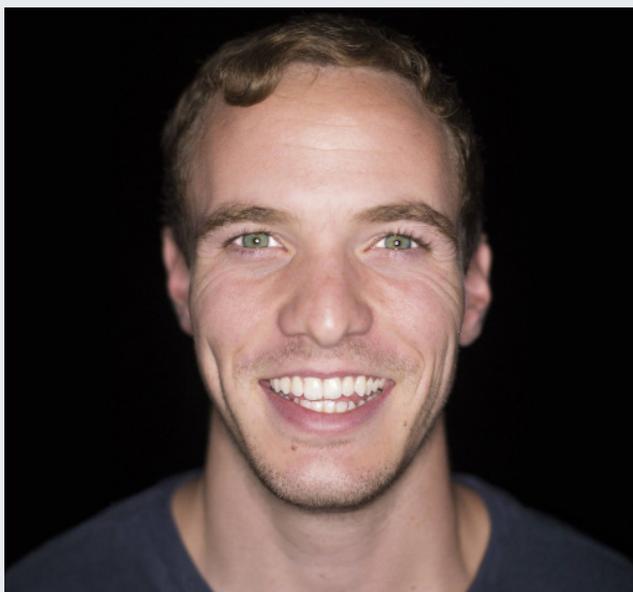
in media production, is currently working towards his Master of Arts and is set to graduate in spring 2016, having already received his Bachelor of Arts this past spring semester.

Dugan explained that her decision to pursue the Communication Graduate Studies Program at Villanova was largely due to the fact that the program is theoretically based.

“As an aspiring journalist, it is tempting to lean towards a program that is more hands-on and specialized in journalism,” said Dugan. “My thought process was that I could learn the hands-on experience through internships and outside work. But what the Villanova classroom offers is a program based in theory and how to think critically.”

Having been involved in the dual degree program for just two months, Dugan explained that she has already seen herself change as a student. Currently, Dugan is a Junior Reporter for FOX 29 Philadelphia, the ESPNU Villanova Contributor, as well as the Villanova TV General Manager. In the past Dugan has worked with the Catholic News Service as a Papal Visit to Philadelphia Freelancer and Vatican Intern, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Vocations Office as a Digital Media/Video Producer, NBC10 Philadelphia as a News Intern and Villanova Athletics as a Video Intern. Needless to say, Dugan has taken full advantage of everything Villanova has to offer and does not plan on stopping anytime soon. When asked what her dream job would be, Dugan said she wants to write history: “My dream job is to be a field reporter – on the scene, speaking to characters, building the story.”

Like Dugan, McIntyre has also taken advantage of all Villanova has to offer a student. Since his undergraduate graduation, McIntyre has worked with a number of local production companies to help shoot and edit films



Current graduate student, Evan McIntyre

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and documentaries. When asked what inspired him to pursue a career in media production, McIntyre replied, "I think what helped me tremendously in my pursuit of becoming a filmmaker was the privilege of being a part of Villanova's Social Justice Documentary. I had the opportunity to go abroad with my class to Costa Rica and film for two weeks."

As McIntyre's passion for media production grew, he knew he did not want to end his studies after finishing his senior year. Not only did the BA/MA program seem to be the best decision he could make but he also explained that he felt there was still so much he could learn from the professors in the Department of Communication. Although juggling the workload of classes as well as video production can be challenging,



Current senior communication major pursuing her dual degree, Lauren Dugan.

McIntyre said it is rewarding to be able to spend another year learning as much as possible about media production and communication.

"I think the Communication Graduate Studies Program is really enabling me to refine the skills that will hopefully allow me to pursue my passions professionally," said McIntyre. In the future, Evan's dream job is to own a small but talented production company or to work for a company like Netflix or HBO, and to become a part of a creative team for a new original series.

McIntyre and Dugan are only two of the students pursuing a Master of Arts in conjunction with their Bachelor of Arts. This prestigious accelerated program only accepts five Villanova students per year, according to the university website, and accepts students competitively based on a number of different criteria.

Students must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 with a communication GPA of at least 3.2. They must also complete 18 credits within the major by the end of their junior year. Students are then considered based on their fulfillment of this criteria and their application, which includes a writing sample, personal statement of goals and recommendation letters. Though small in number, the excitement centered around this dual degree program has continued to grow, as students realize their delight at working with the faculty of the Department of Communication for another year.

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Courses such as those offered in the IGR program are important to offer at universities, as they are the types of courses that have the ability to influence students to make a change in the world. Dr. Dwyer believes that, "It's only through the dialogue and conversation that we come to understand and respect one another in meaningful ways to work productively together." Unique from other courses

offered at Villanova, IGR courses have become an essential part of action on social justice issues. Through IGR, students are able to become completely transparent on issues of social justice in a safe environment where they can trust that their opinions will not be judged. This shows how Villanova has been expanding its learning experience by offering more diverse courses. All of the students have enjoyed these courses, and faculty have encouraged more and more students to enroll in these classes every semester.