

Northeastern Anthropological Association

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Undergrads in the Workplace: The Many Hats of Anthropology Alumni

Edited by Jessica Skolnikoff and Bridget Fitzpatrick

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NORTHEASTERN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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This NEAA Bulletin is dedicated to
anyone curious about studying anthropology.

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"On Spider Bites"

by John T. Omohundro

For a very small number of fields—electrical engineering, I'm guessing—the senior undergraduate attends a set of on-campus interviews with big companies, which often leads to a job offer. That sequence sounds so reassuring to parents and students, and it's a fine one if you seek a career in electrical engineering (as my niece did).

But liberal arts students must invest some time and effort during and after college identifying what's out there and where they want to fit in. Why shouldn't they? The work world is complicated and constantly changing. The language spoken in that world ("experience, abilities") is not the same as that spoken in college ("grades, credits, classes"), but the work world most definitely values some of the same abilities practiced in college. That's what this volume shows, convincingly and repeatedly.

When it works best, the undergraduate experience includes a process of correcting some misunderstandings about the education one is acquiring and the careers that it may lead to. For some fields of study, the best metaphor for the degree is a product in hand: you earn a credential which you then present to the world and they'll hire you for it. For the B.A. in anthropology, a better metaphor is Spiderman: you've been bitten by a radioactive spider, which gives you new powers to do good in the world.

For some fields of study, the best metaphor for the degree is a product in hand: you earn a credential which you then present to the world and they'll hire you for it. For the B.A. in anthropology, a better metaphor is Spiderman: you've been bitten by a radioactive spider, which gives you new powers to do good in the world.

When I began offering career workshops to my students forty years ago, I didn't know much about careers, having been in one school or another all my life. That was a career in itself, of course, and a fine one, but it limited my experience. I knew I could use my anthropological approach to find out more about "the world of work." So, I found my key informant, Jim Barrick, our college's career counselor, and listened hard to what he said. Unlike me, Jim had seen the world of work, and he had followed students' careers in many fields, both during and after college. Jim had no training in anthropology but he still sounded a lot like he had. We were a great team in the anthropology career workshop for a number of years until he retired. By then I'd started writing down what I'd learned from our workshops, hoping to replace some of the out-of-print anthropology career books I'd used. I pitched the idea of a new book to Jan Beattie at Mayfield Publishing, and so my new vocation was launched.

Colleagues in the Northeastern Anthropological Association were very supportive of my proposal to include career workshops in the NEAA annual meetings. Some attended so regularly that they became de facto panelists. Some were practicing professionals outside academia and some were alums. The wisdom I gained from

this wider network of students and colleagues led to a second edition of *Careers for Anthropologists*.

While *Careers* eventually went out of print, the impetus to address careers never faded at NEAA, as witnessed by the document before you now. I'm pleased that the theme here is the same as the earlier books: you can use your anthropological education to find, win, and hold a job, and you'll use your anthropological viewpoint to perform it.

Books go out of print but their ideas don't, necessarily. True, some of the knowledge you might acquire in your exploration of careers while in college today wasn't available when I wrote *Careers*. Learning how to navigate (or avoid!) the gig economy is an example. The ubiquitousness of social media, such as LinkedIn, is another. On the other hand, the twelve abilities that I listed in *Careers* and that are featured herein are still developed by the anthropology degree, and they are still valuable.

Many of these abilities can be practiced in classes, especially since anthropologists don't just lecture and test any more, they encourage more practice of the discipline through discussion, projects, and other activities. All the abilities are especially enriched by opportunities beyond the classroom, like internships, independent studies, research assistantships, anthropology clubs, publication projects, field schools, and travel-study. Thus, it was for me as an undergraduate in the '60s, and so it remains today.

Inviting alumni to tell their stories is one of the best ways to educate—to “lead out,” as the Latin translates—the current undergraduate into the next big phase in life. That's the strategy of George Anders, a Pulitzer-prize winning journalist, in his *You Can Do Anything: The Surprising Power of a “Useless” Liberal Arts Education* (Back Bay Books 2019). In my second edition of *Careers for Anthropologists*, I included some alumni who speak for themselves about utilizing their anthropological studies in seeking a position, then growing into it. This volume adds many examples, more contemporary and diverse.

The alumni in these pages repeatedly stress three points:

- They gravitate to anthropology because it suits them and, perhaps for that reason, they're good at it.
- They use anthropology to discover and research positions and convince someone to invite them in.
- Their anthropological perspective shows up not only in their work but as an approach to their whole life.

As you read through these short memoirs, compare the ones by recent graduates with those five or more years out in “the field.” The work, the rank, and the responsibilities change for the more experienced, but the value of anthropology remains, and perhaps increases. I'm impressed by the writers' flexibility, mobility, tolerance for uncertainty, and high level of self-analysis. This volume speaks well for the kind of people who go into anthropology. There seem to be quite a few radioactive spiders around.

John T. Omohundro, *Professor Emeritus, SUNY Potsdam*

Foreword by Alexandra Finney

It is unrealistic to ask someone entering college to declare a major and feel confident this path of study will help them secure their “dream job.” It is just as unrealistic to ask a graduating senior, a middle age worker in transition, or someone on the cusp of retirement “what is your dream job?” or worse “what do you want to do with your life?” As a career coach, I hate the term “dream job.” We all know people have a variety of interests that change over time, and the evolution of someone’s career path is no different. There are twists and turns, unexpected opportunities, and to quote the Friends theme song, times when “it hasn’t been your day, your week, your month, Or even your year.” The idea that someone will graduate with a degree, will find a relevant (and well paying) job in their field, and stay with that company until they retire is an outdated concept. This is something you see on TV or in movies, but it rarely happens in real life. Parents: think about how many different professional roles you have had over your lifetime . . . It is important to be realistic when advising the next generation of workers, and to let them know it is OK to take time to find their niche; and if this niche changes after two years, that is OK too! When individuals have the skills employers want, many of which are foundational to an anthropology degree or taught through a liberal arts education, they are **marketable, resilient and sought-after** new hires.

The skills developed by studying anthropology—social agility/sensitivity, contextualizing, problem-solving, persuasive writing, etc.—teach you how not only to be an attractive employee, but they teach you how to be a grounded human who can withstand the stress of trying to find the “dream job.” When students or parents ask me “what can you do with an anthropology degree?” I smile because the possibilities are truly endless. I challenge you to think of one career in which these attributes would not be valuable. Parents and faculty see the infinite options anthropology students can pursue as a golden ticket to the workplace. However, many students can feel immobilized by the sheer magnitude of options. In a lot of ways, accounting students have it made. They will study accounting and will likely become an accountant. When you type “anthropology” into the keyword search of a job search database, very few jobs come up with the title “ANTHROPOLOGIST.” However, hundreds and thousands of jobs come up when you type in the keywords “problem-solving” or “observation,” the skills anthropology students bring to the table. The silver lining here is that these students are also learning grit. The grit to withstand the sight of “The search ‘**anthropology**’ did not match any jobs,” because they know this is absolutely not true! These students just need to be creative and use their abilities to get their foot in the door.

Today companies are also changing to meet the demands of a new (and younger) workforce. Many companies are combining jobs to be more efficient, or they are launching new departments or functional units with job titles that did not exist just five years ago! Parents: would Agile Coach, UX Designer, Data Guru, Conversion Optimization Wrangler, or Happiness Manager have made your “dream job” list when you were starting out? Many jobs that recent graduates today are applying to are brand new and revolutionary to their industries! They are jobs that are a combination of traditional roles, and that focus on skill set rather than what your undergraduate diploma states that you studied. This means the

people entering these roles need to be adaptable and have the grit to withstand the growing pains of change in the professional world. Not everyone is cut out to “live in the gray.” Many individuals choose to pursue certain career paths because they take solace in the job being black and white (or clear cut). However, the individuals who can tap into this gray area will be able to thrive in this new professional landscape.

In my current role as a corporate talent acquisition specialist (a fancy name for a recruiter), I search for engineering talent throughout the Eastern United States and all over Canada. The people I hire must have engineering degrees to get onto my desk, but from there my interviews with potential candidates (senior level to entry level) consist of me probing them about their “soft skills.” Even if I speak to someone from a top school, with a great GPA or great field experience, I will not move them forward in the process if they cannot prove to me they have the needed interpersonal skills to successfully do the job and work with clients. I focus on the ability to persuade, take initiative, communicate, collaborate, think creatively, etc. I am looking for the skills that anthropology students focus on throughout their studies. When candidates ask me what skills/abilities I am looking for in an ideal candidate, I respond that being a lifelong learner is crucial. Continually learning and asking questions, whether on the job or in your personal search for the “dream job” is crucial. Anthropology students: If you challenge yourself personally and professionally, I am confident you will be impressed with how far you can stretch your skill set and how transferable you can be. Adaptability and the confidence to flex your skill set are requirements in the constantly changing world of work.

The expansion of post-graduate interns and the growing gig economy prove that students are not ready to stop exploring options even as they approach the graduation window. Exploring is crucial to experience-building, and people should continue to do this throughout their careers. Most people learn by doing, and learning

what you do not like is just as important as learning what you do like when searching for a career. From an employer's perspective, many companies are eager to get their hands on new hires that have hard-to-teach skills (communication, initiative, a personality), and are investing in on-site training programs to hone the technical aspects of the job that are easier and cheaper to teach on site. Many employers require this on-site technical training, even for experienced hires, to indoctrinate the new hire into the way that particular company does things, and to "train out" the unwanted experience from their past studies/jobs. So, I beg you, do not rush into a graduate program or post-graduate training program thinking it will make you more marketable to employers. I would prefer to interview a candidate with multiple undergraduate internship experiences and a bachelor's degree over another candidate with a four-page resume of credentials and degrees but no experience!

Beyond the on-site technical trainings, companies are actively trying to make themselves more attractive to recent graduates by investing in Diversity and Inclusion programs, Unconscious Bias trainings, etc. Cultural sensitivity, regardless of your role within the organization, will likely come up during the interview or onboarding process. Having exposure to some of these ideas and concepts from anthropology classes and projects gives you a leg up, and you will immediately become an asset to the company you are interviewing with.

I can make the case for why someone with an anthropology degree would be a good fit for almost any career, but there are a lot of factors that need to come together for someone to get a job. I am not talking about their "dream job," I am just talking about A JOB. Does the employer have a current need/opening? Is there competition from internal candidates? Do you have the right personality, ability, years of experience, and salary expectations? Are you geographically a realistic option? Do you have any network ties with this organization or hiring team? Does your timeline align

with the company’s interview/onboarding timeline? The stars need to align. Thankfully, because of the applicability of anthropology skills, students with this background have a better chance of this celestial alignment than most. They do not need to wait for the “perfect dream job”; they have the ability to pivot, climb, grow and excel in so many different spaces. They have grit. They have what the professional workforce is asking for today.

Alexandra Finney, *Career & Strengths Coach at
Changing Tide Counseling & Coaching*

Introduction

Welcome to *Undergrads in the Workplace: The Many Hats of Anthropology Alumni*, the latest edition of the NEAA Bulletin! This edition features a collection of first-hand narratives from undergraduate alumni explaining how they use anthropology in the workplace. Anthropology majors often find employment outside of the field, but they use their anthropology skills every day. In the narratives that follow, 37 alumni demonstrate the value that an anthropology degree brings to a diverse array of occupations and industries. We hope that this Bulletin will be an effective resource for current anthropology majors and those guiding them, as well as a helpful tool for Admissions Offices.

This Bulletin came about as we realized, in discussing careers with our undergraduate majors, that qualitative data about the work done by anthropology alumni was lacking. Students need to see a connection between what they learn in the classroom and what they hope to do when they graduate. In soliciting contributions for this research project, we asked alumni to reflect on John T. Omohundro's list of twelve abilities students acquire as an anthropology major (*Careers in Anthropology*, 2001). Twenty years after the publication of this list, these abilities are still highly relevant and sought-after in today's global workplace. As you'll see in the pages that follow, anthropology grads report that the abilities they acquired through their undergraduate coursework prepared them well for today's diverse and rapidly changing work environment.

*John T. Omohundro's
list of abilities students
acquire as anthropology
majors, published in
Careers in Anthropology.
Mountain View, CA:
Mayfield Publishing, 2001.*

Twelve abilities that students acquire as anthropology majors:

1. social agility
2. observation
3. analysis and planning
4. social sensitivity
5. ability to appropriately challenge conclusions
6. accuracy in interpreting behavior
7. insightful interpretation of information
8. simplification of information
9. contextualization
10. problem solving
11. persuasive writing
12. assumption of a social perspective

In this volume, you will encounter a variety of voices and writing styles, reflecting the different interests, perspectives, and career trajectories of the contributors. Some narratives are written in an essay format, while others are presented as Q&As. We have chosen to organize the narratives based on the year each contributor received their undergraduate degree in anthropology. While some contributors pursued higher degrees in fields such as law and education, most entered the workplace shortly after graduation and many have held multiple jobs since graduating. Contributors who graduated in the past four years (2016–2019) are featured first, followed by those who graduated four to eight years ago (2012–2015). Contributors who graduated prior to 2012 conclude the volume. Headings attached to each narrative identify the general area in which the contributor is currently employed. We hope this organization allows readers to browse the narratives according to their individual interests.

This collection focuses on students who earned a degree in socio-cultural anthropology; in future editions, we hope to include alumni from all four subfields of anthropology. The contributors graduated from colleges in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts; in the future, we would like to expand this project to include students from other states and regions. We believe there is a strong need for a compilation of this kind. People with undergraduate degrees in anthropology are doing incredibly interesting and valuable work; their stories are both informative and inspiring. We are pleased to publish the first of what we hope will be many editions of *Undergrads in the Workplace: The Many Hats of Anthropology Alumni*.

To our readers:

If you are an **undergraduate student** reading this, we hope you find ideas, inspiration, and helpful connections in the pages that follow. In addition, we hope that once you graduate, you will contact us and become a part of this project too.

If you are an **anthropology educator**, we hope this Bulletin becomes a useful tool for you in the classroom. Please share it with your colleagues and encourage your alumni to send us their stories for future publication.

If you are a **parent**, as we both are, please know that the skills your students are learning in our classroom will help them succeed in their personal and professional lives. An anthropology toolkit will help them navigate a changing world and make a valuable contribution to it.

If you are an **advisor or career counselor**, we hope you will discover in these pages some of the diverse paths that anthropology majors have taken. Please share these stories when you are asked, “What can students do with an anthropology degree?”

As professors of anthropology, we love teaching in our discipline, and we think that an anthropology toolkit is valuable in many walks of life. We are continuing to collect first-hand narratives from undergraduate alumni employed outside of the field explaining how anthropology has helped them in their careers. These narratives will be published in a future edition of the NEAA Bulletin and made available on the NEAA website (NEAA.org). If you are interested in sharing your story, please contact us:

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2016

2017

2018

2019

GRADUATES

BIOTECH COMMUNICATIONS**Devon Asselin**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology and Psychology, RWU, 2017

NOW: Project Specialist at an executive search firm in the biotech/pharmaceutical industry

Digging Data

I'm from Ashford, Connecticut, a kind of rural, backwoods environment. I grew up loving nature and art, and debated studying art in college, but I chose marine biology because I loved scuba diving and wanted to work in conservation. By the end of my freshman year, I decided to change to a psychology major because I wanted to learn more about the psyche and society in general. That ultimately led me to double major in Psychology and Anthropology+Sociology. At the beginning of my senior year, I planned to go to graduate school and start the path towards a Ph.D. However, at the time, I was working full-time at a nonprofit in a local industrial park. We were trying to restore the old mill buildings for local craftsmen and businesses to have space to create. I was really enjoying working and being able to pay for things in life, and decided to join the workforce after undergrad instead.

At the beginning of the last semester of school, I started working at a zipline and obstacle course with the plan to become a full-time employee after graduation. I was one of four full-timers running the small business, which was in its second season at the time. My primary responsibilities were managing the work schedule, administering payroll, hiring, training office staff, supervising the office, helping with sales and social media, building

and updating the website, and working in the park. It was still very much a “start-up” environment—really fun and educational, but very demanding.

I found a new opportunity at the end of 2019, and now work for an executive search firm in the biotech/pharmaceutical industry. The position that I am currently in is new for the company. They have never had anyone in this role before. My responsibilities include social media, the newsletter, contact database management, and search assistance. The position is one of many hats, which I am very used to from my previous position. I am also working on my own business plans, making and selling naturally dyed things, as well as building websites for individuals and small companies.

Having greater social agility allows you to fit in with many different cultural groups, or to jump from the adventure park industry to the biotech/pharmaceutical industry.

My work experiences have taught me a lot about what it takes to run a small business, and more importantly, how my studies have shaped me as a person. The social sciences, specifically anthropology, give you a really interesting foundation for looking at the world around you. Observation is one of the most useful and important skills in life. Observing a situation, a company, a culture, or an industry, and then making quick, intuitive judgments has helped me, and continues to help me, in my life and career. Omohundro calls this “social agility,” the ability to size up the “rules of the game” and become accepted quickly. Having greater social agility allows you to fit in with many different cultural groups, or to jump from the adventure park industry to the biotech/pharmaceutical industry, for example. Social agility doesn’t

just help in the workplace, it helps in everyday life, allowing you to know how to respond and act in a given social situation. I have found that anthropology has helped me be better at interacting with and managing a small team of people and coordinating to get the job done. Anthropology gives you the skills to be a quick learner, and a better problem solver. Omohundro states that anthropology teaches you to approach problems with care by identifying the problem and deciding on the next steps before acting. I definitely experienced this in my career. Problems tend to arise often, whether it is a new software program that you need to learn, a customer service issue, a communication error amongst managers, an issue within a database, etc. Observing and then accurately interpreting information helps you to simplify and contextualize that information, which then helps you to problem solve.

I have been surprised over the years at what I find interesting and enjoyable in my daily responsibilities. I enjoy managing databases. If you had asked me in high school if I wanted to manage databases, I would have said, "No way!" That would have seemed boring and lifeless. Maybe to some of you it does, and that is perfectly fine, but what I like about managing data is digging through a confusing and seemingly useless pile of data and turning it into something that is clean, organized, complete, and most importantly, useable. I also enjoy working with people, whether that means managing all aspects of human resources for a company, ensuring that customers have an amazing zipline experience, coordinating with coworkers, or working with clients on their websites.

When it comes to applying your anthropology skill set to your career, remember that each industry, each company, each town, etc. has its own culture. Through your education in the social sciences, you've gained an amazing foundation for understanding and connecting with people. Your perspective and skills are invaluable in any work environment. People with anthropology skills are especially useful in a work environment that allows you

flexibility and autonomy to observe, interact, and discover new roles and responsibilities that you can fill. This type of work environment can be found in many different settings—just play around with your interests and abilities to find what suits you. You will find something that you enjoy, and if in a few years you find that you want to do something else, then go for it! I think our culture can get too hung up on the term “career.” You don’t need to stay in one industry or company for the rest of your working life. Is it helpful monetarily or socially to stick with one? Yes, often times it is, but don’t be afraid to look for new opportunities if it seems right.

I think overall, the most important thing that anthropology has given me is an amazing outlook on life. I realize that there is so much out in the world to learn, explore, observe, and be a part of. I never thought that I would go from working at a nonprofit restoring an industrial park, to working at a zipline park, to working at an executive search firm in the biotech/pharmaceutical industry, to starting a business of my own. I took the opportunities that were presented to me when they felt right. To be honest, I am just happy that my work opportunities turned out to be incredible learning experiences. They allowed me to pay the bills and do things that I enjoy outside of work. You are probably a very curious individual and love learning new things. Keep that open mind throughout your life. Never stop learning and exploring. And, most importantly, don’t get too hung up on starting the perfect career.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE**Danielle Bernier**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology and History, RWU, 2017

NOW: Employee Experience Associate at a bioscience company

The Power of LinkedIn

I am a 2017 graduate of Roger Williams University where I received my B.A. with a double major in Anthropology+Sociology and History. I truly believe that these two majors (technically, three disciplines) complement each other in a tremendous and obvious way. One cannot fully analyze the depths of history without factoring in cultural norms of the time and acknowledging the importance of reflexivity. The same is true vice versa: how can we understand culture today without understanding the roots of the past? History, anthropology, and sociology work in a symbiotic way that I think some historians and social scientists do not fully comprehend or discuss in their works. I was fortunate enough to study each in depth during my years as an undergraduate, and I could not think of a better way to expand my thinking and, most importantly, enjoy my studies for those four years.

Since graduating from RWU, my career track has taken twists and turns that I'd never predicted in school. I remember sitting in my Applied Anthropology class, watching videos on corporate career options and listening to former graduates discuss career paths with absolutely no ties to the academic social sciences—or so I thought. Toward the end of my senior year, I made the decision to move to Boston and seek out employment in the city. Prior to

graduating, I applied to a number of jobs that I could see myself growing in, and all were relevant to my majors. My dream job was to work in a museum in the city. I'd volunteered and completed internships at several museums, and I thought that there was no way this experience would not leverage the position of my dreams. I applied to every open museum position with a "livable" salary and did not receive a single call or email in return.

I began searching for research-based jobs and more "out-of-the-box" positions, where I could still see some hint of anthropology or history in the posted descriptions. I quickly realized that these jobs were few and far between and that I'd need to apply to a great deal of openings before I could afford the monthly rent in my new Boston apartment. During the last month of college, I applied to more jobs than I could keep track of, and these were of all varieties. The week prior to my graduation date, I received calls and emails from several companies that were interested in conducting phone interviews. The week of my graduation, I interviewed in-person at an international private school on the outskirts of the city, and I was offered a job the next day. Although I would learn that this scenario does not happen often, I was so flattered and excited about the opportunity that I immediately accepted.

In this first position out of college, I thought that I might still see a glimmer of anthropology shining through in my daily work. The school accepted students from all over the world and there was an emphasis on the celebration of heritage and culture-sharing. I worked as an Administrative and Communications Assistant in the main office of the school and applied skills that I'd learned through several seasonal positions in my past. I even had a college student connect with me while in this position, asking if she could interview me for a class. She was interested in pursuing a similar career after completing her B.A.

There were a number of reasons I left this position after a year and a half. Anthropology can certainly apply to the field of education, but I quickly realized that the field of education was not

for me. There were some truly wonderful aspects of the job, and also some truly frustrating aspects, mostly in my day-to-day routine. Ultimately, I am glad that I tried out the field of education and I will cherish many of the experiences that I had there. It is important to note, however, that your first job out of college does not need to be your dream job, nor your permanent career track.

It's important to note that your first job out of college does not need to be your dream job, nor your permanent career track.

As I had in May of 2017, I again applied to a large number of open positions with a variety of job descriptions. This time, however, I found it much more difficult to obtain an offer. I spent months applying and interviewing, and I attended four different in-person interviews within a three-week period, all of which I felt went very well. I was not offered a single one of these positions. At this point, I felt incredibly discouraged. I knew that job-searching was a tedious and slow-moving process, but I was stressed and exhausted. This is when I began to embrace the incredible power of LinkedIn.

As an anthropology major at RWU, my senior year involved career preparation and resume writing. We were taught how to build resumes, participate in interviews, and develop LinkedIn pages. I had maintained my LinkedIn profile with relevant information post-college, and I'd received several messages from Boston-area recruiters wanting to chat about my resume and meet in person, but I'd written them off as scams and a waste of time. However, in September 2018, I received a LinkedIn message from a recruiter at a bioscience company in Cambridge, MA. I had never envisioned myself working in the corporate world, and certainly not in the world of biopharmaceuticals. I thought that my skills and

background were meant for more hands-on, “meaningful” work in the nonprofit or academic realms. Given my desperation for a new position, though, I put these notions behind me and began the interview process. What harm could a few interviews do?

Two years later, I am still working for this bioscience company in Cambridge. I do not regret the decision one bit. Since starting in October 2018, I’ve grown tremendously in my career and as a person. I’ve learned that the corporate world should not be feared by social scientists, but embraced. There are so many critical ways in which anthropology and sociology majors can contribute to large companies on a day-to-day basis. Anthropologists now work in market research, UX design, process improvement, and employee relations. Personally, I found my calling in human resources.

Social sciences and the hard sciences
can certainly conflict, but they can also
complement each other in beautiful ways.

I started at my current company as an Administrative Assistant, and have since been promoted to Employee Experience Associate. While this position still encompasses a great deal of administrative work, I am now able to engage in human resources-based projects and have additional access in our internal data systems. I’ve connected with some incredible thinkers at this company, and it always amazes me to see the viewpoints of the “science brains” in the office. Social sciences and the hard sciences can certainly conflict, but they can also complement each other in beautiful ways. I’ve become a member of an on-site group that works solely to improve the culture of our employees. I’ve conducted surveys, collected data, and presented analyses for various topics. This is where my anthropology skill set shines.

I'm not sure if human resources is the end of the career track for me. Perhaps it is? Or perhaps it's a stepping stone in a long line of career changes. One idea that the biopharmaceutical world has taught me is that some fields are constantly changing and evolving, and that is okay! A beautiful part of working in a large city is seeing culture change around me. Some people stay in one field or with one company for the majority of their lives, but I've met a number of people, not much older than I am, who have already experienced a number of fields and companies during their professional careers. A career does not need to be set in stone, and anthropology is a discipline that will apply to any and all paths a person may pursue. I spend every day, in both my personal life and work life, embracing ideas that I learned in my anthropology courses and from my anthropology professors. I observe, analyze, and interact with people constantly. Doesn't every human? But every one of those interactions and observations is shaped by the lectures, projects, books, and groupwork I participated in during my four years as an Anthropology+Sociology major.

Some look at anthropology, and history for that matter, and see an antiquated discipline with little application in the real world. Of course, some anthropology students will pursue higher degrees in the field, but there are plenty of others who sit around wondering, "How do I convince an employer that anthropology is relevant to this position?" As a professional in a career field that I never saw myself working in as an undergrad, I can say that I do not regret majoring in anthropology. Whether an employer sees it or not, anthropology shapes your workplace interactions and skills. Ultimately, it shapes you as a person, and that person can be a fantastic addition to any workplace.

CAREER ADVISING**Emily Wall**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology, RWU, 2017

NOW: GEAR UP Program Advisor at Lawrence High School, Lawrence, MA

The Road Less Traveled

I would argue that I was well-prepared for what some like to refer to as “entering the real world” after graduation. My professors had been intentional about helping me identify the many abilities that come from majoring in anthropology and how they related to my individual experience. I had dealt with my fair share of adversities leading up to that point. I felt prepared to be on my own and to use my degree wisely. This did not mean that I had absolutely no anxiety about graduation. In fact, it was quite the opposite. I had plenty of stress about what I was going to do after graduation.

I decided late in my senior year that I was going to do just what I wanted to do, even if I was scared, even if some people around me didn’t agree with me, and even if I wasn’t exactly sure what it was that I wanted to do. My anthropology background had prepared me by offering the ability to appropriately challenge societal norms and reflect on what is important to me. My classes often posed the questions: “What is normal?” or “Why are things this way?” Oftentimes there was no clear answer, so I figured that not having a clear answer about what I was going to do was okay for at least a little while. Although I wasn’t exactly sure what I was going to do, I knew it would be something I was passionate about. I reflected, wrote, and talked to my support network about what I should do.

One of the people in that support network happened to be my career advisor. (Here is my shameless plug for career advisors: *Please, please, please*, start to develop a relationship with your career advisor from your freshman year—or earlier if possible.) I didn't always agree with everything my advisor said, but she really helped me with my resume and cover letters and even connected me to opportunities that I wouldn't have had otherwise. In the midst of one of my panics about what I was going to do with my life after college, she connected me to a graduate program and encouraged me to apply. I wasn't too keen on the whole "going right from undergrad to my graduate degree" plan, but I applied anyway.

During the spring of my senior year, I found out I qualified for a fellowship at Merrimack College (and if I worked for the school, my graduate degree classes would be free). Free school sounded like a really good idea considering that I knew my undergraduate loans were going to come back with a vengeance. My parents also loved the idea of free school and a one-year graduate program, so I thought on it. I thought about questions like "If I knew I could not fail, what would I do?" or "What are things that I really want to do that I might not be able to do if I take a nine-to-five job or go right back to school?" After a lot of individual reflection, I decided that going right back to school wasn't what was best for me. A lot of people in my life were disappointed with that choice (including myself, at times).

I believe that if you do not ask, the answer is always no. So, when I declined the offer from Merrimack, I asked "Is there any way my acceptance could be conditional if I decided to come back after a year?" To my surprise, they told me yes. That summer, I returned to my usual seasonal job waiting tables and worked my butt off. I saved all my money until October. Then I returned home to live with my mom and plan my next moves. I did not enjoy moving back in with my family, but I knew it was going to save me a lot of money on rent. I put aside money for when my loan payments started to kick in, and I spent the month of October

researching and planning. I gathered all the data I could about the countries I wanted to explore and analyzed it in order to create a tentative route—a research technique that I learned through my anthropology degree. I had connections in Cape Town, South Africa, from my time spent studying abroad as an undergrad. In my heart, I knew I really wanted to see the rest of the African continent (maybe not all of it, but a chunk of it).

Again, I took a chance. I booked a one-way ticket to Rwanda and reserved a room in a hostel for a week. My plan was to backpack solo from Rwanda down to South Africa using predominantly ground transport over the course of a few months. You can imagine some of the looks and questions I received when I told people what I was planning to do. Thankfully, my mom was extremely supportive despite feeling nervous. In the end, my research accurately prepared me for what I would encounter through my travels, and I was able to ethically and respectfully interact with people of diverse cultures in each country I visited. My Culture Change class provided me with strong interpersonal and relationship skills by teaching me to understand differences in customs and beliefs. My Anthropological Lens class explored the right and wrong ways to conduct research in a foreign country and to analyze questions of ethics. These skills allowed me to successfully navigate my way down the continent through Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, and eventually South Africa alone. My travels were amazing in so many ways, but I'm not sure I would have been able to appreciate it the way that I did without my training in anthropology.

While I was traveling, I decided I would take advantage of my conditional acceptance to the graduate program at Merrimack and told the school I would attend classes starting in the summer. The program would provide me with a master's in higher education, something I wasn't even sure I would like. What I did know is that if I did not do something different, I would fall into the cycle of

seasonal work and possibly never stop working at a restaurant (which I was sure was not for me).

As I began taking classes, I realized that I was one of the only people in the graduate program who was not completely sure about what kind of job they wanted. I wasn't even sure if I wanted to work in higher education. I felt like I did not totally belong, but I knew I had to do my best to get the most out of this program. I worked as a career advisor for a caseload of over 415 students while earning my degree. The advising, coaching, and mentoring style that I used was influenced by the interviewing skills I learned doing undergraduate anthropology research. I practiced interviewing in almost all of my anthropology classes. As a career advisor, I fine-tuned the way that I obtained information about people's attitudes, knowledge, and behavior. I developed relationships with the different communities surrounding Merrimack (despite the negative stereotypes facing those communities) and met many people who are now extremely influential in my life.

Anthropology proved to me that I had,
and still have, much more to experience in
this world. I just need the patience and
perseverance to take the road less traveled.

After obtaining my master's degree, I was sure that obtaining my first "real job" would be a breeze. I was wrong. I tended bar in the meantime, but took over eight months to find a job (50+ applications, 10+ interviews, multiple turned-down offers or final interviews where the hiring committee went with the other candidate, etc.). It was really difficult and time-consuming. There were plenty of nights when I cried about how I'd never find a job and struggled to budget for my loan payments, car expenses, etc. But I held out. The perseverance I exhibited is directly connected

to the patience I learned from my early training in anthropology. My first assigned research activity in college was to sit in an area and watch how many people used their cellphone. My professor told us to not just tally up the number of people, but rather take copious notes about the situation. I remember thinking how stupid this activity was but dutifully did it anyway. After about ten minutes, I had quite a few pages of notes. I couldn't believe how much data I collected in just 30 minutes. When I returned to class I realized that, because I had not rushed through the activity, I was able to make conclusions about cell phone use that some of my peers could not. I grasped that with patience and perseverance, success was possible. I began to enjoy the journey, not just the final destination.

The end of those eight months has come, and I just accepted a job offer in a high school that I volunteered at during my graduate degree. The Department of Higher Education in Massachusetts has a team that I believe valued and continues to value my worth, experience, personality, and skills, while allowing me to do important work that I enjoy. Before I was offered the position, I used my anthropological research skills to figure out the average salary and ultimately negotiated my salary to the high end of the range given. As a Program Advisor for the GEAR UP Program at Lawrence High School, I advise students on finding their path, help them prepare to apply to college, and teach them about financial aid. I'll continue using my anthropological background to lead workshops, analyze data, and start my next challenge: learning to speak Spanish. (Regarding studying a second language: I'm thankful that my anthropology training taught me perseverance and patience.)

I would argue that I was well-prepared for "entering the real world," but life after graduation was much different than my expectations. I credit my success to my training in anthropology: problem solving, interpersonal skills, questioning norms, cultural understanding, strong communication skills, etc. That training has informed my worldview. There are so many parts of the world that

not enough people, particularly young people, experience. Anthropology proved to me that I had, and still have, much more to experience in this world. I just need the patience and perseverance to take the road less traveled. It may not always be easy, but it will always be worth it.

MUSEUM ADMINISTRATION

Bettina Bucco

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with a minor in Spanish, RWU, 2017

NOW: Social Media Coordinator for HISTORY at A+E Networks, New York City, NY

Dream Job

I graduated from Roger Williams University in 2017 with a B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology and a minor in Spanish. As an undergraduate, I was not sure where I wanted to take my degree. All I knew was that I loved to work with people and I wanted a career working for people—I really am one of those people-persons. This is where anthropology and sociology really helped out!

My college career did not start out smoothly. I had a rough start, not really knowing if I wanted to stay at RWU, or even in the major, but I talked a lot to my advisor and we decided to take it one semester at a time. By junior year, I totally found my groove. I knew anthropology was for me, but it took me a while to realize that, besides being a people-person, I could also be a scholar.

In one of my anthropology classes, the professor required us to think of a “dream” job and shadow someone in that position. I had always thought I wanted to work in a museum, so I shadowed the Executive Director of Linden Place Mansion (a small historic house museum) in Bristol and fell in love! I was able to use my connections from this job shadow assignment to secure a five-month internship at Linden Place. This was an opportunity to work with and for people, and to learn the business side of museums.

We learned about Omohundro's skills list in that anthropology class and I had to discuss them in a paper, but it was not until I worked at Linden Place that I realized how I was using them every day. One specific project I was assigned involved working on Linden Place's social media presence. I knew I was asked because of my age, but also because they knew I had the ability to mediate between the organization's mission and their presence in the digital world—bringing together old and new.

I found that with the observation skills
I learned in my anthropology coursework,
I was able to understand the different
stakeholders involved at Linden Place. I was
able to quickly read situations and respond.

During my internship, I worked in marketing, managing events, interacting with visitors, teaching history, and much more. I was able to apply the skills I was learning in my courses to the workplace. This internship opened the door to my first job after college. I completed an internship in NYC working for an event planner right after graduation, but I wanted to come back to Linden Place. I had stayed in touch and I was eventually offered a job as Museum Administrator. As I soon came to learn, I would wear many, many hats: I managed museum membership, programing, marketing, public relations, and volunteers. My internships had prepared me for this job, but so had my anthropology degree. I found that with the observation skills I learned in my anthropology coursework, I was able to understand the different stakeholders involved at Linden Place. I was able to quickly read situations and respond. We have visitors of all ages, so information has to be presented in different ways. Fundraising opportunities must appeal to different groups. It is not just about meeting the diverse

needs of the visitors, though. Donors and staff have to work well together to create the best museum experience.

The many hats I wore at Linden Place reinforced what I liked to do and showed me where my strengths were and what parts of the role had been difficult. All of this prepared me for my current job working for the History Channel in NYC. I have always wanted to work in NYC and I'm glad to have this opportunity. Anthropology and sociology taught me that no matter what your passion is, what your interests are, or where you are, you can connect, learn, and adapt to what comes next. With this degree, you are more versatile and you are excited to learn more.

FAMILY SERVICES

Jessica Ryan

THEN: B.S. in Legal Studies with a double major in Anthropology+Sociology, RWU, 2017

NOW: Former Police Liaison, Family Services of Rhode Island; Candidate for Juris Doctor, Roger Williams University School of Law

What did you originally plan to do after graduation? Is this similar or different from what you actually did?

I did plan to attend law school after graduation. I thought about going and getting my MBA. However, law school was always the original goal and I did not plan to take off time in between graduation and attending law school.

Where has your career taken you since graduating from your undergraduate program? How did anthropology help guide your career trajectory?

Right after graduation, I went to law school at Roger Williams University School of Law. I am a full-time law student and also work part-time for Family Services of Rhode Island (FSRI) with the Providence Police Department as a Police Liaison. I provide crisis intervention for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, juvenile matters, etc. I use my interviewing skills to help talk with victims. Anthropology has helped me to work with people from different cultures and backgrounds and to appreciate each individual perspective. I learn more about people every day.

How do you use an anthropological approach (skills, perspectives, or methods) in your current job?

When I first began interning with FSRI, I used participant observation techniques. As an intern, I was not in a position to actually interact with everyone I came into contact with, but I could observe how my boss

and those she worked with interacted with victims. Once I became full-time, I used in-depth interviews to assess a victim's situation and provide assistance. I also observed how people interacted within their environment and how they responded when speaking with me.

How has anthropology helped you solve problems (big or small) or address important issues in your life?

Overall, anthropology has helped me solve problems and address important issues by taking a step back and being able to look at the full picture. Sometimes, if I am too focused on the small issues, I need to take a step back and take a holistic approach to the situation so I can figure out how to fix the problem.

Which of Omohundro's twelve abilities have helped you most in your career?

I definitely use almost all of these abilities. Observing and analysis/planning go hand in hand in my work and even with certain experiential law classes I have taken. Social sensitivity is important as well because I am interacting with different people during my work shift and in my classes. There are a lot of students who come from all over the United States as well as other countries and it is always interesting to hear someone's life story and how they got to where they are. There is also a lot of problem solving that goes into my work life and school life. I really enjoy speaking with people and trying to help them, even if it is a victim from work or a classmate from school. A lot of people will come to me with problems, large or small, and it is important to be able to communicate effectively with someone who might be in a crisis situation and be able to address the situation.

STUDY ABROAD**Annette Davis**

*THEN: B.A. in Anthropology and Spanish,
Connecticut College, 2018*

*NOW: Program Consultant at EF College Study,
Cambridge, MA*

From Cuba To Cambridge

I graduated from Connecticut College with a double major in Anthropology and Spanish in May of 2018. After I graduated, I began my first job as a United States Representative for the Autonomous University of Social Movements Study Abroad Program in Havana, Cuba. I worked for one semester in Cuba and then began my second job as a Program Consultant at EF College Study in Boston in July of 2019.

When I first imagined what kind of career I would pursue after college, anthropology was front of mind. I wanted to work in a position that would allow me to connect with people from different backgrounds and cultures, and ideally, help them understand each other in order to enhance relationships and facilitate growth and learning. My first position in Cuba involved all these elements.

My main responsibility in Cuba was to facilitate communication and understanding between the students from American colleges and universities and the Cuban staff members, and I took on this position with confidence thanks to my anthropological background. In my anthropology classes, I learned about cultural relativism—the concept that people’s customs and beliefs must be understood based on their own cultural contexts. Using this anthropological lens, I was able to help the students from the United States better

understand certain aspects of their program. For example, they would ask me: why does our schedule change so often? I drew from my understanding of cultural relativism in this moment by encouraging students not to jump to the conclusions they might draw if they were in the States. I explained how it can be difficult to plan visits far in advance in Cuba because there are various disruptions that households face throughout the week. The Cuban staff would explain: the water shut off, the bus was late, I had to wait in line for eggs, it took me all day to do my laundry (due to the size and/or condition of their washing machines, among other reasons). Although our Cuban staff may have planned an event well in advance, many other factors were at play for both the Cuban staff and the Cuban professors and professionals who were hosting the event. Ultimately, these factors determined whether an event occurred when scheduled. My studies in anthropology gave me the skills I needed to bring context and understanding to these situations.

I wanted to work in a position that would
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different backgrounds and cultures, and
ideally, help them understand each other.

My studies in anthropology not only gave me confidence in facilitating learning within the cultural context of Cuba, but it also strengthened my political consciousness. As a result, I learned to effectively articulate the expansive effects of the United States blockade against Cuba, a core aspect of the study abroad program. The daily struggles that Cubans face are all connected to the blockade in some way, and I was able to use cultural relativism, coupled with my understanding from anthropology of power structures and oppression, to help my students connect the dots.

The Cuban reality is the result of an intentional policy enacted by the United States that Cubans on the island have been denouncing for decades. This understanding of Cuba-United States relations is something I will always be grateful for, and my ability to share this knowledge was enhanced greatly by my anthropological training.

My post-college trajectory shifted when I made the transition from living and working abroad to sitting (and standing) at a desk in a ten-story building in Cambridge, MA. What culture shock! Nevertheless, I quickly realized that my Cuba experiences prepared me for my current job, including my daily phone conversations with internationally-curious professors. My main role as a Program Consultant at EF College Study is to describe the value of study abroad to professors who are interested in bringing their students overseas. Sometimes the conversation goes smoothly and we are aligned in our values. Other times, my own experiences studying and working abroad serve as an influential anecdote to help professors see why this could be valuable for their students (some of whom may have never left their state).

One reason I find study abroad so important is because I understand personally how this experience contributed to my own critical consciousness. My experience abroad helped put into context what I learned about critical race theory in my anthropology coursework. My understanding of race as a social construct that has real implications for people's lived experiences is a direct product of my anthropology degree. I find this to be one of the most important takeaways from travel too, when that travel includes the appropriate learning interventions. I believe that, when done correctly, an experience in another culture can be the first step on a student's journey toward understanding the complex dynamics of race, class, and privilege, and their impact on societies across the globe. With this powerful takeaway, I am fully bought-in to what I am selling. Because my own study abroad experience was so integral to my critical consciousness and has shaped how I

engage in the world, I can genuinely express the value of our programs to the professors I talk to each day.

In short, I appreciate my anthropology training daily, not only because it allows me to thrive in my professional life, but also because it has nurtured my political consciousness and served as a reliable guide to many life decisions. It is much more than a major, and, in fact, I view it much more like a lifestyle that has served me well and will continue to support me throughout my lifetime.

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

Julia Bradley

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology and History, RWU, 2019

NOW: Candidate for M.A. in History and M.S. in Library and Information Science: Archives Management at Simmons University

Blending Past and Present

I graduated from Roger Williams University in May of 2019 with a double major in Anthropology+Sociology and History. My original plan was to take a few weeks off after graduation and use this time to search for a job, ideally in a museum or archival setting. During this search, I found a position that involved digitizing records from Boston's METCO program. This program began in 1966 as a way to desegregate schools in the greater Boston area by busing children of color to various school districts. The vast majority of METCO's records, mostly student applications to the program, were stored in cardboard boxes. One of the first phases of the project I worked on involved manually entering data from thousands of files into a computer program designed for this project.

This position was exactly what I was looking for. While the project was not specifically designated as historical or archival, I was working with historical documents in an archival setting. As it was a temporary position, I simultaneously began looking at graduate programs in history and library science. I believe my experience with anthropology gave me an advantage in this position. I developed strong analysis and observation skills as a result of taking anthropology courses, which was crucial when

dealing with such a large amount of data. The project required a great deal of problem-solving to keep the data organized, find the best system for entering the data, and systematically track which boxes had been organized. The project also involved a lot of outside partners, requiring me to simplify information so we could explain the mission of the project easily and effectively.

The position itself ended much sooner than expected and I found myself with about three weeks to get an application together for the history and library science dual master's degree program at Simmons University. I was accepted and began classes in January of 2020. My library science program has a concentration in archival science. Archives present an interesting blend of both history and anthropology. Culture comes into play in the archives, especially when it comes to understanding whose culture you are preserving. Understanding the significance of items housed in the archives and respecting the cultures they represent requires a holistic perspective. Preserving artifacts and sharing them with the rest of the world is crucial to preserving cultural diversity overall.

Understanding the significance of items housed in the archives and respecting the cultures they represent requires a holistic perspective. Preserving artifacts and sharing them with the rest of the world is crucial to preserving cultural diversity overall.

A culturally sensitive view, central to the field of anthropology, also comes into play in the archival field, not just in dealing with artifacts but also in interactions with the general public and other institutions. While in my undergraduate program, I worked with the Roger Williams University archives to create an exhibit

celebrating accomplished women from the East Bay of Rhode Island. The project required a great deal of research and collaboration with local museums, libraries, historical societies, and private collectors. At times, our team found that we did not have enough information on some of the subjects to include them in the physical exhibit. We had to come up with ways that we could still include the women, despite having little information about them, as a way to respect their individual accomplishments and personal stories. Anthropology can inform archival work by making sure that archives and libraries represent and are available to as many people as possible.

Archiving also depends heavily on contextualization and clearly explaining the significance of objects in order to communicate their significance to the general public. Archives focus on teaching people why artifacts are important, why they matter, and why people should care about them. Persuasive writing is an important anthropological skill used in the archival field, specifically in the area of grant writing and funding requests.

Anthropological skills and perspectives are vital to so many other fields, but especially in history, and library and archival science. They have been crucial to my success, giving me an advantage in my career and guiding my work as a culturally responsible archivist.

BEHAVIORAL SPECIALIST**AnnaMarie Bakovic**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with a minor in Psychology, RWU, 2019

NOW: Behavioral Specialist at Lifespan

Anthropology is a Life Lesson

I graduated from Roger Williams University in May of 2019. Psychology complemented my Anthropology+Sociology major because I learned why people did things on an individual level and could apply that knowledge on a broader scale when viewing things from an anthropological or sociological lens. Knowing an individual's motive or past experiences can determine why they and others do things a certain way. To understand the whole, one must understand its parts, and psychology helps make sense of the parts while anthropology and sociology explain the whole.

I started my undergraduate journey at a community college with a major in "Undecided." I had no clue what I wanted to be when I grew up. Adulthood seemed so far away from the perspective of an eighteen-year-old. I had interests, but nothing that made me think I would like to do this for the rest of my life. One thing I have learned since then is to change the way I look at this question. Instead of asking what is one job I wish to do for the rest of my life, I ask what can I see myself doing right now. Chances are people will weave in and out of different career paths throughout their lives and therefore the choice one makes does not have to be so concrete. Within a short period of time, I changed my major from Undecided to Liberal Arts and Sciences. This was the broadest major after Undecided, and after obtaining an associate degree, it

would allow me to transfer my credits to a four-year school as painlessly as possible.

After transferring to RWU, I stood at another crossroads, wondering which major to choose and what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. With two years of college already under my belt, I was no closer to answering this question. I shifted my perspective just a bit and began to think about what I was interested in. I was not sure what anthropology was, but after a quick inquiry I was certain that I could spend my next two years focused on studying the development and interactions of people from different societies and cultures. I have come to realize that studying anthropology prepares you to live in this world. It sets you up to succeed, not just in one specific job, but in any career path you choose to follow.

Anthropology taught me to be empathetic. It taught me to suspend judgment and avoid an ethnocentric perspective. Just because one person does something differently does not mean they are wrong. Cultures, beliefs, traditions, and values all look different to the eye of the beholder. You do not have to know the person or circumstances to be empathetic. To me, anthropology is not the same as any other subject. It is not a math equation that can be solved with one answer. It is a complex, intertwined web of variables whose product is always changing depending on the way you perceive it. To me, anthropology is a life lesson that teaches you that if everyone took the time to understand one another then there would be fewer arguments and more cooperation, less division and more collaboration, less war and more love. Taking on an anthropological lens simply means understanding others' ways without judging them for being different. It is knowing that if you were to grow up on the other side of the world, you would probably do things the same way they do. Anthropology has taught me invaluable skills that cannot fade with time because it is a way of thinking and not just today's homework.

Once I graduated, I was again faced with the question of which career path to go down. I thought about what I wanted to do and

realized that if my schooling had taught me anything, it had taught me that I want to help people. With that in mind, I started learning about local organizations whose work aligned with who I am as a person and I applied to any position they had available. Although I sent out a lot of applications, I did not receive responses right away. After what seemed like endless radio silence, I started to panic. In my adrenaline rush, I realized my opportunity was a lot closer than I had anticipated: two miles away from my house, to be exact. I used to pass by Bradley Hospital whichever way I was headed. I realized that working at Bradley did not have to be a pipe dream. I reached out to their volunteer coordinators and, to my surprise, someone got in touch with me within a week and explained that they were looking to hire! Fast-forward to today: I am now working at Bradley Hospital through Lifespan. I am a behavioral specialist working with children with autism, performing intensive behavioral treatment.

To me, anthropology is not the same as any other subject. It is not a math equation that can be solved with one answer. It is a complex, intertwined web of variables whose product is always changing depending on the way you perceive it.

At first, the thought of this position scared me. Did I have the skills to be a Behavioral Specialist just out of college, with little to no experience? I had never worked with children with autism and I did not know much about the disorder. I feared I may be too different from these children to understand what they are going through. But I remembered from my studies that one can have empathy for others without knowing them. As my training began,

I realized that anthropology had taught me the skills I needed to succeed in this profession: empathy, compassion, and awareness. Even though it frightened me at first, it now excites me that I can put my knowledge and skills to the test. In fact, the differences I was once scared of I have now learned to love, because these differences are what makes each individual unique. Becoming aware of these differences and exploring cultural similarities helps me to communicate more effectively with the children I work with.

Currently, I am in the shadowing phase of my new job, following another behavioral specialist at their sessions. Everything that I do daily at work involves practicing the skills I was taught in anthropology. As long as you are open-minded, compassionate, loving, and eager to learn, anyone can do this job. The staff teaches you everything else you need to know. In the short time since starting my position with Lifespan, I have interacted with people across many socio-economic levels and cultural backgrounds. As a professional, I must know how to properly and effectively communicate with everyone, whether that means using sign language with children or speaking logistics with my supervisor. I've begun to understand that effective communication looks different for everyone.

As a student of anthropology, we are taught to exercise patience and to take the time to know and understand another person, their culture, and their background. Being patient with my clients is one of the most important traits I possess. Without a doubt, you and all anthropology students will have to remain patient and calm while family and friends repeatedly ask what can you do with an anthropology degree. My answer to them is now simple: you become a better human and jobs will follow.

ARCHITECTURE**John Rissmiller**

*THEN: B.A. in Anthropology,
Connecticut College, 2018*

NOW: Workplace Strategist at Unispace

Translating Work Cultures into Spaces

I graduated from Connecticut College in 2018 with an undergraduate degree in anthropology and the expectation of one day becoming a professor at a small liberal arts college. However, after finishing my undergrad thesis, I knew I did not want to continue with that research interest. After spending over a year and a half researching how gender is expressed through gaming, I was beginning to feel some burnout. With that in mind, I decided to pursue a master's degree in applied anthropology, thinking that I would be able to change projects before applying elsewhere to get my Ph.D. I excelled in my first semester and devised a new project. I was now going to research the impact of technologies on the relationships between incarcerated people and their families. This project maintained my interest in understanding the intersections between technology and culture, and it was more personal than my previous project because it related to my experience navigating my relationship with a relative who was incarcerated. I was hoping by making my project more personal, I would not become tired of it after two years. Before I knew it, winter break was over, and I was back in Memphis. On the first day of classes, my car broke down. My whole month's stipend was spent before the month had even started.

Scrabbling to figure out what to do, I was sent into an existential crisis. Was this worth it? Would I get a job? Was I planning to study technology in prisons because I was interested in it, or because it would be interesting to the broader community and therefore help me get a job down the line? Could the answer be yes to both of those questions? Was I okay with that? What about my existing student loans? Did I want to take on more debt? What about climate change? Will I even get the chance to write an ethnography? I needed something more stable. So, for the first time in my life, I accepted not having a plan, and less than a week later, I drove home to Massachusetts. I spent the following months applying to jobs that focused on qualitative research. In interviews, I would tell the story of why I left graduate school, which resonated with a lot of the people I talked to. After dozens of phone interviews and in-person interviews, I got a call about a resume I had submitted to Unispace. While I want to say that I applied to Unispace for a specific reason, the truth is, I read a vague job description for an analyst role and decided to apply because I had the experience they asked for. I had never heard of “workplace strategy” before and had never once thought about architecture. Less than a week later, they offered me a job in Boston. Serendipitously, I had found a job that I love and one that directly relates to anthropology, so I have no regrets about leaving graduate school. I might not have a Ph.D., and I might not be in the field for three years at a time, but I still feel like an anthropologist, and now I have a healthier work-life balance and more financial security than ever before.

So, what exactly do I do? As a Workplace Strategist, my job is to gain a holistic perspective of the client through interviews, observational work, focus groups, surveys, and by analyzing badge and utilization data. Once I get a grasp of the client and their needs, I work with our designers to create concepts and solutions that will help them leverage their workspace to achieve their future goals. I need to understand the intersections between their existing culture and space, and then try to modify that over time. This

means that I get to travel frequently to client sites around the United States. Instead of spending years in a new environment, I only get a few days at a time, spread out over the course of a few months, to observe, talk with stakeholders, and develop an understanding of the company's cultural DNA.

I might not have a Ph.D., and I might not be in the field for three years at a time, but I still feel like an anthropologist, and now I have a healthier work-life balance and more financial security than ever before.

My favorite type of project that I work on are master planning projects. Master planning projects are perfect projects for anthropologists because the goal in master planning is to create a defining concept. This concept should explain the connections between the macro and micro aspects of the company's campus while laying out a holistic plan that addresses prevailing issues and enhances current successes. I am not always on master planning projects, but these projects highlight both the process of and the connections between master planning and anthropology.

My first big master planning project was for a tech firm located in an office park in the suburbs. The firm focused on automation production and electronic device testing. The workspace consisted of three buildings that served over six hundred people. The interior of the space consisted mostly of cubicles and meeting rooms. There were also a few lab spaces for testing their products and a cafeteria for people to use during the day. However, when walking through the space, it felt empty and quiet. Normally tech firms feel like the latest and greatest office spaces, but this one felt more like an early '80s insurance firm, so it was our job to fix that.

The project started with a kickoff meeting where we established the project schedule and determined the high-level goals for the project: demonstrate core values, activate underutilized space, strengthen community, attract A-level talent, and become the benchmark campus for their organization. After that, we ran a focus group to better understand their campus experience, then we conducted interviews with managers of each department. We had planned to run just one more focus group on branding, but based on what we heard, we decided to conduct a second focus group with the younger generation of workers. We planned three presentations to make sure we were hitting the mark and making adjustments based on the feedback we were receiving from our core team. Taking an iterative approach like this is as important in workplace strategy as it is in anthropology. Throughout our engagements, we would ask ourselves: What is this activity doing for us? Are we getting what we want to get out of it? How will it relate back to the overall story? What does it mean for the workplace? Why is it important to ask this? In doing so, we uncovered a story that had yet to be told about their workspace. We used that story to explain our core concept: convergence.

Our first focus group consisted of two activities—one to understand the current state versus what they wanted to see in the future, and another to understand the optimal experience for different campus visitors. The first activity provided insights about how the space was being used, what community looks like for them, and what their priorities were for the future of the company. The second activity was an imaging activity that allowed them to show us what the look and feel of the space should be to create the optimal experience. This helped the strategy team get a better understanding of what kinds of spaces they felt were worthwhile and how certain spaces affect individual and team behavior.

From our interviews and the first focus group, we began to find some salient themes. Employees knew there was a strong community at their site but felt like the space hindered and hid it

because of how it was laid out. They argued that the space negatively affected their ability to collaborate because of the lack of group spaces available. Talent was an issue because they were going to lose nearly forty percent of their workforce to retirement in the upcoming years. Furthermore, the greatest challenge to attracting talent was trying to explain exactly what they did. It turns out, that issue was also a problem for potential clients and investors. What exactly did this company do and how could we help them tell that story through the built environment?

The greatest challenge to attracting talent was trying to explain exactly what they did. What exactly did this company do and how could we help them tell that story through the built environment?

After thoroughly researching the client's story and products, conducting the same focus group activities with the younger generation of employees, and then conducting a branding workshop, we were ready to start planning their new headquarters. We created a master plan that centered around creating an active intergenerational culture that used space to help tell their story and explain their products. The epicenter of the campus focused on the new innovation hub that would serve as a multi-functional space to host meetings, conferences, and community events, such as their beloved movie viewing parties. We strategically located the innovation hub so that everyone would have to walk through it: current employees traversed it to get to the cafe and visitors passed through on the way to branded meeting rooms. Doing this put the company's story and community front and center. It created a positive change in how people interacted within the space and with

each other that not only helped the business but increased employee satisfaction and engagement.

Many of the skills I learned as an undergrad helped me collaborate with my coworkers to create this master plan. The most important skills I consistently use are observational analysis, interviewing, holistic and iterative thinking, problem solving, and simplifying complex issues. Anthropologists are particularly well suited for this field because we use these same research methods. We know how to analyze qualitative data, while keeping in mind cultural relativism. We see the connections between the big picture and individual behaviors, and most importantly, we can tell compelling stories. At the end of that first project, I was asked to present our final concept to their C-suite. While I never thought I would end up in the corporate world, I am grateful for my degree in anthropology as I fall back on it every day to help me navigate a world that still sometimes feels foreign to me.

HUMAN RESOURCES**Lauryn Pregoni**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology, RWU, 2016

NOW: Senior Human Resources Generalist

Navigating “Parallel Worlds”

Since graduating in Anthropology+Sociology from Roger Williams University, I have been able to employ my academic training and methods in an applied way. On a typical day as a Human Resources Generalist, I am applying skills of observation, analysis, social agility, and social sensitivity. Working with a diverse employee population requires that I employ these methods in order to be an effective human resources representative. I believe that my academic background in anthropology has made me a generally empathetic person as well.

In a corporate setting, solving personnel problems requires a humanistic approach. There are complicated nuances that require social sensitivity. I aim to have employees view me as an ally to their employment rather than as the corporate police. Majoring in anthropology taught me how to observe social situations to understand behaviors and relationships, and this has served me well in my corporate positions. I am able to observe situations and use the information to assess and respond. As a student of anthropology, I read the ethnography *Parallel Worlds* (Gottlieb and Graham 1994) in which the anthropologist faces the challenge of gaining the trust of the community that she is studying before she can really achieve her research goals. I often reflect on that ethnography when working, because in human resources, one truly has to gain the trust of the employee population to make any

changes or gain any insight into the challenges facing the workforce. It is also imperative for me to be accurate when interpreting the behavior of employees. If we are in difficult performance discussions, I try to understand if there are personal issues causing performance problems or if there is a greater issue at the workplace that requires further research and investigation. Without being able to accurately interpret behavior, the needs and concerns of our employees would not be met. When interviewing for the role of Senior Human Resources Generalist, my supervisor acknowledged that my anthropological background and training made me an ideal candidate because I could offer a different perspective than the rest of the human resources team.

I have been able to address concerns about employee relations by drawing on my anthropological training, specifically my ability to assume a social perspective, practice social agility, and interpret behavior. Understanding the complex and dynamic power relations in a corporate structure and reporting hierarchy requires me to assume the social perspective of employees concerned about their performance. Understanding their perspectives allows me to empathize with them and offer alternative solutions to situations that would typically be handled in a more bureaucratic way. I believe that my background in anthropology allows me to listen and understand employee's concerns with an empathy that is not typical within human resources. Without this background, I would not be as equipped to interpret behavior both empathetically and analytically as it pertains to performance issues, insubordination, termination, and resignation. When conducting exit interviews, for example, I am able to understand the employee's concerns relating to their employment and give them a safe space to divulge information. In my opinion, this is only possible by first building trust or rapport.

Human resources truly requires a "humanistic" approach, and majoring in anthropology trains the student in just that. My education prepared me to enter in the workforce with a more holistic

approach to looking at social systems and human behavior. In my anthropology courses, I gained practice observing social situations and behavioral patterns, and then interpreting and analyzing my findings. This education equipped me with the skills necessary to understand the nuances of human behaviors, and I have been able to translate that into understanding employee behaviors in the workplace. Social agility is a trait that I practice daily at my job. Interacting with people in the workplace who have different roles, positions, personalities, and cultures requires a human resources representative to have agility. For instance, the way I work with a senior leader compared with a colleague differs dramatically. Understanding and interpreting their behavior and needs allows me to more accurately address them. When I meet with employees upon hire and departure, I am committed to being a person that they can trust while listening to all of their concerns. They feel confident that I have their best interests in mind. That may vary depending on their specific needs and background, so I ensure them that I am providing the best unbiased approach that I can.

Anthropology has also been a catalyst for me to analyze life situations more holistically, and it emboldens me to question preconceived social and cultural norms.

Social sensitivity is another trait that anthropology majors bring to the workplace. Maintaining social sensitivity is crucial in a workplace like mine, which is comprised of employees who come from various backgrounds and cultures. An approach that works with one employee may not be effective with another; there is really no one-size-fits-all approach in human resources. Additionally, there are issues that arise in the workplace pertaining to prejudice and discrimination. It is my duty in human resources to be sensitive to

all employees' concerns. Without social sensitivity, discrimination can become a problem in the workplace.

It is not solely in my professional work that anthropology has aided me. Because of my education, I am able to express more empathy, social sensitivity, and understanding in my day-to-day life. Upon graduating, I moved across the country to pursue work opportunities. Despite being in the same country, I still encountered culture shock. We talked about this phenomenon in my anthropology courses, specifically learning how it impacts anthropologists conducting field work overseas. However, a cross-country move is replete with cultural differences that can be just as striking. My education in anthropology allowed me to successfully adapt to a new culture despite its challenges and complications. I strongly believe that if I did not have the educational background that I do, I would not have been well-equipped to face the challenges that I have faced during my cross-country move.

Anthropology has also been a catalyst for me to analyze life situations more holistically, and it emboldens me to question preconceived social and cultural norms. Without this background, I believe I would not have been as successful as I have been. I would not have been as well-equipped to handle the complicated power structures of a corporate workplace or to challenge the mainstream human resources business model. I feel passionate about bringing my academic training into my career so that I am able to make sense of the world in a way that is less robotic and more human. To borrow from the ethnography I mentioned earlier, I see my education and career as two parallel worlds that I am bringing together.

References

Gottlieb, Alma and Philip Graham. *Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and a Writer Encounter Africa*. University of Chicago Press 1994.

SEX THERAPY

Bridget Horan

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology with a minor in English, Connecticut College, 2017

NOW: Social Services Intern with the Public Defender's Office in Philadelphia; Candidate for M.A. in Sex Therapy at Widener University

Storytelling

At this point, it seems like college happened in a different lifetime, though I graduated from Connecticut College just three years ago. My major was in Anthropology, my minor was in English, and I received a certificate in Public Policy and Community Action. I minored in English because I have always been curious and inspired by stories and poetry. At the heart of all writing is the desire of the writer to be known. To me, anthropology was quite similar. In many ways, anthropologists share the stories humans tell each other about ourselves and others through art, artifacts, nature, and civic engagement. Good anthropologists have to be good storytellers. Even archeologists, who deal with artifacts, construct narratives from material items and have a huge influence on the way a community's story is told. Constructing the narrative of people's lives comes with great responsibility, one that I was not necessarily comfortable having. Although I appreciated anthropology for all it brings to light, I struggled with the racist, colonial implications of telling other peoples' stories. Now I also understand the importance of helping people tell their own stories.

My wonderful advisor supported me in these concerns and allowed me to be extremely creative in my senior independent

study: a peer and I made a podcast on sex education. It was this project that really solidified my desire to be a sex educator. After graduation, I moved to Memphis, Tennessee and did a host of odd jobs before applying to graduate school. I worked at a coffee shop and a clean water nonprofit, I taught ballet, and I was a legal assistant. Graduate school is a huge commitment emotionally and financially, so I wanted to try out a few different jobs to see if I was really sure that sex education was for me. After several conversations with my advisor, I was convinced that I would be better off getting a Master of Social Work in addition to a Master of Human Sexuality Education.

Currently, I am a first-year student at Widener University in Chester, Pennsylvania, in their dual-degree sex therapy program. For my first year in the program, I am working in the Public Defender's Office in Philadelphia as a Social Services Intern. All of my clients are currently or were formerly involved in the criminal justice system. If a client is currently incarcerated, it is my job to meet them at the county jail and help formulate a plan to get them out. Recently, I was able to secure a client a spot at an LGBTQIA drug recovery home and the judge agreed to immediately parole her there. If clients have on-going cases, I help them comply with the requirements their judge has set for them. We make a plan together and I use my knowledge of community organizations to connect them with resources that make the most sense for their situation. Often, judges want to see that clients are going to therapy, participating in drug treatment, going to parenting classes, or have secured steady employment. This is a lot to juggle, so it is my job to help the client prioritize their needs and get them going in the right direction.

Studying anthropology, I had the opportunity to explore the human condition from a far-away, academic perspective as well as through one-on-one interactions. This course of study gave me so many of the interpersonal skills that I use daily in my interactions with clients at work and in my social work practice at school. Anthropology is multi-faceted and dynamic by nature. This rich,

unpredictable aspect of anthropology helped prepare me to work with clients of all backgrounds. In particular, when interacting with clients at the Public Defender's Office, I use the concept of emic and etic knowledge to work with clients that I find myself challenged by. For example, I have many clients who struggle with opioid addictions. While it is hard for me to imagine how they always know where to go to get drugs, how to stay safe while using, and where to spend the cold nights, this is emic (insider) knowledge for them. No matter how deeply I care for these clients, I am an outsider in their lives and can only ask them to describe their experiences. My etic (analytic) perspective helps me put their situation into context. As an outsider I often hold none of the answers. My clients have a right to self-determination and self-definition. This power shift is radically influenced by the anthropological idea that all people have emic knowledge that is unique to their lives.

It is not always malicious to draw conclusions or make generalizations, but anthropology has trained me to work hard against this impulse in order to honor the specificity of each person's experience.

Although studying anthropology gave me all of the twelve abilities Omohundro lays out, most important to me are the skills of observation, contextualization, and challenging conclusions. Observation for me looks a lot like humility. Instead of jumping into situations with clients or classmates as soon as I have a thought, I allow myself time to observe the situation in full. I do my best to actively listen to clients and classmates before I formulate a response. This is a muscle that I continue to develop each day, and conducting ethnographic research as an undergrad unquestionably

gave me a solid foundation in that skill. Further, anthropology taught me to contextualize. Anthropology has a troubled history of racism and colonialism; there is no undoing that fact. On the other hand, my anthropology education also taught me about the current implications of systemic oppression. When I meet with clients today, I always look at their situation through an intersectional lens. There is no way to separate people from the systems that work upon their lives. Finally, studying anthropology taught me to challenge conclusions. Although anthropology allowed me to study many cultures and read fascinating first-hand accounts, my professors were always quick to remind me that each was *one* example of culture, of human life. We were reminded to never make unfounded generalizations and to question those who do. Each person is a unique individual living within a distinct cultural context. When I meet with clients, I wait for them to tell me their story before I make any sort of assumption based on their case file. It is not always malicious to draw conclusions or make generalizations, but anthropology has trained me to work hard against this impulse in order to honor the specificity of each person's experience.

LAW SCHOOL

Rebecca Rogers

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with minors in Political Science and Legal Studies, RWU, 2018

NOW: Candidate for Juris Doctor, Roger Williams University School of Law

Where has your career taken you since graduating from your undergraduate program? How did anthropology help guide your career trajectory?

When I first started college, I was an Anthropology+Sociology and Legal Studies double major, but I decided to major in Anthropology+Sociology with a minor in Legal Studies. I did a semester in DC, so that's when I picked up a minor in Political Science too. I think these three fields complement each other really nicely. I always wanted to go to law school after graduating, but I ended up taking a year off to work with a private defense attorney in Newport, Rhode Island. I was able to use my anthropology skills during that job whenever we had meetings with people from different backgrounds. I was also able to be culturally sensitive to the different people that needed representation.

Has anthropology had any influence on the interest you are pursuing?

I want to be a criminal prosecutor. Looking at society as a whole and looking at how different people interact, I think is important, especially because as a prosecutor you're going to meet a wide range of people.

What can you share about your current position?

Being a One L (first year of law school), you read different cases, meet new people. It's a change. I think I have a different lens versus someone who went to business school. Overall, I am aware of being more sensitive to people and seeing that my way might not be the only way.

Do you think, as a law student, that anthropology has helped you in the classroom or have you used certain skills in the classroom?

Besides analyzing, maybe participant observation. I did an undergrad assignment where I sat and people-watched. I saw the different ways people interact with each other, depending on their different ages and races. People that are culturally different need to come together if they want to do something. This can apply to an office setting, courtroom, or even out and about.

How has anthropology helped you solve problems (big or small) or see important issues in your life?

While interning with the defense attorney, I realized that Newport has a very diverse population, so anyone could walk through the office on a given day. The attorney I worked with did not have just one type of clientele. We worked with people from different backgrounds including economic status, race, gender—there was always something new.

Which of Omohundro's twelve abilities have helped you most in your career?

Social sensitivity is a big one, as well as problem solving and persuasive writing. I am actually in the process of writing a memo to get a judge to rule in favor of my client, and that requires problem solving and social sensitivity. I use skills of observation, analysis and planning, and the ability to appropriately challenge conclusions. This goes back to having a different perspective than someone who majored in business as an undergrad. There are so many different views and it is important to be able to talk about them openly. Everyone is entitled to their own point of view whether you agree with it or not. But keeping that discussion open so people feel comfortable talking about those difficult topics that nobody wants to talk about, I think is very important in law school as this field is still predominantly white.

Anything else you would like to add? Has anthropology benefited you?

I think it definitely has. I don't always recognize it in the moment, but I do use what I learned as an undergrad all the time. I don't say to myself, "That was participant observation I just did." It's second nature now. It's what I do. Anthropology has shaped my point of view, my ability to listen, be open, and not judge right away. These abilities are valuable in any field you choose to go in.

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

Moriah McKenna

THEN: B.A. in Biological Sciences and Anthropology with a concentration in Archaeology, Connecticut College, 2017

NOW: Former Director of Communications at Institute for Field Research; Candidate for Ph.D. in Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania

Selling Science

Since graduating from college, I have worked at two academic nonprofits. The first was an education nonprofit that advances science curriculum in K-12 public schools through professional development for teachers and extracurricular activities for students. I ran the after-school science clubs for third through fifth grade girls. At these clubs, visiting professional female scientists volunteered to lead activities and be examples of successful women in science. My double major served me well by providing background knowledge in a range of sciences. However, anthropology in particular gave me the skills to break down and relay this knowledge to the various audiences I encountered.

I am passionate about science communication and believe it is the duty of academics to relay their findings to the public in a relatable and exciting way. The socio-economic landscape varied greatly across the six schools and four towns at which I ran clubs. Not only this, but the academic cultures cultivated by different teaching and discipline methods at the schools were wide-ranging. This meant that student needs were very different at each club. My anthropology degree made me sensitive to these

differences and helped me navigate ways of communicating the material to young women with diverse backgrounds. It also helped me analyze student behaviors in context and find ways to effectively relay the material, which made me a better teacher and science communicator.

My second position was at another academic nonprofit called the Institute for Field Research (IFR). The IFR runs college level, research-based field schools, mostly in archaeology and anthropology. The programs provide students opportunities to participate in peer-reviewed, methods-intensive research projects all over the world and build networks with scholars outside their home institution. The field schools are open to anyone 18 years and older, regardless of their major or enrollment status, and there are no prerequisites to attend.

Without any formal training in marketing, anthropology gave me crucial skills for advertising our field schools and garnering public interest in the research.

My tasks as Director of Communications drew upon my anthropology background on a daily basis, from analyzing data on human behavior to finding the best ways to communicate our programs to a global audience of prospective students, faculty, parents, and non-academics. Without any formal training in marketing, anthropology gave me crucial skills for advertising our field schools and garnering public interest in the research. For example, I identified and tracked trends regarding our website visitors (human behavior on our website) to optimize our limited resources on ad placements and other forms of outreach that drove people to our website and influenced their decision to enroll in a field school. In alignment with our mission of raising public consciousness

of evidence-based science, I worked to break down complicated research topics and findings into digestible formats for our broad constituency using social media, website content, and printed hand-outs. Anthropology provided the abilities of adaptability, contextualization, and social sensibility that I drew upon to execute unpredictable nonprofit work and correspond with people from across the United States and the world.

My plan has always been to pursue a career in academia. Since graduating from college, I have worked to build applied skill sets that make me a well-rounded and better-prepared graduate student. Last winter, I applied to a few anthropology graduate programs with a research focus on past human-environment interactions. My experiences in different work environments helped me hone in on the type of graduate program that I wanted. This fall, I will take the next step toward becoming a research faculty member by beginning my Ph.D. track studies in anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**Julie Lavoie**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with a minor in American Studies, RWU, 2016

NOW: Reading Teacher at an elementary school

A Year at City Year

I graduated from Roger Williams University in 2016 with a degree in Anthropology+Sociology and a minor in American Studies. When I was a senior, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I briefly considered attending graduate school to become a cultural anthropologist, but I already had a massive amount of student loan debt. Instead, I applied and interviewed for one job, was offered that position, and accepted it. That position was an AmeriCorps member with an education-based nonprofit called City Year.

I served full-time in a third-grade classroom in an under-resourced elementary school. That year was truly the best, most meaningful, year of my life, so I decided to serve a second year with City Year but in a different role. I switched to an office-based position in the development department, where I worked on various projects. I was given countless leadership opportunities, and I expanded many community partnerships.

In addition to supporting schools and students, City Year also focuses on social justice issues. I felt much more equipped for the social justice aspects of our work than many of my colleagues did. In college, I took a Medical Anthropology class. I remember being completely amazed by the ways various cultures treat different illnesses. In that class, I realized that the United States does not necessarily have the "best" medical care in the world. Prior to this experience, I had held

an ethnocentric view of medicine which hindered my ability to see value in different ways of addressing illness. I learned from that experience that there are multiple methods for solving the same problem. Perhaps these are some reasons why I felt comfortable discussing issues of diversity and racism at City Year, while these topics were uncomfortable for others.

Studying anthropology taught me a lot about different kinds of people. I leveraged that knowledge in a recent job interview—and I got the job as an elementary reading teacher! In the interview, I discussed how I spend a lot of time observing and listening, something I learned to do in my anthropology and sociology classes. During my sophomore year, we had one assignment where we simply had to stand in the lunch line and observe everybody waiting in line. Through that experience, I learned to pay attention to the details in peoples' movements, expressions, and word choice. This type of training is easy to highlight in a job interview. Because I discussed it, my interviewers were impressed and I was able to demonstrate that I understand people—that I'm a people person.

I use my skills of observation daily to gauge how to best interact with students and colleagues. Instead of giving a formal test each day, I often informally assess students through observation. My education has also helped me tremendously in the areas of analysis and planning. These are important skills to have in any job. I use these skills when analyzing student data and creating daily lesson plans. I need to be accurate when I collect and analyze student data, so I can make accurate interpretations of their behavior. For example, I may perceive that one student understands a lesson, but when I formally assess the student, the data shows that they did not understand part of the lesson. In this case, I need to problem-solve and possibly simplify the information that I have taught this student. I try to address this type of problem by reviewing the content that I've already taught before proceeding to teach new content. Unexpected problems pop up constantly in an elementary school environment, but I have learned to be flexible and adapt.

In addition to these skills, anthropology prepared me for teaching because I work with students from diverse backgrounds. Some of my students' families are immigrants, and many of my students are learning English as their second or third language. They also have a wide range of religions and cultural backgrounds. In my teacher-student interactions, I need to be socially sensitive at all times. I cannot teach lessons about holidays like Halloween, and I am careful to avoid topics that might be offensive. I also try to use an anthropological approach by asking students to share personal examples from their cultures whenever appropriate.

If I had to boil it down, anthropology
taught me to keep an open mind when
working with people.

Most importantly, studying anthropology taught me that there is no single perspective on any situation. I look at the world with a more holistic viewpoint than I did before college. Prior to college, I attended homogeneous public schools in a middle-class suburb. I was born into a culture of privilege. I was taught that the history of my (white) people was the only history that mattered. Anthropology taught me that there are millions of people in this world with their own beliefs, traditions, and values. They all deserve the same basic rights of being listened to and respected. If I had to boil it down, anthropology taught me to keep an open mind when working with people.

LAW SCHOOL

Tess Berkowitz

THEN: B.S. in Legal Studies with a double major in Anthropology+Sociology, RWU, 2017

NOW: Candidate for Juris Doctor, Rutgers Law School–Camden

Where has your career taken you since graduating from your undergraduate program? How did anthropology help guide your career trajectory?

I was hired as a paralegal by a law firm while I was still an undergraduate. My area of focus is veterans' law, which is similar to Social Security and disability law, but it is administered within the Veterans Affairs (VA) system. Many of these laws support veterans who, after their active duty period, are suffering from disabilities incurred during their service.

Anthropology has helped me in the legal sector both professionally and interpersonally. I think it made me more sensitive to cultural differences and helped me adapt to the workplace culture. Anthropology is definitely an advantage for anyone leaving academia and moving into the professional world for the first time. Having a background in anthropology gives you a genuine interest in other people's cultures and points of view, and that makes you a more empathetic person.

What did you originally plan to do after graduation? Is this similar or different from what you actually did?

I ended up doing what I originally planned, but I took a slightly different path. I originally wanted to go to law school right out of college. However, in my sophomore year, I decided to change my double major from Legal Studies and English Literature to Legal Studies and Anthropology+Sociology, which put me a bit behind. This new double major made more sense to me, but I ended up having to take extra classes during my last few semesters of school which made studying for the LSAT difficult, so I ended up taking a gap year to work. This turned

into two gap years which was actually advantageous. I gained invaluable professional experience during those two years. I learned what it was like to work in a law firm, and I saw how the skills that I learned in the classroom carried into the work place. Drawing these connections has been really helpful. I am definitely where I thought I was going to be, but I took a different path.

When did you start your current job/career? What can you share about your current position?

I am currently a full-time law student. I started in June of 2019. I took my first doctrinal over the summer so I could have a lightened course load in the fall. I am currently in my second semester of law school, finishing up my doctrinals. I am involved in a lot of different pro bono activities. I participate in a domestic violence project where I go to court and assist victims of domestic violence. I'm also involved in a mediation project in which I am actually an agent of the court who helps resolve disputes.

How do you use an anthropological approach (skills, perspectives, or methods) in your current job?

Understanding that different people around the world have different cultural ideas, values, norms, and customs is actually reflected in the case law. Something I found interesting is that the federal circuit might be influenced by another circuit court's ruling on a decision if that makes sense for their region. There is actually some tort case law stating that, in certain contexts, there are behavioral customs that could actually override the law. So, the concepts of customs and subcultures are a lot more prevalent in the law than one might think. There are different regional interpretations of laws, too: the interpretation of a law in California may not be the same as the interpretation in Alabama. Anthropology recognizes the importance of people's cultural background, and I think this has made me more understanding and not as quick to judge behaviors that are different from my own. In the field of legal studies, we're seeing more diversity and diversity coalitions, so there is definitely more of an effort to be understanding of another person's background.

How has anthropology helped you solve problems (big or small) or see important issues in your life?

I am more receptive to new ideas, because some anthropology classes challenged my gut reaction to situations. I realized that sometimes I look at things only through my own lens, and I need to be aware of the fact that someone may be looking at it using a different lens. I think having that awareness makes working with others easier because you don't have the expectation that everyone has the same opinion or view that you do. Going through life with that understanding helps you be a part of conversations a lot more easily. I credit anthropology with giving me an advantage over a lot of my peers, because when we talk about diversity in law school, many of the other students are just beginning to understand the concept of cultural lenses, and here am, already working within that framework.

Which of Omohundro's twelve abilities have helped you most in your career?

I always thought I was very insightful, but looking back I realize that these are skills I learned in anthropology and I continue to use most of them all the time. First, social agility entails being able to change your perception or plan of attack. If I'm trying to explain something, or even trying to persuade a judge, I am going to tailor the way I present an argument to be more compatible with their particular lens. I think that's important if you're trying to convince an audience, because you can see if someone is not "feeling" your argument. If you're on the stand, strong observation skills can help you see if your witness is understanding your line of questioning. I think social sensitivity means that when you go into a room or enter a conversation, you recognize it is okay that somebody might not have the same view as you. In law, challenging conclusions means having the ability to take what is already known and reframing it in a way that is most favorable to your client; or having the skill to predict what someone might say, so you can shift gears to properly block and discredit their defenses. We need to interpret information from a lot of individual cases and rulings before setting goals for a case, and being able to do that is what makes someone an effective lawyer. Whenever

you're making an argument, it is your job as a lawyer to interpret statutes and make the case that a situation in one part of the country applies to another, so the ability to simplify information is important in any kind of litigation and persuasion. If you are a lawyer, it is your job to be the expert and to break things down for your client. Problem solving is really based on being able to see something from another point of view. Understanding that there is another side to the situation is half the battle. In law, persuasion is an art that entails discrediting the opposing argument in court, and being able to see things through the opposing side's lens allows you to better discredit their points. Outside of law, though, approaching a situation with the understanding that many views exist is welcoming and warm.

SPECIAL EDUCATION**Mia Hayden**

*THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with minors
in Educational Studies and Psychology, RWU, 2018*

NOW: Candidate for M.S.W. at Salem State University

Special Insights

I graduated in 2018 with a B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with double minors in Educational Studies and Psychology. My major and minors complemented each other well because they all revolved around people in society. Whether I was learning about the Samoan Islands or the educational pipeline here in the United States, all of my coursework helped me evaluate human nature. After graduating, I became an Instructional Assistant at an elementary school where I work with children with severe special needs.

My background in anthropology helped me a lot in this job. One of the biggest assets it gave me was the skill of observation. There is a lot of umbrella training when you work with children, but when working with a specific student, especially one with special needs, it all comes down to observational learning. Anthropology helped me better assess situations with my students and make decisions that were best for them.

Anthropology also helped me develop social sensitivity. When you work at a school, you work with a wide range of people including, but not limited to, parents, students, social workers, psychologists, and other specialists. Everyone comes from different backgrounds and everyone has different opinions about what is best for a student. Anthropology helped me see each situation from these multiple perspectives.

Other anthropological skills that I used in my day-to-day work include collecting and analyzing qualitative data. Most people may not realize that a school setting is itself a cultural setting, and to understand it, I needed to put on my anthropologist goggles. Anthropology taught me to synthesize all the information I received and contextualize it to help my students in their day-to-day life. For example, every student with special needs has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). These IEPs are drafted by many different people and they get updated every year based on the student's needs and growth. A student with an IEP may have a special education teacher, a classroom teacher, and in most but not all cases a speech and language pathologist, psychologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA), and a guidance counselor, all working on their IEP. As a result, an IEP can be a complex and overwhelming document. Behavior plans, drafted by a BCBA, are also put in place to minimize maladaptive behaviors ranging from violence to flopping (lying on the floor or desk to avoid working) in the school setting. As an instructional assistant, I was required to record daily qualitative data as I worked directly with each child. Qualitative data is crucial to implementing the behavior plans because it helps the BCBA come up with techniques and solutions to minimize unwanted behaviors. Whenever there was an incident, I would record data for the BCBA to analyze. An example of this would be a child hitting their instructional assistant. The data I recorded would address questions like this:

- What was happening before the incident? Were they being asked to do a task that they did not want to do?
- What did the student do (flop on the floor, hit, try to leave the classroom etc.)?
- If the student was violent, how many times did they display violent behavior?
- How many times were the students prompted to do the task they were asked? (This could be as simple as "Sit down.")

- How long did this incident last?
- What happened after the incident?
- Any other relevant details about the situation.

This is only one example of how skills of careful observation and qualitative data collection can help the people working on a student's case. In a way, my job is like fieldwork. I go into the setting and observe and record what the student is doing. I collect data, and with that data, I help others come up with solutions to make the student's day-to-day life easier. I help improve their learning environment so they can receive the best possible education.

Anthropology taught me that there is no
such thing as a small and unimportant detail.

Anthropology taught me that there is no such thing as a small and unimportant detail. Every observation, no matter how mundane, can help further someone's knowledge in the field. In this case, the field is a school. Before majoring in anthropology, I didn't consider that it could help me work in the field of education. But anthropology gives you a foundation in observational learning and teaches the importance of immersing yourself fully before making assessments about where you are. It teaches you that there is always a *why* and that if you keep asking, you will find a solution.

Before completing my undergraduate degree, and even after completing it, I had no specific career in mind. Anthropology gave me so much flexibility by providing me with strong foundational skills. My work in the field of education has unlocked my passion for helping others. I am currently looking into master's programs for social work. I would like to further both my education and qualifications so that I can help others to unlock their potential.

2012

2013

2014

2015

GRADUATES

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY**Collin Schmitt**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology, RWU, 2012

*NOW: Energy Grid Management Salesperson at Enel,
Boston, MA*

Travel Bug

Sometime around my junior year of high school, I caught the travel bug. I did a summer trip to Costa Rica that paired adventure (surfing, hiking, ziplining the rainforest) with service (painting schools, fixing trails, and cleaning beaches). I went with a high school friend and merged with a group of about twenty students sharing the same experience. It was my first time out of the country and I was thrust into an environment far removed from the thrills of western Massachusetts. The smells, food, noises, animals, weather, beaches, and, most of all, the locals all became part of an instant sensory overload in the best of ways. I was enthralled by the whole experience. Fascinated with a culture that was so very different from my own. I often describe that trip as my “oh shit” moment—when the world opened up for me, and it was from there that my curiosity would forever be piqued.

So, what does someone study when they are culturally curious and love to travel? Welcome to anthropology! I’ll admit, I had no clue what I wanted to major in when I got to campus, and I didn’t decide until sophomore year after taking an introductory class. I rationalized the decision to major in Anthropology+Sociology by recognizing that whatever career I pursued, I’d need to understand people and how they interact with their environment. (I should add a caveat here: I had no intentions of being a mathematician.)

Staying true to my liberal arts degree, I took a smattering of classes ranging from philosophy to Spanish, but I found a particular passion for my class on sustainability, and it just so happened to be taught by an anthropology professor. That interest snowballed into an extraordinary study abroad program with the Sea Education Association. Aboard a 134-foot sailboat, students and crew sailed from Cape Cod to St. Croix while studying marine biology, oceanography, and nautical science. One of the most common elements we found during our research, at sea and in creatures' bellies: plastic. All of a sudden, the negative human impact on the planet became very apparent, and I knew that I wanted to help mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. In short, I wanted to change the world.

I recognized that whatever career I pursued,
I'd need to understand people and how
they interact with their environment.

With a degree in people and a minor in sustainability, I took my mission to Boston to work for a company selling solar panels. I figured that if climate change is a human impact problem, I could directly reduce that impact by helping homeowners power their homes from the sun. For the most part it worked! Still a very long way to go, but solar power has become mainstream and every sale I made felt like a tangible and positive impact.

Very seldom will you find a job board in the anthropology department with sales jobs listed on it, but I'd argue that sales is one of the truest applications of anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Sure, sales has some stigma associated with it, but that's because people are either bad at it or they are selling you a piece of junk. The most important element of sales is to sell something that you are passionate about; otherwise, you just won't

be very effective. For me, I was selling a cost-saving product to homeowners that, in aggregate, could reduce the demand for peaking power plants. Pretty easy to get behind.

About two years into my solar sales career I started to have some doubts about the impact I was making. Solar was tangible, but was a house-by-house approach enough to move the needle? I thought not, so I dusted off the resume and landed a job at a company in Boston called Enel. Enel is one of the largest utilities in the world. We do massive wind, solar, and battery storage and efficiency projects. I work on a grid management service called demand response that is essentially a way to provide power to the grid through energy efficiency. We work with some of the largest power users (including my alma mater) to reduce their energy costs and help power the electric grid. My role requires me to work with different levels of an organization ranging from CEOs to maintenance managers. To be effective, I need to adapt how I communicate. Understanding how to gain a client's trust and work within their organization and community allows me to be most effective in finding the right service for them. Much of that hierarchical understanding and social navigation draws on a framework taught in the social sciences.

Anthropology is the study of humans and culture. Psychology is the study of the mind and behavior. Both fields, in essence, use a series of discovery questions to better understand a person or persons and then use that information to make some sort of determination or recommendation. Sales is very similar in that in order to provide a solution, you must first identify the problem. Asking the right questions helps you position your product as a solution and, more importantly, helps you earn trust with your client as an empathetic advisor and not another greasy salesperson. To employ a cheesy but true saying in sales, "Telling is not selling." The social sciences, in general, have given me a skill set that has allowed me to better understand people and what makes them tick.

Look at almost any cultural anthropology case study and you'll see that any successful work required immersion in a specific culture. That immersion can often be challenging, as the subjects and cultures of most of these studies were intensely different from those of the anthropologists. They had to gain trust, learn the language and navigate some of the cultural hierarchies in order to get the information and understanding that they sought. The same is true in business and in sales. We take a consultative approach to our process to learn our customers' business, earn their trust, and be able to work through corporate hierarchies in order to get a deal done or a product implemented. That adaptability is a true anthropological skill and tool that is applicable in any field, especially in business.

Despite having to fend off the confused majority that think anthropology is just "digging up fossils" and sociology is the path to social work, the skills learned and topics covered in my anthropology and sociology coursework have been very helpful in both my career and my everyday life. I've found that trying to understand humans, cultures, and society at large is really a daily practice that we sometimes aren't even aware of. Having a foundation and framework to make sense of it all is very helpful, and that's what is at the core of anthropology.

So whether you're fascinated by people and want to think critically about why humans and society operate the way they do, or if you're unsure of what you want to study but have a curiosity about the world, you will get exposed to a unique field of study with an interesting array of classmates and professors in the anthropology department. Not only will you be interested in what you're studying, but you'll learn lifelong skills for any profession—maybe even sales.

LIBRARY SCIENCE**Hannah Arnow**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology and History, Tufts University, 2015

NOW: Project Manager and Research Assistant at Harvard University Library; Candidate for M.A. in History and Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) at Simmons University

An Anthropologist in the Library

I graduated from Tufts University in 2015 with a double major in Anthropology and History. Throughout my academic career, I found anthropology incredibly useful as it provided a theoretical and methodological foundation for me to consider my work as a historian more broadly. Originally, I saw myself as an academic historian, however, I am now pursuing degrees to be a professional archivist. My anthropology coursework encouraged me to approach history in an interdisciplinary way and to interrogate sources for their silences and social contexts. In my historical research, I treat sources as a product of humans who have their own cultures and perspectives, and I read against the grain for details of voices often left out of primary sources. Anthropology, or more specifically, my archaeology fieldwork, has equipped me to analyze non-traditional primary sources, such as oral histories, myths, and material culture. This framework informs my desire to work as an archivist and as an advocate for the importance of archives, libraries, and spaces of information literacy education.

In 2018, I began working on a Master of Arts degree in History and a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS)—both at

Simmons University. In my graduate classes, my anthropology background is a huge asset. Anthropology coursework prepared me to think at a level ahead of my peers as we study concepts of cultural memory and the politics of remembering. We use many of the anthropological theorists who populated my undergraduate coursework, so I am ahead of the curve in the type of thinking my professors are working to cultivate in us as historians and archivists.

My professional path has worked its way back to anthropology more explicitly, but the skills I learned through my anthropology degree have been an asset for me throughout my professional life. Immediately after completing my undergrad, I received a Fulbright Research Scholarship for an anthropology project studying cultural identity and identity performance. Once I returned, I was a little burnt out and did not want to go immediately back to graduate school. My plan was to find a job that used my research skills without being solely a research job.

In my first job at Partners Population Health, I started as a research assistant, and over the next three years I was promoted twice. My hiring manager was an anthropology major and therefore understood the skills that I, as an anthropologist, could bring to the table. I became entrenched in the internal consulting arm of my department. I worked in workflow optimization because I was skilled at bringing disparate groups together and communicating business needs to people with competing priorities. This skill set led me to excel at project management, technology operationalization, and implementation work. In my job, analysis and planning, social sensitivity, the ability to appropriately challenge conclusions, accuracy in interpreting behavior, and insightful interpretation of information led me to rise as an effective leader and project manager. I bring together people from many departments and organizations to have productive conversations and make decisions. There are many opportunities for cultural miscommunications and language barriers—between the developers and the social workers,

for example—and my anthropology background has helped me navigate it all and be a fluent cultural translator.

Currently I work as a project manager and research assistant at Harvard University Library as I complete my graduate work. I do a lot of user research and research design that requires me to think critically about the populations we are serving. Ethnographic techniques, observation, and cultural awareness—skills I learned through my anthropology degree—are skills that I use every day to consider how different people engage with the technology and materials we produce.

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One project I am particularly proud of was one on which I was brought in to help reorganize a high-profile team that had a major issue when it came to the implementation of their new patient database. There was a lot of confusion because the clients were social workers, who viewed the data differently than the data scientist who created the database with minimal engagement from the project team. The outputs were not what they wanted, needed, or understood. The social workers wanted to be able to identify the patients as individuals, rather than as part of a larger dataset. I was brought in to help get the project back on track and to try to understand what went wrong. I started with listening, getting a handle on what they needed, what they asked for, and what they received. This helped me get to the heart of the problem and earn

the trust of all the parties involved—all details that anthropology taught me are essential when you approach a new situation. By improving inter-team communication, creative problem-solving, and some technology education, I was able to establish a framework for future success between the two groups and a pathway forward for collaboration.

My ability to observe, adapt, and react have shaped my career. These skills allow me to not only be an effective employee, but to also continually learn from my mentors and peers. My openness to learning by doing and observing has served me well, as I can take on the ever-evolving landscape of my profession. As I complete my MLIS and look for jobs in the library space, my skills in project management, facilitation, user design, and social mediation will help me stand out in an applicant pool. All of these are skills that I cultivated through my anthropology coursework.

STUDENT LIFE**Lindsey Proulx**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with minors in Psychology and Global Communication, RWU, 2015

NOW: Assistant Director of Clubs and Organizations at a university in the Northeast

Anthropology Skills in My Back Pocket

I graduated from Roger Williams University (RWU) with a B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology and minors in Psychology and Global Communication. I grew up in a homogenous, small town in New Hampshire, which limited my exposure to diverse perspectives, individuals, and beliefs. I enrolled in college fully intending to pursue a degree in legal studies and ultimately become a lawyer; however, within my first year, my plans changed and I switched my focus to Anthropology+Sociology. A year later, my career aspirations took another shift, and I decided I was going to pursue graduate work in higher education and work toward a career in student affairs. While I knew that my career goal was not to be a practicing anthropologist, I was confident that I was gaining tangible skills and lessons that would prove to be invaluable in the future.

In college I had the opportunity to go on a service-learning trip where I was able to fully immerse myself in the culture by living in the community with host families and spending time with locals. Through observation and participation, I began to understand the culture and customs of the community I was serving. Throughout that trip, I returned to what I had learned in my anthropology classes. My coursework provided me with the skills to think

critically and openly about what are considered best practices for community service. I vividly remember a classroom discussion in the early days of my coursework about western views of community service and the impact service organizations make on the communities they serve. What I learned in this discussion was the importance of being invited into a community and being intentional about respecting beliefs that differ from one's own. We considered the concept of biomedicine and how its impact on a culture is not always positive or invited. Even if a service organization begins with the best intentions, it can be harmful to assume that biomedicine's effectiveness aligns with the community's belief systems, and equally harmful to not ensure the service efforts are sustainable. What happens when the community no longer has access to something that they have learned to rely on? The value of ensuring that service work is in the best interest of the community it is serving and does not do more harm than good is something that I carried with me throughout that trip. This is also a value that I encourage my students to consider when they embark on their own service trips.

After graduation I moved south to pursue graduate work in higher education. The move from a small private liberal arts institution to a large public research institution required a considerable adjustment. I found myself turning to my background in anthropology to help guide my decisions. At my graduate institution, students of color made up 35 percent of the student body, over 3,000 students were from outside the United States, and many students identified as first-generation or from low-income households. My position as a Graduate Assistant put me in a new role as a para-professional, charged with supporting hundreds of students with incredibly unique stories. I constantly needed to be aware of how their identities and cultural backgrounds came together to influence who they were and how they showed up in spaces. For many of these students, access to college presented its own barriers to success, which followed students throughout their

academic career. A primary goal of educational institutions is to provide support for students to push them to persist and graduate, but student support methods are not one-size-fits-all. A degree in anthropology allowed me to understand systems of privilege, power, and oppression, and encouraged me to work tirelessly to break down access and success barriers in education.

A degree in anthropology allowed me to understand systems of privilege, power, and oppression, and encouraged me to work tirelessly to break down access and success barriers in education.

I am fortunate to say that I have completed my graduate work and have been working in my dream career ever since. Working in Student Life comes with its challenges, though. One of the most challenging decisions I've had to make was a case involving freedom of speech. A student organization was planning an event and inviting a notoriously radical speaker to campus to speak to students. This individual was well known for ridiculing the views of many culturally diverse groups and for opposing social justice and gender equity movements. The group organizing the program expected support, just as any other organization would receive. They were adamant that we should uphold their freedom of speech as strongly as programs encouraging inclusive values. Other students, many of whom already felt marginalized on a predominately white campus and in a system that set them at a disadvantage, hoped my office would oppose the event. I was obligated to support a decision that aligned with the laws of the state where the institution was located, but I was concerned that we were doing a disservice to the community and stripping away the trust we had built. In this instance, my ability to understand

multiple social perspectives, recognize different values in their specific contexts, and navigate challenging conversations were all skills that proved beneficial. I leaned on social sensitivity and agility more so than at any other point in my career.

Navigating conversations about equity and inclusion, and creating inclusive environments for students from diverse backgrounds, remains at the forefront of my career. My background in anthropology allows me to understand the complexity of human interactions, social systems, and the intersection of cultures and beliefs. My ability to recognize the importance of unique stories, diverse identities, and social interactions stems from my undergraduate education and is something that I will continue to value in my career.

While my resume may not state that I am a practicing anthropologist, the skills I gained from my degree have always been in my back pocket ready to be used at any point. Every student that I work with has unique values and beliefs that frame the way they see the world. As a professional whose responsibility it is to help guide them to be the best and most successful version of themselves, I always need to be able to listen and think critically, but without judgment, about the social and cultural experiences that they bring to the table. These principles are at the core of who I am and will continue to frame my work and life.

HEALTHCARE

Grace Van Vooren

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with a minor in Global Communications, RWU, 2015

NOW: Development Associate at Ryan Health

Where has your career taken you since graduating from your undergraduate program? How did anthropology help guide your career trajectory?

I loved my Medical Anthropology class in college, so once I graduated I contemplated seeking a patient advocacy job, but instead I found an internship for event coordinating at the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS). Through that internship I became interested in the nonprofit sector and their missions. My Global Communications minor was a great compliment to my major because it gave me a marketing perspective and another view of community interests.

What can you share about your current position?

I started my career several months after graduation and interning for LLS. I worked part-time for a fundraising and philanthropy consulting firm in NYC called Changing Our World. That gave me a view of the fundraising side of the nonprofit world. After that, one of their clients, Seeds of Africa, hired me as a Development Associate to assist in fundraising and strategy efforts. Recently, I was hired by Ryan Health as their Development Associate to assist in the fundraising/grant writing efforts. Ryan Health is a Federally Qualified Health Center based in Manhattan that provides high-quality, comprehensive, and affordable primary and specialty care to New York's diverse and underserved communities. We currently serve over 60,000 patients. The organization's mission is guided by the founding principle that "Health care is a right, not a privilege." My role is to apply to foundation grants and build upon their individual contacts for solicitation. There is a clear link here back to my early wish to do patient advocacy work. I may not be out on the front lines with patients, but funding the people that are is very important and

it uses a skill that I have. Anthropology made me become mission driven and gave me the gift of storytelling. I use my persuasive writing skills to inform people of issues they should support and give money to. Grant writing is persuasive writing and being able to share the stories of this organization and its members is important. That, to me, is advocacy.

How do you use an anthropological approach (skills, perspectives, or methods) in your current job?

As I write this, I have only been at Ryan Health for one month, but at Seeds of Africa, anthropology was very prevalent and I practiced it in my job frequently. I traveled to visit our programs on the ground in Ethiopia for four weeks and introduced our board members and supporters from New York to these programs. I had to keep an open mind and practice my participant observation skills as I navigated the introduction of two very different communities and cultures.

How has anthropology helped you solve problems (big or small) in the workplace?

When I worked at Seeds of Africa, I drew on my social agility skills every day to feel comfortable in an unfamiliar country and culture and to help others do the same. I used keen observation skills when working closely with program staff to better understand how the people and organization operate. And I used analysis, planning, and ultimately strategy to determine who to solicit for funds and when. This is all integral to getting your organization funded.

I am always employing social sensitivity when working with the many different groups that I want to raise money from. I essentially have to educate people if they do not know about the organization, or do not know about the cause, and continue to reinforce that people who need funding are the same people they want to help financially, whether it's in a domestic medical setting or a community across the globe. Being able to interpret information to better understand how an organization or program works is important to being able to write a compelling overview and address specific funding needs.

DISASTER RELIEF**Anna Swenson**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with minors in Global Communications and Psychology, RWU, 2015

NOW: Emergency Management Specialist focused in Recovery at FEMA

One Disaster After Another

I graduated from Roger Williams University in 2015 with a major in Anthropology+Sociology and minors in Global Communications and Psychology. In college, I was incredibly involved in student affairs, leadership, and mentoring programs on campus, all of which have contributed to my current career at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). My interest in disaster relief began in 2010 when I attended a People to People Student Ambassador Leadership Summit where I learned in-depth the overall catastrophe and destruction Hurricane Katrina had on the New Orleans community on a micro and macro scale. Working with hurricane survivors, hearing from first responders, and seeing the ongoing aftermath of the hurricane, still present after five years, opened my world to a new perspective.

After my first year of college I was able to travel to New Zealand with the Habitat for Humanity Global Village program where we immersed ourselves in the culture, heritage, customs, and values of the local Kiwis. We worked with a family of seven who had lost their home to an earthquake. They took us in, showed us their remaining valued possessions, taught us their culture and customs, and opened their lives to us in gratitude for our assistance. This gave me yet another perspective. Their community was still in the

immediate rebuilding phase of the disaster, but it was clear that they had different approaches to rebuilding and recovery.

I began to take an interest in how disasters and major events changed a community, not just aesthetically but in terms of the culture and people within it. My degree allowed me to focus on this interest specifically, as my mentors and professors guided me to available opportunities. Anthropology gave me the flexibility to take several different routes post-graduation and use what I'd learned as I wanted, rather than constraining me to a specific career path. At the time, I had never dreamed that I would be able to make a career out of my passion and interest.

Anthropology gave me the flexibility to take several different routes post-graduation and use what I'd learned as I wanted, rather than constraining me to a specific career path.

Senior year approached and I began to research graduate programs that would allow me to implement my undergraduate degree and further explore my interest in disaster relief and operations. I earned my master's in Homeland Security with a concentration in National Security and Emergency Management from Northeastern University, and began working for the State of New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management as an intern during my second year. That internship turned into a permanent position post-graduation, and then I moved to the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency. I am currently working as an Emergency Management Specialist focused in Recovery for FEMA.

Working for FEMA has been a dream come true and a challenge that is ever evolving. I was first stationed in Region II which covers New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin

Islands. Two months into working for the agency, I was deployed to St. Croix to assist in recovery efforts stemming from hurricanes Maria and Irma. I spent seven months working in an operations role there. This gave me the opportunity to apply my undergraduate anthropology skills and knowledge extensively. Although still a United States territory, the customs and culture have vast differences that I quickly had to adapt to. In my position, we are surrounded by individuals who have been devastated by a hurricane and need assistance, but who may have a negative opinion of our mission there. Although the media and rumors can misconstrue our values, we all needed to be able to understand cultural differences in order to interpret people's needs during a time of distress.

I believe the skills I learned in the anthropology curriculum are important in any field that involves interacting with others, especially in times of distress. Being able to understand cultural differences and norms allows an outsider to be more accepting and able to make connections with others who can help interpret the situation. I can think of many instances in my deployment when new people would come into the office with cultural assumptions. I would explain that in St. Croix honking your horn is a way of saying thank you, and saying good night is a form of saying hello and goodbye. Without this knowledge, it is easy to misinterpret behavior as rude or unwelcoming. Being an outsider who wants to understand cultural differences not only made my work more successful, but I was able to leave the island with a community of friends and experiences that were positive and lifelong.

I relocated to Region 8 in Denver, Colorado to take a position on the Field Operations and Program Delivery team in the Public Assistance Branch and I was deployed to Sioux Falls, South Dakota for eight months to work on severe flooding and storms that occurred in March 2019. Coming into this deployment and being back on the mainland, I had expectations that things would not seem as unfamiliar as in my previous island deployment. However,

South Dakota is home to several tribal groups that hold distinct cultural norms and values. Mannerisms that seem normal and mundane to people who are not aware of a group's customs can sometimes result in discomfort and hostility. FEMA personnel were given training immediately upon deployment to educate them about the various tribes' norms and how to interact respectfully as a federal government entity.

Anthropology has not only made me more successful in my career, I believe it has made me a better person. It has given me the skills to observe, reflect, interpret, and analyze situations prior to making judgements or assumptions. Additionally, it has taught me the importance of people's differences. Through my personal and professional travels, I am constantly interacting and adapting to unfamiliar scenarios. Being able to understand and take on a different social perspective has given me the opportunity to learn and grow into a person that I am proud to be.

USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Kimberly Eliassen

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with a minor in Visual Arts, RWU, 2014

NOW: Production Designer in User Experience (UX) Design

Passion and Persistence

I graduated from Roger Williams University with a degree in Anthropology+Sociology in the spring of 2014. To supplement this degree, I minored in visual arts, and the combination of these two fields has led me down an interesting and fulfilling career path. I would not say that my steps have been linear, but each position I've held provided the resources, experiences, and skills that brought me to where I am today.

While in school, I learned quickly that there was an intrinsic relationship between art and anthropology. Beyond the technical skills involved, art is all about reading symbols, understanding political, social, religious, and economic contexts, and about appreciating the artists' perspectives. It is also about recognizing the significance of trends and patterns in society and paying attention to how fast they can change.

I did not know exactly what I wanted to do while I was still in school and, to be honest, it was a terrifying time. I knew where I wanted to live and realized early on that I wanted to do something creative, but I began to understand how difficult it would be to survive as an artist. It wasn't until my senior year that I came across User Experience (UX) Design, an industry that combines the analysis of human-technology interaction with visual design.

Through research, I learned what skills were needed to become a UX Designer, and while recruiters will often seek people with social research backgrounds, technical graphic and web design skills are also required. I was lucky enough to get in contact with someone who works in the field and received some helpful advice regarding the steps I should take. In the meantime, I was preparing to graduate and getting ready to enter the workforce.

I moved to Portland, Maine, and started the job search. I sent out dozens of resumes and cover letters to companies within any industry that interested me. I knew that whatever I found would be temporary, but I hoped that it would offer experience and skills that I could leverage in the future. It was purely by chance that I decided to visit the Cryptozoology Museum one day and met the owner, who happened to have a background in anthropology. After a fascinating conversation about the field, I was offered a position as a docent.

This museum is wonderful and quirky to say the least. Though famously known for its Bigfoot exhibits, the Cryptozoology Museum as a whole displayed a large range of rare zoological specimens alongside preserved native art, and unique, pop culture pieces. It was an odd, yet enriching, experience and has become a valuable conversation starter.

During my time at the museum, I began to teach myself as much as I could about graphic design, but ultimately I decided that additional classes would be helpful. I enrolled in an online university and temped at a publishing company before being offered a job at an insurance company through a contact I made at the museum. I was in an investigative role for about a year and a half before being offered a position at my current company.

I was originally hired to be a part of the marketing team. My primary responsibility was to help pharmacies fulfill their local marketing initiatives. I spoke with them about what they were interested in promoting and who they wanted to target, and I learned more about their community. Then I used this information

to create an effective marketing plan. Anthropology helped me tremendously in this role. The ability to analyze demographics, contextualize a region's socio-economic conditions, and draw concise, defensible conclusions—all without a degree in marketing—was invaluable. It was my responsibility to consider how a commercial would be received in rural Alabama versus New York City, to suggest edits to marketing materials that were being targeted to an older demographic, and to analyze the population of a region to determine how far a digital ad should circulate.

The ability to analyze demographics,
contextualize a region's socio-economic
conditions, and draw concise, defensible
conclusions—all without a degree in
marketing—was invaluable.

I was in this role for a few months before I heard about an opening in the design department. Though I was still taking classes, I reached out to the creative director and explained my interest in the UX and design industry. He met with me, reviewed my portfolio, and we discussed the position's requirements. I knew that he needed a designer with far more experience, but I had a working relationship with our clients and emphasized my willingness to learn. He agreed to bring me onto his team part-time and, for a few months, I held positions in two departments. Eventually we had the opportunity to build a website for a client and I was asked to be a part of the project as the Production Designer. I accepted the position and title change and moved into the creative department full-time.

The website I worked on provides marketing materials to mom-and-pop pharmacists interested in promoting themselves to their local community. While building the site, it was important that we

tailor the experience to the pharmacists while also considering their customer base. Many of the pharmacists that we work with are older and not the most tech-savvy, so the site was made as intuitive as possible. Workflow and efficiency mattered as well, because at the end of the day they are pharmacists, not marketers, and it was our job to take that responsibility off their plate.

My job duties shifted once the site was built and I had to start monitoring the existing templates. In addition to this, I had to help the site evolve with changing industry trends. I used several data collection techniques including content audits, customer surveys, and feedback. The information gathered in these discovery sessions affected the user's customization process and general website experience.

Though many of the technical design skills I now possess were learned after graduation, my anthropology degree has benefited every position I've held.

Today, I still use these data collection techniques to keep the site user-friendly and to enhance the overall user experience. Though many of the technical design skills I now possess were learned after graduation, my anthropology degree has benefited every position I've held. I am constantly looking for patterns and meaning, which has made me more thoughtful and observant in and out of the office. I am not afraid of a challenge or ambiguity, I have the means to think outside the box, to decipher information and draw my own conclusions, and I am conscious of others' socio-cultural and economic perspectives.

I am still a novice in my industry, but I am grateful for the degree I earned and for the breadth of experiences I have had. I am still growing as a designer and, while I may not discuss in-depth

anthropological theory every day, my earned skill set and appreciation for global cultures has enriched my life in so many ways. I have a far more insightful perspective on travel, fashion, music, and politics, and I have been lucky enough to combine anthropology with my love of art. There are an incredible number of places that a degree in anthropology can take you. The difficult part is realizing where your passion lies. Once uncovered, a little tenacity, openness, and hard work will take you the rest of the way.

SURVEY TECHNOLOGY

Shane Bumstead

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with a minor in Creative Writing, RWU, 2012

NOW: Survey Office Technician at a survey and mapping company

As an undergraduate, what did you plan to do after graduation?

When I graduated, I needed money and thought that I would make a good oil and gas manager since I already had a background in that. I did do that and reached a high level and was pretty good at the job, but decided it wasn't for me.

Where has your career taken you since graduating?

Today, I am a Survey Office Technician. I started this position about a year and a half ago. The position pays well and we use fun technology like drones, 3-D imaging technology, and miscellaneous survey equipment.

How has anthropology helped you solve problems (big or small) or address important issues in your life?

I like to use an anthropological lens to identify problems that many times others can't see. For example, I applied a holistic perspective when considering the legalities of flying drones for surveying. My colleagues had not thought of privacy issues being a potential problem with the new technology. Because I looked beyond the technical issues to address the social implications, I was seeing the problem holistically. I use anthropology in my personal life as a way to understand complex situations. I am more aware of the ramifications of my personal actions as they relate to the environment and other people.

Which of Omohundro's twelve abilities have helped you most in your career?

Persuasive writing and conversation have helped in both my work life and personal life. I am able to effectively argue for a position that I believe in—especially in diverse work groups. Developing social sensitivity has been very helpful to me because I didn't have much of it before I took anthropology. I would have inaccurately thought that I was socially sensitive, but that probably wasn't the case. I also highly value my observation skills. I did not realize how important this was before taking anthropology, and how much one can learn from just listening instead of waiting to be the one who is talking.

ARTS FUNDRAISING**Paloma Hutton**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with a concentration in Music Theory, RWU, 2014

NOW: Membership and Annual Fund Associate at The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York City, NY

Marketing Music and Arts

I graduated from Roger Williams University in 2014 with a B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology and a core concentration in Music Theory. While I was in college, I held two marketing internships. My first one was at The Ridgefield Playhouse, a nonprofit performing arts center in Ridgefield, Connecticut. I was responsible for doing grassroots marketing for the organization, such as hanging up posters and flyers around the town, calling local organizations to share information about upcoming events, and posting event details on local arts and culture calendars and websites. My second internship was with the Rhode Island Philharmonic, where I also posted information on websites, helped distribute mailings, and answered patrons' questions at the information table during performances. During these internships, I used what I was learning in school to really observe a formal work environment—the first I had ever experienced—in order to get a better understanding of office culture (figuring out the appropriate attire to wear based on what everyone else was wearing, or even learning phone etiquette while making cold calls to other organizations to share information). While doing a lot of grassroots work, I spoke with several local businesses/people to get an understanding of what they thought about the institutions I was working for and how we

could better provide support to patrons and distribute information about upcoming events. What I learned in my anthropology coursework about interviewing, listening, and observing helped me understand how audiences found out about events and what we could be doing better to market them or how we could partner better with local organizations.

The combination of my bachelor's degree, core concentration in music theory, and my internships in music and performance deeply informed my senior thesis. I chose to pose the following questions: How does collectivity happen between groups of people who are musically involved together? How is a dynamic tension produced between individual tastes and the taste of the group? Who are "creatives"? I conducted fifteen individual interviews and two focus groups to answer these questions. While the thesis was hard work, I really enjoyed doing the research and interviewing people. I think that my thesis informed my decision to keep working in the nonprofit arts and culture sector after school.

After graduating, I applied to open job positions in Manhattan but found it to be extremely difficult due to my geographic location at the time. I finally landed a position back at The Ridgefield Playhouse in the fall of 2014 as a full-time Marketing Assistant, which later evolved into an associate level role. In this position, I was responsible for creating marketing plans, which included both digital and grassroots initiatives such as radio, print, and social media ads, as well as community outreach via flyer and poster distribution. In this position, I continued to utilize my anthropology and sociology degree by understanding the culture of the people who attended certain events, and exploring where there was cross-over in attendance. For example, we would often market to people who attended several concerts in similar genres by sending emails or mailing postcards with a list of upcoming events. We also surveyed the audience at shows to figure out how they found out about our events, so we could then invest more money into the tool that was performing better for future events. I learned in that role

that people really loved to support the venue because of the mission and the cultural events that they brought to the town. My anthropology degree was helpful in this role because I could continue to utilize my interview skills as well as my ability to understand audience performance and engagement from a micro and macro level.

After working there for two and a half years, I decided I wanted to move up within the nonprofit sector and have some more job responsibility. That's when I started working at The Wassaic Project, a nonprofit community arts organization with year-round exhibitions, an artist in residence program, and education programs based out of a repurposed grain mill. They also hosted an annual festival with music, dance, and film screenings. Here I was the External Affairs Marketing Officer and was responsible for marketing programs and raising funds for the organization. I marketed the education programs, the festival and other community events, and the residency program. In terms of fundraising, I would help with grant writing, managing our donor database, and raising money for general operating support. I learned a lot in that role about nonprofits, especially the amount of work it takes to raise money for an organization. I was able to use my anthropology skills a lot, in particular with the grant writing. The writing I had to do for fundraising varied from answering short-form questions that were less than 300 words to writing a two or three-page essay about the organization and what we needed the funds for. I often had to outline objectives, compile data to support our needs, and explain clearly how we would use the funds. I also had to make sure that what the foundation was willing to support was clearly stated when explaining the need for a gift. For marketing, I had to write for social media, email, and website copy for the organization. I had to take my long-form skills of persuasive writing and shorten it into two or three sentences. Clear and concise writing was important for both grant applications and marketing events. This was challenging at first, but because of my

foundational work in anthropology I was able to tighten up this skill and use it to increase audience attendance and spread brand awareness. Because of my diverse responsibilities in this role, I think this is where I utilized my anthropology skills the most.

Ultimately, I made the move to Manhattan. I applied to nonprofit jobs and finally started my role at The Studio Museum in Harlem in 2018. I have been working for the museum for a little over a year as their Membership and Annual Fund Associate. In this position, I help acquire new members for the museum, retain current ones, and plan special events for members. I also help solicit donations towards general operating support while our organization is in the midst of a capital campaign for a new building. In this role, I still use my anthropology skill by looking at things from a different perspective. For example, with our mass solicitations asking for general operating support, I often have to use the lens of a donor. I think about if I were to donate to an organization, what kind of language, images, or call to actions would persuade me to donate? This helped me with decision making throughout the campaign and led us to reach our fundraising goal.

Anthropology greatly expanded my horizons in terms of understanding people and the importance of culture in today's world. I learned how to step back and really interpret people from different lenses.

Although I did not pursue further education in anthropology, I believe that my major was really important to both my personal and career growth. Before attending college, my view of the world was extremely narrow. Anthropology greatly expanded my horizons in terms of understanding people and the importance of culture in

today's world. I learned how to step back and really interpret people from different lenses.

Of Omohundro's twelve abilities students acquire as an anthropology major, I would say I regularly use social agility, analysis and planning, and insightful interpretation of information. Nonprofits typically tend to have smaller staff sizes due to budget constraints. Sometimes this can result in doing work both in and out of your job description. My social agility helps me quickly respond to situations that can be hectic and to prioritize assignments and projects accordingly. With analysis and planning, I believe that my anthropology degree, and in particular working on my senior thesis, helped me to be better at managing projects internally in the development department as well as cross-departmentally. When handed a project, I am able to analyze all the steps it will take to complete it and therefore make a better plan to get it done efficiently. I am also able to plan a small system for the project so things can get approved and pushed forward on time. This leads to the insightful interpretation of information, which includes analyzing performance reports of campaigns we do year-round to acquire members and get donations for general operating support. Being able to analyze data in this way creates a better-informed decision about our audience and will influence what we do in future fundraising campaigns.

Overall, I think I made a great decision to major in anthropology and sociology. I learned so much about myself as well as our world. I broadened my horizons, learned how important someone's culture is, and how influential it is to someone's identity. Now I am deeply invested in the power of people's cultures and the importance of artists' contributions to society. Working in both music and performance spaces, and also now in visual art, I've realized how deeply these things impact people. I am proud to have been and can continue to be a part of sharing information and raising the funds for these important art forms.

INTERIOR DESIGN**Briana Balboni**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology, RWU, 2013

NOW: Project Manager and Design Coordinator in interior design

Designing a Career

You most likely have had this moment (or you will soon): someone asks about your future degree, and after holding your breath, you smile and exhale, “anthropology.” You either immediately must explain what anthropology is, or you start getting overwhelmed by the big questions: “What kind of jobs are out there?” “So, will you be like Indiana Jones?” Well, as a seven-year post grad who carries an anthropology degree, I can assure you that without it, I wouldn’t be where I am professionally today.

Yes, I have a job! Not only do I have a job, but I have held several jobs at very different companies. I have found it very easy to apply my anthropological training to my work, and due to my inquisitive nature as an anthropology grad, I have been able to really pinpoint how each role has applied anthropology in its own unique way. My degree has allowed me to broaden my career horizons in ways that other degrees would limit, mostly due to the array of skills I graduated with and the ability to apply anthropology . . . well, anywhere.

Since graduation, I have worked in a restaurant, a museum, a marketing firm, a retail store, in residential interior design and finally, in hospitality design. Do you know what the common theme in all of these is? People. In school, we constantly were asking the “whys” of human existence, finding this answer through our

observations, through our strong analysis and through our problem solving. No matter what job you come across, you will be working around people in some capacity; whether you are in customer service, environmental work, healthcare . . . the list goes on and on. It is the distinct perspective you learned and adapted to in your anthropology studies that will support you in your professional endeavors. This perspective will allow you to offer new and innovative insights, to challenge the norms, and to simplify processes.

An anthropological perspective is present in my everyday work as a project manager and design coordinator, specializing in hospitality design for hotels, restaurants, and senior living. I support the Boston and Chicago territories and work with over fifty design and purchasing firms, representing fabric, furniture, and lighting manufacturers. Generally, project managers have the task of balancing processes, supporting their team and their clients. In my case, in the design world, these tasks center around the end goal of a design that is functional, appealing, and beneficial to the quality of life of those using the space.

No matter what job you come across,
you will be working around people
in some capacity.

One of the important attributes that makes me successful in my project management role is the ability to work well in a collaborative environment, remotely. That's right, I work from home! While this has its perks, it ultimately forces me to use my anthropological skills even more, especially when it comes to interpreting information, problem solving, and planning. Throughout the week, I balance phone and video meetings with my internal team, on-site meetings with clients, and email requests.

Being able to shift gears quickly while keeping my workload organized is one of the abilities that I pride myself on as an anthropology graduate. I might be at an on-site meeting with an interior designer in the city and get an email from my internal team with an urgent request, or from a purchasing company with an issue that might have come up with an order that needs clarification. It is in those moments that I can take a step back, accurately interpret the information I am given, and come up with concrete solutions in a manner that respects all parties involved. When working with designers, I collaborate with them to develop new ideas to achieve their design vision, while keeping an understanding of the people using the space.

I need to have extremely strong time-management skills, be proactive in problem solving, and communicate effectively, both in my written and verbal communications. When I am at home, most of my work includes administrative tasks such as forwarding and tracking fabric samples, assisting with the tracking of purchased items, maintaining inventory lists and project logistics, collecting specification information from designers and purchasers to determine quantities, pricing, and lead times, all while creating standard budget documentation and quotes. My day-to-day coordination efforts are necessary to execute projects effectively and support my outside sales team.

The skills I learned as an anthropology undergrad allow me to dive deeper, to simplify and contextualize broader ideas, and to interpret my surroundings in an insightful manner. It benefits those around me, as I encourage a refreshing perspective, guiding others to appropriately understand the world around them. In broad view, working in the design world allows me to help designers tell a story, through color, pattern, and texture. It is taking their ideas and inspirations and helping them to capture that essence through interior design. This is all on top of the designers' goal of understanding how a person uses the space they are designing, which is key if you are looking at it with an anthropological

perspective. Luckily, I am able to be a part of the design process, exercising common anthropology practices such as assuming the social perspective of the customer, simplifying the design specifications to meet customer needs, and delivering products that benefit the people who ultimately will be using the space.

I graduated with the support to pave my own career path, on my own terms (shout-out to my Applied Anthropology professor!). It might sound scary, but it has been one of the most exciting and freeing experiences being able to navigate different career options and finding different ways to apply my skill set. It guided me to find what I am passionate about. As anthropology professionals, we love a good challenge. So, I say keep 'em coming! Also, for all of you anthropological creatives like me, do me a favor and do some research on design anthropology. You can thank me later!

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Darwin Almonte

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with minors in Business and Spanish, RWU, 2012

NOW: Relationship Development Associate, Strategic Industry Insight in telecommunications

As an undergraduate, what did you plan to do after graduation?

I switched majors to Anthropology+Sociology late in my undergraduate career. I discovered my new major as a junior and declared officially my second semester. As a result, I needed to complete all the required courses along with a thesis project within three semesters to graduate on time. Luckily, all my prerequisites were complete and that gave me the liberty to take on full course loads of Anthropology+Sociology classes. I was successful in completing my coursework and handing in a fully developed thesis project. However, I felt rushed in my discovery, pursuit, and mastery of the profession and was left hungry as I walked across the stage to obtain my diploma. I was hoping to continue in Anthropology+Sociology, but the cost of further education was one of the main reasons I opted to find full-time employment instead.

Where has your career taken you since graduating?

Since graduating in 2012, my career path has changed three times. When I first graduated, I had a series of part-time jobs that included landscaping, hospitality, and auto sales, which ultimately led to a full-time position as a Technical Recruiter for a recruitment process outsourcing company that tasked me with filling the hiring needs for General Motors. After a couple of years of corporate recruiting, I decided to pursue a career in higher education as an admissions recruiter. This work was a labor of love as I was helping first generation college students navigate through the college process. After five rewarding years in higher education, I completed my master's degree in business administration/cyber-security intelligence and recently

changed careers to telecommunications sales. Throughout all these experiences and career paths, I am thankful for my anthropology experience, as it taught me to always be open minded and willing to adapt to any new culture I was introduced to. Being able to recognize the key elements of a company culture has helped me navigate through the job and understand the organic solidarity in place.

I started my current position in September 2019. I work for a privately held telecommunications firm in their relationship development department. I am in charge of providing strategic industry insight and maintaining a healthy partnership with clients from a wide variety of industries. I find myself having to reach back into my anthropological toolbox to adapt to each client's way of conducting business. Starting a new career involved many hours of research into many topics which could have led me into a rabbit hole. My ability to gather, assess, and interpret data is being tested each and every day as my responsibilities require staying on top of the latest trends and innovations in the industry.

How has anthropology helped you solve problems (big or small) or address important issues in your life?

In my previous role as an undergraduate admissions counselor, I found myself using my anthropological mindset in almost every interaction that I had with students and families. Upon visiting an educational institution, there were many elements at play that dictated the flow of my interactions. Depending on the scenario, I had to act in accordance with a set of preconceived rules that may be plainly stated, assumed, or both. What helped me make a lasting impression on students and families is understanding what they thought a normal admissions counselor would do and then going above that preconceived notion. I built rapport with my audience as I pitched my university criteria.

How do you use an anthropological approach (skills, perspectives, or methods) in your current job?

Before I took my current job, I'd only encountered corporate culture in movies and television shows. Now I live and breathe it. In the

telecommunications world, industry trends impact the employees at my company every day. By actively participating in this industry, I feel the effects of what I thought I understood when I was simply reading about economic changes in school.

Which of Omohundro's twelve abilities have helped you most in your career?

During the course of my career, I can identify with multiple abilities that I've slowly sharpened with every opportunity. I have an innate ability to socialize with virtually anyone I encounter. In combination with social sensitivity, social agility helps me to navigate through many social events and work functions, even in different countries. In my job as an admissions counselor, the ability to insightfully interpret and simplify information was essential in reading student applications efficiently, especially during the busy season. Even now, in my current career, I find it absolutely necessary to keep up with my analytical and planning skills. Sales, I have discovered, is a profession of constant change. No matter which product I'm selling, I have to understand how it fits into every viable industry. These have been the anthropological skills that I've incorporated into my life after college. The human condition will forever be the X factor in all that we try to understand, because no matter how much we think we know, we can always find ways to grow.

DISABILITY SERVICES**Samantha McGilvray**

*THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology and French,
RWU, 2013*

*NOW: Pre-employment Transition Services
Coordinator at a human services agency*

Love of Learning

I graduated from Roger Williams University in 2013 with degrees in Anthropology+Sociology and French. I was passionate about both subjects, but when I chose to study both of them I wasn't necessarily thinking of how they would work together. Knowing French obviously opened many doors in terms of studying anthropology, and studying anthropology has certainly helped me navigate my French work.

While in school, I loved learning everything I could. However, I never had a clear career path in mind. There was never really a "dream job" that drove my studies, but rather just a love of learning. Some of the many jobs that I entertained were teaching English overseas, working at a nonprofit of some sort, being part of a documentary team, and joining the Peace Corps. Despite my wide range of interests, I was paralyzed by indecision. I took a chance in early 2013 and applied for a program that sent American graduates to France to work in French public schools as English language assistants. I was accepted into that program and I was placed in Reunion Island, an overseas department of France. I always described Reunion as "French Hawaii." Much like Hawaii, Reunion is a tropical island located a great distance from the mainland. The island itself is incredibly diverse, with a vast colonial history. I lived

in the bungalow of a Reunionese family, so I really got to be a part of the culture. It was an anthropologist's dream! It was also the perfect blend of my anthropology and French degrees. I got to speak French all the time, and I was able to live and work in a place that is unique. I taught English in two middle schools and I got to learn a lot about the people and culture of the island from my students.

My job in Reunion was a one-year contract, so after that year I returned home to the United States. I was still struggling to identify a clear career goal. I knew I wanted to work with people, but my continued indecision hindered me greatly. In the few years after returning from Reunion, I meandered through various jobs, working at an after-school program, a gym, and teaching at a dance studio, but I knew those were not the end-all be-all of my career.

During the spring of 2018, I started searching for jobs in the human services field. I knew I wanted to work directly with diverse groups of people and I was ready to dive in. I found myself doing direct care work with adults who have developmental disabilities. We worked on life skills such as hygiene, reading, and travel training, and did many community activities as well, like Meals on Wheels, hiking trips, museum trips, and volunteering at local high schools. I also had the freedom to run my own educational groups. It was fun to pick a topic and find creative ways to teach it. Anthropology served me particularly well in this context. My ability to research and then communicate that information simply and clearly was certainly thanks in great part to my studies in anthropology. In addition, my anthropological training benefited me in the day-to-day happenings on the job. As part of my job, I collected data on each individual to track their goals and behaviors. A lot of this data is similar to the data I collected through participant observation research, which I learned in my anthropology classes. Having that practice allowed me to jump right into data collection with confidence. Because of my anthropological training, I quickly understood how to collect the necessary data, and I understood the importance of being accurate

and thorough. My diligence in data collection helped the clinical team create behavior plans and helped the case managers track each individual's progress more efficiently and precisely.

Each student learns and communicates in their own unique way, so I constantly use anthropological thinking to find ways to make sure they understand what I am teaching.

After about a year working with adults with disabilities, I transferred to my current position as a Pre-ETS Coordinator. In this position, I work with high school students who have disabilities. I provide them with "Pre-Employment Transition Services" to better prepare them for work or schooling after high school. This program is completely new for my agency, so I was able to design the program and curriculum from scratch. A lot of the training I provide consists of the soft skills and cultural knowledge needed to make the students successful in the workplace. Each student learns and communicates in their own unique way, so I constantly use anthropological thinking to find ways to make sure they understand what I am teaching. Being able to appreciate and understand the diversity of the students I work with is essential to helping them successfully transition, and this work is something that studying anthropology prepared me for.

Being able to work with a wide range of people is essential. I am always trying to find new ways to communicate information and make sure that what I am teaching is understood. With students who have disabilities that affect how they communicate and pick up on social cues, it's important to be clear and concise when giving them information. Many of my students use rigid, rule-based thinking, which can be a challenge when navigating the nuances of work and social settings. Having studied anthropology, I am better

prepared to be socially sensitive with my students. As I work with them, I am constantly observing and adjusting my delivery methods to fit the audience. Anthropological methods and abilities are prevalent in all aspects of my career. While many may assume studies in psychology would be the obvious precursor to a career like mine, anthropology has aided me tremendously in the work that I do.

RETIREMENT PLANNING

Derek Englebretsen

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with a minor in History, RWU, 2012

NOW: Retirement Plan Account Administrator

Where has your career taken you since graduating from your undergraduate program? How did anthropology help guide your career trajectory?

I am now in finance. I do retirement plans, which I never thought I would do. What I took from anthropology is the ability to use quantitative and qualitative research methods to collect data and to analyze that information. That's huge in what I do now. There is a lot of pattern recognition involved in analyzing data across different areas of the country. For certain clients, depending on where they're located, I might draw on particular communication techniques. Anthropology has helped me to be able to read people and understand them. To find out what's relevant to them and how we can relate on the same level. A lot of what I learned in anthropology does transfer over to finance. I never thought it would, but when I think back about it, it definitely does.

What did you originally plan to do after graduation? Is this similar or different from what you actually did?

It was completely different! What I originally wanted to do was go into movies. Movie companies sometimes hire anthropologists if they are filming a movie about another country. They might send someone to study the culture and make sure that they accurately represent it in the film. So basically, I hoped to get paid to travel to these awesome places and just study the culture and report back. I also thought about working for a big company that is trying to market to a new target base. Some companies use anthropologists when they are deciding to open up a global chain in another part of the world, to make sure that their menu or restaurant is going to be successful in that culture. Those were two things I thought I was going to do with my degree. You could say they

are different from what I do now, but those careers and my current career are all about reading people, interpreting their situation, understanding their culture, and using that information to approach them in the best way possible.

When did you start your current job/career? What can you share about your current position?

I started my job at the end of June 2019, but I have been in the same industry for the last five years. My current position is Retirement Plan Account Manager. I am responsible for about 100 clients based mostly in the central United States. I am the day-to-day liaison between clients and their plan (usually by email). I answer their questions, make updates to their retirement plans, and maintain compliance with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Department of Labor regulations. Right now, we are in testing season, so it's very busy. We use census and employment data, so there is a lot of exciting stuff as you can imagine. If a client sends us a request to process and we can't for one reason or another, my team lets me know. I reach out to our client and we work together to resolve it.

How do you use an anthropological approach (skills, perspectives, or methods) in your current job?

I think, as I said earlier, it's more about being able to read people. My clients are from all over the country, they have different backgrounds and lifestyles. I try to play off of who they are and relate to that. I am able to help them because they feel comfortable with me. I can always find a way to add a personal touch and make a better connection. Anthropology helps you read people and pick up on social cues and cultural norms that most people wouldn't notice.

How has anthropology helped you solve problems (big or small) or see important issues in your life?

Anthropology helps when I travel anywhere that is outside of my comfort zone. I learned to respect people's values and norms and be aware of

how my behavior might inadvertently offend someone. That has helped me in my travels in this country and overseas.

Did you have any specific experiences from undergrad that have helped you in your current career or even just in general?

I liked anthropology because there was more discussion in class. I enjoyed the projects and small papers that we would do. For example, in one assignment, we had to study a section of campus through observation. We were asked to look for patterns and trends over a period of time. What is the expected culture here on the first floor of the library? What are you actually witnessing? It was cool stuff like that where you'd find things you wouldn't think of that I really like. Anthropology makes you think outside the box and realize things that you wouldn't normally pick up on. There were a lot of good group projects that we would do that were engaging. There were good discussions in the class and, regardless of the topic we were debating, you could agree or disagree as long as you could support your position. I think that stuck with me.

Which of Omohundro's twelve abilities have helped you most in your career?

I pretty much use the majority of them on a day-to-day basis without even thinking in that context. Once you actually think about it, you realize you do it every day. These skills are taught throughout the major so it gets drilled into you and it just becomes second nature. Social agility, observation, analysis, and planning is all stuff I do every day. I constantly observe people—teammates or clients that I have to work with—and then make adjustments based on their behavior or tone of voice. I rely on the ability to appropriately challenge conclusions, absolutely. If I'm working with another department and I ask for one thing and they come back with another, I may disagree with their conclusion. I will ask for supporting documents. Sometimes you have to go back and forth with other departments. Same with interpreting behavior: it helps me respond appropriately to clients and handle situations in the right way. Sometimes I feel like I overcomplicate things for myself but, when it comes to work, I can simplify information and

explain it to a client. Anthropology taught me to problem solve by going through steps: What's the problem? What stems from this problem? What causes this problem? Work your way backward. Find out what the root cause was. Once you see it, work your way forward. In my written communications with clients, I can be very persuasive. I gradually guide the client into doing what they need to do. Sometimes I need to say "You're wrong," and then explain why: "You've got to do this or your plan will fail and there will be a bunch of fines."

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Regardless of what you do with an undergrad in anthropology, you'll use what you learned in everyday aspects of your life. Even if you end up in the field like mine, which has nothing to do with traditional anthropology, so much of what you'll learn applies. I didn't even realize until I sat down to think about it like this. Don't assume that everyone needs to go the same way in a major such as anthropology. The skills you learn apply to so many different aspects of life. It is all applicable, and it can lead you to the most unexpected places—like retirement plans.

HEALTHCARE

Emily D'Iorio

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with a minor in Psychology and core concentration in American Sign Language, RWU, 2013

NOW: Manager of a joint healthcare partnership between Dartmouth College and Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center

Challenge Your Assumptions

I am a 2013 Roger Williams University graduate with a major in Anthropology+Sociology, a minor in Psychology, and a core concentration in American Sign Language. As an undergraduate, I completed a senior thesis project that helped me to realize that my interests spanned both anthropology and public health. My thesis studied the relationship between personal religious beliefs and parental uptake of the HPV vaccine for their children. I realized the extent to which health is intertwined with broader factors, such as where you live and what you believe, through this research. This interest in the intersection between culture and population health brought me to Atlanta, Georgia, for a master's degree in public health at Emory University. While pursuing my master's, I was able to study health disparities across the United States and better understand why some groups of people have different health outcomes than others.

I believe my desire to study public health issues stems from my undergraduate training in anthropology and sociology, which encouraged a deep, thoughtful, and holistic understanding of issues. As Omohundro explains, anthropology students are trained

in observation, contextualization, and assumption of social perspective, among other skills.

It is these skills that have guided me from my undergraduate degree at RWU throughout my career and have driven my desire to understand population health phenomena by understanding and empathizing with individual experiences. I didn't know where my career would take me after graduation, but I knew that I wanted to use qualitative research methods to improve public health in the United States.

The common thread linking my current position, my work at the FDA, and my education in anthropology is the appreciation for a deep understanding of the individual perspective and the use of qualitative research to elevate voices that are otherwise unheard.

After completing my master's degree in 2015, I accepted a job with the United States Food and Drug Administration in Washington, D.C., as a Health Communication Specialist. In this role, my job was to communicate the risks of tobacco products to groups of people in the United States who use tobacco at higher rates than the general population, such as teenage boys who live in rural areas, young adults who identify as LGBTQ+, teenagers who identify as American Indian/Alaskan Native, and others. My job required me to study all of the factors that increased risk of tobacco use and to create tailored, targeted health messages that were relevant to that group of people. We conducted frequent interviews and focus groups, traveled to areas in the United States with high rates of tobacco use, and gained a deep understanding of all levels

of influence on tobacco use in these populations. The skills that were required for this position were firmly rooted in the concepts and techniques that I learned in my anthropology and sociology courses, such as the assumption of the social perspective. By creating health communication materials that were grounded in a deep understanding of the audience, our efforts were effective. A recent evaluation showed that between 2014–2016, our program prevented nearly 350,000 adolescents from initiating smoking (Farrelly, Duke, Nonnemaker, et al. 2017).

Currently, I work at Dartmouth College managing a joint partnership with our local hospital, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, to transform the way healthcare is provided to patients who are experiencing serious illness in rural New Hampshire and Vermont. We are using the principles of human-centered design and innovation science to rapidly test new models of healthcare delivery. One of the core principles of human-centered design is to understand and empathize with the “end user,” which in this case is the patient. To do this effectively, I pull from the anthropological skills I learned as an undergrad, such as observation and contextualization. My team and I seek feedback from patients at every decision point in the program. We may spend the day in a patient’s room to understand what it’s like to receive care in a specific ward, or conduct focus groups with patients who have a particular diagnosis, or hire patients to serve as team members on our innovation projects. The common thread linking my current position, my work at the FDA, and my education in anthropology is the appreciation for a deep understanding of the individual perspective and the use of qualitative research to elevate voices that are otherwise unheard.

One thing I’ve found to be true throughout my career is that we all make assumptions about what we think is the right program, policy, or approach for a group of people, and we are often wrong. There is so much that can be learned by taking time to challenge your own assumptions, to speak with individuals who are the “end

users,” and to get their feedback early and often. It is this appreciation for different perspectives that anthropology instilled in me, and I am confident that my public health work is better for it. I think the public health workforce would benefit from more professionals who are trained in anthropology because the core principles, such as observation, contextualization, and assumption of social perspective allow you to truly understand health at all levels of influence, and this is where you can create meaningful change.

References

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**Pre-
2012
GRADUATES**

TRADEMARK LAW

Krystina Osgood

THEN: B.S. in Legal Studies with a double major in Anthropology+Sociology, RWU, 2011

NOW: Attorney Advisor at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

A World of Cultural Symbols

The study of anthropology has positively affected my professional career path and has played an important role in my post-graduate experience. I knew I wanted to pursue a career in the legal field, so I sought out a degree that would inform the way I think about individuals and groups of people. My decision to study anthropology has proven beneficial as cultural behaviors have an immense impact on the legal system in our society.

Shortly after graduating law school, I began working as an attorney for The Wilderness Society where I was able to put to the test the analytical thinking and strong written and oral communication skills that I had developed in my anthropology courses. As a member of the general counsel staff, I assisted in managing the company's corporate legal matters, contracts, federal reporting requirements, and intellectual property. I frequently used persuasive writing, a skill honed in classes like Applied Anthropology where I wrote critical essays evaluating and analyzing particular anthropological perspectives and methods. Learning strong persuasive and critical writing skills, I was able to comfortably compose documents to the leadership and to other employees within the organization.

This first job as an attorney also introduced me to trademark law. The framework of trademark law is ultimately rooted in consumerism, marketing, and branding, which are concepts closely related to anthropology. A trademark can take many forms such as words, names, symbols, and devices used to identify and distinguish the goods or services of one provider from those of others. By protecting intellectual property rights, businesses and individuals are able to use their brands and logos in society as a means of source identification.

At The Wilderness Society, we registered the words and symbols used to identify our brand and current campaigns to receive federal protection. This area of law was where my anthropological background helped me see, first-hand, how symbols can shape and cultivate certain behaviors. For example, registered trademarks allow users to utilize the symbol ® to indicate that their mark is recognized as being federally protected. This symbol has a specific value to businesses and consumers and shows an example of the power of government institutions in the marketplace.

I enjoyed working within this area of the law and decided to accept a position at the United States Patent and Trademark Office as an Attorney Advisor reviewing trademark applications. Having never worked for the government, I relied on social agility to understand the complex bureaucracy and hierarchical systems that accompany federal employment. Through quick observation and participation, I was able to understand the office environment and expectations within my office and seamlessly acclimate to the unique working conditions of my new job.

My new position is a more customer-focused role. I regularly communicate with people who have varying degrees of knowledge about the legal system. On one end of the spectrum, I interact with attorneys whose sole job it is to represent their client's trademarks before the federal government. On the other end of the spectrum, I communicate with individual applicants who have very little, if any, interaction with government institutions or a background in

law. I also correspond with foreign citizens and government institutions from around the world.

Navigating the trademark application process can prove difficult even for those familiar with the procedures. I often have to modify my daily language of legal jargon into layperson's terms based on the knowledge level of the individual I am communicating with. Having learned how to quickly and adequately simplify information, I am able to provide individualized answers to problems that may seem difficult or intractable to those traversing this unfamiliar process.

I find myself in a position to witness the
inner workings and potential beginnings of
cultural trends through the trademark
registration process.

As a trademark examining attorney, I am involved in the entire lifecycle of the trademark registration process. I find it interesting to see how applicants are using creativity and innovation to build brands and logos based upon their understanding of culture, trends, and current consumer behavior. Brands and logos can evoke certain images in a consumer's mind and influence the purchasing and lifestyle decisions ultimately made by the consumer. On a larger scale, groups of people can collectively identify and emotionally connect with companies based on the marks put forward in marketing campaigns. The popularity and symbolic perception of value associated with these brands can create cultural changes in the marketplace through brand loyalty. Anthropology examines these cultural behaviors, and I find myself in a position to witness the inner workings and potential beginnings of cultural trends through the trademark registration process.

I truly appreciate working in an area of law that strengthens our economy and protects consumers and innovation. Every day, we see thousands of trademarks in the form of tag lines on commercials, symbols on our t-shirts or footwear, company names, and countless others. I am able to better comprehend how our economy is influenced by consumer perception and trends in the marketplace thanks to my background in anthropology.

The skills I learned in the study of anthropology impacted my personal life as well. Learning about other cultures in my anthropology courses sparked a strong desire to see the world. Before traveling, I make sure to research the customs, culture, language, and even those dreaded *faux pas* to avoid in new destinations. Having conducted ethnographic research and learned about ethnography in practice, my observation skills become heightened upon arrival in a new foreign location. I often find myself enjoying the moments of observing people and customs, whether it be in the bustling streets of Tokyo or during an exchange of goods in a street market in Dubai.

I have found the study of anthropology to be a worthwhile endeavor. I truly believe that my career and personal life have been enriched by the skills I obtained in my undergraduate studies.

ARTS EDUCATION

Christian Staton

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology and Elementary Education with a minor in Music, RWU, 2007

NOW: Integrated Arts teacher at Paul Cuffee School, Providence, RI

Where has your career taken you since graduating from your undergraduate program?

I minored in music with the intention of learning all I could about the artform I was falling in love with as a college student. I didn't clearly see the future then and how Anthropology+Sociology would lead me to where I am today: an educator and musician passing on the joy of learning and music to students who come from various backgrounds. I serve as the Integrated Arts teacher at the Paul Cuffee School, a public charter school for grades K-5 in Providence, Rhode Island. I am also a music instructor at two local music schools.

How did anthropology help guide your career trajectory?

I did not know much about Paul Cuffee until I happened to stumble upon it during my years as a substitute teacher. Every time I went to the school, the vibrant atmosphere, enthusiastic teachers, and smiling students spoke to me. I was excited when I was hired as a teaching partner (para-professional) in 2011. After serving in a few different roles over the years, I landed what I didn't realize at the time would be my dream job. In 2016 I became the Integrated Arts teacher for the elementary school.

The school population is largely Hispanic and African American. As a white educator who studied cultural diversity in my undergraduate coursework, my experience at this school has been eye-opening. On campus and in my college classrooms, the majority of my peers and professors were white and privileged. I had experienced learning about culture, taking notes about race, class, and identity, and interviewing members of different social

groups, but I didn't have the experience of working with people from backgrounds other than my own. In my education classrooms, my professors taught the importance of multicultural education. I now put these studies to use working in an urban community. My job allows me to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve the best possible outcomes.

How do you use an anthropological approach (skills, perspectives, or methods) in your current job?

Omohundro's twelve abilities that anthropology students acquire certainly resonate with me, particularly social agility, social sensitivity, and accurately interpreting behavior. As I interact with my students, I am cognizant of the social agility I have to have in order to be a culturally responsive and effective teacher. I need to be sensitive to implicit bias and aware of how my actions or inactions towards students of different ethnicities can affect their feelings and views. This was something that I recall from my first anthropology courses and was later highlighted in my upper-level courses: the importance of cultural relativism in response to our tendency toward ethnocentrism.

How has anthropology helped you solve problems (big or small) or address important issues in your life?

Cultural understanding is essential to what I do because I don't belong to the same demographic as most of my students. Ethnographic skills and the importance of lived experience are anthropological concepts that I learned about in college. Today, I use that knowledge to better understand and serve my students and their families.

As an educator, I strive to be the best teacher that I can be for all of my students no matter their background. I am aware of my own identity and theirs, and I draw upon what I learned in my anthropology courses to understand the children holistically. Also, the power structures I learned about in my anthropology and sociology courses are evident in my work in education. I may never fully understand the lived experience of a particular child or family, but I am hopeful that by teaching and learning, I can work to break down some of the inequalities inherent in our educational system.

FINANCIAL ADVISING

Gregory Hom

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with a concentration in Theater, RWU, 2006

NOW: Financial Solutions Advisor

As an undergraduate, what did you plan to do after graduation?

I majored in anthropology but I had a concentration in theater. Theater is all about imitation and exaggeration of true life. The connection to anthropology is fairly obvious: if you recreate a Kabuki performance you had better understand something about Japanese culture. I originally planned to get an MBA after college and move into upper management or operations in retail. After having my first child, I realized that a job in traditional retail would never allow for the kind of family life that my spouse and I both wanted.

Where has your career taken you since graduating?

Since graduating, I moved immediately into retail store management with RadioShack and then AT&T from 2006–2015. From 2012–2014 I spent about a year and a half working as a Regional Sales Manager for Whirlpool and then went back to AT&T. I managed retail locations for AT&T in Rhode Island as well as New York City. This meant my customer base and my employee pool all came from many different backgrounds. I managed the Empire State Building location—talk about meeting people from all walks of life! I met visitors from all over the world every day.

Today, I am a Financial Solutions Advisor. I meet with clients and assess their current financial circumstances at a macro level and then I get to know the individual and their goals and needs. Once I understand what their financial priorities are, I help them plan and reshape their goals depending on the likelihood of success.

How has anthropology helped you solve problems (big or small) or address important issues in your life?

One of the most important skills in a sales role is the ability to develop a quick bond or trust with the customer. The best way to do that is by understanding their background. My role requires truly understanding a person's motivations, goals, and desires. While people are similar, their religion, culture, age, ethnicity, and sex all come into play when shaping their experience. Anthropology certainly gave me a lens through which I can sit with someone and empathize with them about something we may feel completely differently about. It has also given me the ability to draw comparisons and relate on a much more personal level with my clients even if their backgrounds may be vastly different from my own. I don't know that I can pinpoint one specific thing, big or small, that anthropology has done to help with an issue in my life. What I can say is that it certainly has given me the ability to be much more open-minded and to look at different people's norms with respect and wonder. I use all of Omohundro's skills in some fashion every day. At the end of the day, I am in sales, and any decent salesperson leverages all of these abilities to develop trust, create relationships, and provide solutions.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Colleen Finan Fehringer

THEN: B.S. in Legal Studies with a double major in Anthropology+Sociology, RWU, 2011

NOW: Grant Manager for New York State

Making A Better Public Servant

I am a 2011 graduate of Roger Williams University, where I double-majored in Anthropology+Sociology and Legal Studies. When I started college, I enrolled as a Legal Studies major because I thought I would pursue a career in the law. I figured that I would go to law school either straight after graduation or after a few years working as a paralegal. As I started taking anthropology courses in the second semester of my freshman year, I realized what intrigued me about “the law” was how law and public policy impact people—their cultures, identities, social norms, and institutions. I decided to add Anthropology+Sociology as a second major to enhance my understanding of law, culture, and public policy.

After I graduated, I chose to take some time to work before deciding if law or graduate school was in my future. During that time, I had an opportunity to serve as an AmeriCorps member at a legal aid organization, helping low-income, elderly, disabled, and otherwise disadvantaged clients with their legal needs. I represented individuals at unemployment benefit hearings, managed clinics where pro bono attorneys provided legal advice to people seeking custody or divorce, and screened clients facing issues with their housing or welfare benefits. In doing this work, I saw firsthand how public policies impact society’s most vulnerable,

and how a person's background impacted their relationships with the courts, government agencies, and the nonprofit sector.

I quickly saw that members of some communities—immigrants, victims of domestic violence, or people with disabilities—distrusted the help I was prepared to provide. This distrust resulted in failure to seek available assistance, not following through with appointments, and aggression or disrespectful behavior towards those in power. My background in anthropology, specifically my interest in issues of law and policy, cultural narratives, and the structure of social life, made me uniquely positioned to critically analyze why some members of these communities behaved as they did, and how structural barriers created (and/or reinforced) these cultural narratives and behaviors.

Courts, government agencies, police, nonprofit organizations, and other systems have historically failed members of these communities. Agencies and organizations like mine, which were established to help those in need, are often restricted in who and how they can help. Nonprofit legal aid providers are limited in a practical way by budgets and staffing. They are also structurally constrained by restrictive funding: grants that only fund specific work (victims of domestic violence who have children), grants that only fund specific types of expenses (staff expenses only, no building rent or office supplies), or contracts that limit the types of people that an organization can assist (some sources of federal funding limit assistance to undocumented immigrants, for example). These grant programs, whether they come from governments or private philanthropy (made possible by the United States tax code), are public policy in action.

It became clear to me that culture and policy can play a role in the design of programs that aid individuals in need and ultimately better their lives. But culture and policy also prohibit how those same individuals get access to those programs. It was this realization that drove me to seek another way to make sense of what I was seeing. I continued to work at the legal aid organization

to apply and hone my skills while I earned my Master of Public Administration (M.P.A) at Suffolk University. The public administration lens is, in some ways, a perfect combination of law and policy, sociology, and anthropology. It taught me how to design, manage, and evaluate public policies with the end user in mind.

After receiving my M.P.A., I worked at another legal aid organization which focused on assisting nonprofit organizations that serve the disadvantaged or enhance the quality of life in communities. That position reinforced much of what I had previously observed about the intersection of culture, social structure, and public policy. That job taught me that I truly sought a position where I could improve public policy, specifically regarding the distribution of public funds.

One of the first things I did in my new position was a bit of fieldwork, so to speak: I observed what key staff members in my department did on a daily basis.

I began my current job as a grant manager for New York State in 2016. I was initially drawn to the position because of the intersection of my professional background (my agency exclusively funds civil legal aid organizations) and academic skill set (opportunities to use evaluation tools, plan and analyze public policy, and contextualize structural and cultural barriers to services). In my role, I manage my agency's grantmaking, including developing grant applications and reports, coordinating with other New York State agencies involved in the contracting bureaucracy, gathering quantitative and qualitative data from grantees, completing statistical analysis with grantee data, completing reports for public use, and working with grantee organizations to navigate the New York State contracting and grantmaking process.

When I started, my position was new to the agency so, while I came into the job with some broad responsibilities, I had the opportunity to shape my work. One of the first things I did in my new position was a bit of fieldwork, so to speak, in which I observed what key staff members in my department did on a daily basis. I also interviewed those whose tasks overlapped with my new position, taking thorough notes. My “data collection” led me to create a process map of my agency’s grantmaking. I contextualized all the information I received from my colleagues to see the big picture. This map enabled me to identify not just inefficiencies, but structural barriers that were limiting the agency in how it could best distribute public funds. That map helped to hone my priorities and projects, which mainly focused on streamlining processes and becoming more transparent to our constituencies.

My use of anthropology skills and methods in the workplace continued well beyond my preliminary work. Being a public servant (my preferred term for “bureaucrat”) requires a degree of social sensitivity. While my agency and job are focused on doing work on behalf of a particular industry, I do work for and represent New York State. My behavior in and out of the workplace reflects on my employer; as such, I endeavor to always treat those I interact with with respect. I also have had to gain expertise in the culture of civil legal aid organizations. Like all industries, there is a culture with its own unique norms and mores that permeates the organizations I work with daily. Before beginning my current position, I had some insight into that culture as a participant observer from my previous work experience. I now have more years of observational data to add to my knowledge of how this specific culture functions. These insights influence how I communicate with my grantees, the procedures I design to collect information from them, and how I act as an advocate for their causes, among other things.

Perhaps above all else, anthropology taught me to critically evaluate, synthesize, and interpret information. I use these skills every day in my job. I read and critique persuasive writing (grant

applications and reports), synthesizing them to draw conclusions. I collate and synthesize program statistics, using a discerning approach to understand trends and phenomenon in the industry. I constantly analyze, reevaluate, and revise processes and approaches to better suit the agency's obligations and industry needs.

I have come to realize that the work I do is policy in action. My choices—changes in procedure, attitudes towards my grantees, the ways I interpret and synthesize data—all impact how agency policy is implemented and enforced. My hope is that the use of my anthropology toolkit, in conjunction with the skills and perspectives I've gained through my other academic and professional endeavors, makes me a better public servant producing better public policy.

RETAIL SALES

Caroline Stoever

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology, RWU, 2009

NOW: Retail Salesperson at See's Candy

Where has your career taken you since graduating from your undergraduate program?

After graduation, I worked a bunch of odd jobs and moved back to Colorado. I am a fourth generation Coloradan so this is home. Since completing my B.A. from Roger Williams University, I have traveled, worked and become a mother. One trip that stands out is in 2011, I spent the summer in China teaching young children how to speak English. I am Chinese Filipino and was adopted by an American family as an infant. Visiting China was a bit of a culture shock for me since I was raised in the United States and lived here for the majority of my life. It was an unforgettable experience.

What did you originally plan to do after graduation? Is this similar or different from what you actually did?

I originally wanted to work in a museum environment. I completed two archaeological digs through UCLA and UC Berkeley and worked in the Wings of the Rockies Air and Space Museum. Presently, I am working at See's Candy, a company that is almost 100 years old. For me this is another experience in hospitality and I love it. I am currently a retail salesperson. I moved into retail because of the opportunity for career growth and the work flexibility it offered since I am a mother. My first retail job was at Banana Republic. I learned that I enjoyed the environment immensely—it helped me develop confidence and people skills. I am still friends with many of my former coworkers.

There are similarities between the fields of museum work and retail, and those relate to hospitality. Both fields are presenting material goods for consumption but different types of consumption. More importantly, both

encourage people to interact with products, with the goal of making sure the “customers” have good experiences. Within both fields, you have to work with people and hopefully some of them become friends.

How do you use an anthropological approach (skills, perspectives, or methods) in your current job?

Looking at retail through an anthropological lens, I would say that I use some of these skills daily. For example, working at See’s Candy requires strong communication, group work, and management skills. Shopping is about more than finding “things.” Shopping is entertainment and a way to establish a connection with one another. My communication skills allow me to connect with my customers. Another area that is important in all workplaces is group work. Group work is critical because it allows you to process, share, and evaluate information needed to work effectively together. I apply my management skills by coordinating the different roles within the group.

How has anthropology helped you solve problems (big or small) or address important issues in your life?

Studying anthropology helps me understand consumer culture. In particular, it helps me understand how customers make their purchase decisions based on their social and economic status, cultural values, and research. Shopping is a way of expressing social identity (how we are classified and perceived by others), and social identities guide people’s shopping behavior. For example, when working in a chocolate store, we might see ourselves as members of a community: people who enjoy sweet treats (It is not a job requirement, but it does not hurt either). See’s is situated in one of the busiest parts of Denver. It is located in a plaza that houses many different businesses (bakeries, grocery stores, postal services, etc.). The demographic around the store includes a mix of upper-middle class and low-income communities. Working in sales, I am constantly interacting with customers from different socio-economic backgrounds. Being sensitive to these differences makes me a better salesperson. It also makes me a more culturally aware customer. For example, I shopped for shoes recently. I was looking for work attire, so I

was thinking, “What kind of image do I want to project to my customers, coworkers, and peers?” “What kind of experience do I hope to have?” “Why did I pick this brand?” I recognized that I chose this brand because of who I am and word of mouth in my community, as well as the long-standing reputation of the company.

Which of Omohundro’s twelve abilities have helped you most in your career?

The skills I use on a daily basis in a hospitality setting are listening, problem solving, and accuracy in interpreting behavior. Listening and problem solving are essential in hospitality. Strong listening skills allow you to help with the customer’s needs. As I write this piece, I am in the middle of Valentine’s Day sales at work. People are getting gifts for their family or significant other because chocolate or candy is a symbol of appreciation. Many of the people who shop in our store want their candy wrapped a certain way. By listening, I can help them find a particular variety of their favorite chocolate.

Another skill I use is accuracy in interpreting behavior. You can tell how a person is doing through their actions (non-verbal signals like smiling, frowning, or shaking hands) and words. Interpreting behavior is crucial to finding out whether they will make a sale or not. Anthropology taught me to observe people’s behavioral patterns. For example, the time of year determines people’s spending patterns (the first part of January is slow at See’s because it is right after Christmas and before Valentine’s Day). For example, one of my customers comes to buy chocolate for her ninety-year-old mother frequently. She asks for the same candy assortment every time. In her case, accuracy and fast service means a return customer.

Anthropology has helped me gain insight into human relationships—both professionally and personally. Anthropology has made me a better mother, coworker, friend, and spouse.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Carrie Portrie

*THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with minors
in Political Science and German, RWU, 2003, M.Ed. in
Education, University of New Hampshire, 2013*

*NOW: Fellow at New Hampshire Listens; Candidate
for Ph.D. in Education: Children and Youth in
Communities at University of New Hampshire*

A Long and Winding Path

In 2016, I became a fellow with New Hampshire Listens, a civic engagement initiative, at the University of New Hampshire's Carsey School of Public Policy while pursuing my Ph.D. in Education with a focus on children and youth in communities. I collaboratively design opportunities for people in communities to gather across their differences to confront challenging issues such as education funding structures, access to early childhood education, race and equity in schools, substance misuse, and childhood lead poisoning. I have to hold my assumptions and help others think about their assumptions to facilitate conversations. Ideally, these conversations illuminate a path for addressing social complexities across different values and belief systems that can challenge people's worldviews.

The story of how I found this work began at Roger Williams University where I studied anthropology and sociology, which happens to be the same undergraduate major as my mother. I found the study of cultural diversity, values, and norms inspiring. I knew that I wanted to become a researcher, but I needed to learn more about life and people beyond the halls of academia. After I

graduated, I completed two years of AmeriCorps service, first as a trail crew leader with the Montana Conversation Corps and then as a field crew member with the Mountains to Sound Greenway in Washington State. After my service, I accepted a job as a tutor for students with learning difficulties at a company called Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes. I wanted to teach and tutoring provided an opportunity to try it out. It also provided a window into the immense abilities and unique perspectives of children who are “differently-abled”—and how these perspectives are often undervalued in schools.

In my work and in my life, anthropology
reminds me to challenge dominant
paradigms and work collaboratively
within and across current social and
cultural systems.

A couple of years later, I became a preschool teacher and managed a community afterschool program. During that time, I learned how to conduct a field trip with my fellow coworkers, packing 50 children onto city busses to visit the beach or go to Seattle Center. I also took early childhood education classes at North Seattle Community College. My professors taught me to cultivate deep conversations with children from diverse backgrounds, to hone my observational skills, listen, be attentive to their interests, and to support their perseverance through curricular planning. These classes helped me find my way back to academia and research. In mid-2010, I moved back to New Hampshire and began a master’s degree in early childhood special education at UNH, and then carried on with my Ph.D. in fall 2013.

My dissertation is an ethnographic study about Head Start, a school-readiness program for children from low-income

backgrounds that focuses on early learning, healthy development, and family well-being. In my research, I used anthropological tools of participant observation and ethnographic interviews to learn how staff and parents at one Head Start center adjusted to a new policy that extended Head Start's hours to full-day and full-school year. In my dissertation, I documented the voices of staff and parents as they described the realities of work and family. What were their days and routines like? How did they make decisions? What did they think about the new policy and what does it provide for their child(ren) and family?

Parents and staff are essential partners in an ongoing civic discussion about systems for promoting children's learning and wellness and parents' need for viable work to support their family in the long term. My research was about one Head Start community but it sheds light on a broader conversation about how families and staff negotiate raising and teaching young children, and how we as a society address issues related to work, childcare, kinship, and empowerment.

In my work and in my life, anthropology reminds me to challenge dominant paradigms and work collaboratively within and across current social and cultural systems. It has helped solidify my beliefs that, to be an educator and a community-minded researcher, I have to be responsible and able to reflect deeply about the diversity of lived experiences and the multiple realities that exist among people in our communities who are subject to the policies that are enacted. Anthropology has influenced how I facilitate discussions about more equitable and holistic solutions to ongoing community challenges. It has been a long and winding path, but I am not sure I would want to do it any other way.

OPTOMETRY**James Sanborn, O.D.**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology and Philosophy, RWU, 2006; Doctor of Optometry, The New England College of Optometry

NOW: Optometrist practicing in the Northeast

Where has your career taken you since graduating from your undergraduate program?

People are often surprised to hear that my undergraduate work was in anthropology, sociology, and philosophy because today, I am an optometrist! As with many freshmen entering their first year in college, I was not sure what my future would consist of and what educational direction I should pursue. I remember meeting with my guidance counselor who happened to be a professor of anthropology. She made the case for choosing anthropology as an area of study, as it offers a skill set that is applicable across nearly every discipline. I would later go on to add a philosophy degree as well and found both subjects to be rewarding fields to learn about.

How did anthropology help guide your career trajectory?

Now, nearly 15 years since graduation, I can look back and really appreciate the path I took to get where I am today. While it would have been more direct to simply go through a pre-med program instead of a liberal arts curriculum, I know that anthropology provided me with a strong foundation for everything I've done since college. I think I was better prepared for optometry school and the professional world than many of my peers because of my unconventional route.

How do you use an anthropological approach (skills, perspectives, or methods) in your current job?

The reading, writing, and problem-solving skills that I honed during my undergraduate years were essential in allowing me to excel in optometry school. They helped me stand out against people with a strictly science-based background. In fact, when I interviewed for optometry school, the admissions department took note of my coursework in the social sciences. They valued a student with a diverse educational background. Now, when I have the occasion to impart wisdom on some young college student, I always make a point to suggest that they diversify their course load with some of these disciplines, as they invariably strengthen any other area of study. I firmly believe a well-rounded education is the key to success.

VETERINARY PRACTICE**Kayla Waskiewicz**

THEN: B.A. in Anthropology+Sociology with a minor in Biology, RWU, 2010

NOW: Field and Office Operations for an Equine Veterinary Practice

Horses and Humans

I graduated from Roger Williams University in 2010 with a degree in Anthropology+Sociology. I minored in biology with the intention of integrating my passion for animal science with an anthropological interest in how humans' lives are influenced by working with animals or simply owning a pet. Many people have devoted their lives to animal husbandry, while others have pursued different career paths but can't imagine their lives without their beloved pets. I was interested in what animals mean to people, what role animals have in their lives, and how they treat and care for them.

Since graduating from RWU, I have explored many different career paths, yet all with a similar theme. Whether working with cats, dogs, or horses, I haven't ventured far from an animal-related field. I wasn't sure which direction my career would lead, but I tried to keep an open mind while looking for a financially responsible route. I considered abandoning my passion for working with animals to explore something with a more lucrative future. Yet, I felt if I stayed true to myself and let the vision that I started with guide my journey, I would end up wherever I should be eventually.

I have not yet made a career of studying the culture of animal husbandry and pet ownership, but over the course of the last ten

years, I have been engaged in a world in which this could become a reality. My background in anthropology has strongly influenced my day-to-day life both personally and professionally. It inspired me to take the opportunity to move around a little, experiencing different aspects of animal care in order to better understand what I did or did not enjoy, and what I would like to improve in the industry as a whole.

My background in anthropology has strongly influenced my day-to-day life both personally and professionally. It inspired me take the opportunity to move around a little, experiencing different aspects of animal care in order to better understand what I did or did not enjoy, and what I would like to improve in the industry as a whole.

Immediately following graduation, I traveled to New Zealand where I worked in exchange for room and board on a number of working horse farms. I was able to experience what animal husbandry meant in a completely different part of the world and how it compared to what I was accustomed to. Upon returning to Rhode Island, I worked as a veterinary technician for an equine practice. This experience gave me an invaluable hands-on education in equine medicine. Despite how much I enjoyed the job, I decided it was time for a change of pace, so moved north to Maine where I worked as a small animal vet tech, this time taking care of cats and dogs. I gained a lot from experiencing a different side of animal medicine, but missed working with horses, so I took a job as the Public Relations and Marketing Manager for a Maine horse rescue. This position allowed me to build and diversify my resume,

gaining experience engaging with the community and finding innovative ways to promote our cause.

Working and living in Maine was quite different than the life I was used to growing up in Rhode Island. It was true what you may have heard about the people in Maine: they are friendly, honest neighbors always willing to lend a hand. The community was unpretentious and genuine. The problem, unfortunately, is that the economy is lacking in opportunity for professional growth and development, so I found myself returning to Rhode Island a few years later. This time I landed a job working for the local mounted police unit where I was in charge of overseeing and managing daily operations of the facilities, horses, and employees who cared for them. This was a city union position and some aspects of working for such a politically-motivated governmental organization were overwhelming. Despite the employment benefits that came with working for a municipality, there were too many other factors compromising the care of the animals and inhibiting ethical management, and I sought another means of employment yet again.

Presently, I am working for another equine veterinary practice. My current position has allowed me the opportunity to combine all the experience and use the skill set I've cultivated thus far. I work for a small practice that values the importance of integrity, continuing education, strong client communication, and exceptional horse care. I work in the field and in the office, so I have a comprehensive understanding of both business operations and client's needs. I was fortunate enough to find myself in this position as a result of networking and maintaining a professional, respectful, and strong work ethic in the industry.

Working at all these different places, for and with different people, I have found myself engulfed in the anthropological aspects of equine management and the working world surrounding animal husbandry. Along the way, I have used my background in anthropology to help guide my trajectory. It has provided me the tools I need to process all the information influencing my current

state of mind or even that of others. There were certain aspects of each place I worked that I loved and missed when I left, yet others that caused me to seek something new and different—or to continue to chase a stronger sense of self-fulfillment. Although we may all have different ways of doing things or different standards by which we do them, as individuals we decide to what extent we are willing to compromise our own beliefs or expectations in order to sustain inner peace, happiness, satisfaction, or tolerance of our situation. It can be challenging to figure out how to teach ourselves to be open enough to accept new or different ideas as well as the opinions and practices of other people, employers, coworkers, and work environments, despite initial reactions or preconceived ideas influencing how we feel.

Anthropology teaches us that the way in which we observe, process, perceive, and analyze social situations is different for everyone. We all have a unique way of interpreting our surroundings, situations, or conflicts. Maybe the way we perceive things is based on other experiences, our backgrounds, traditions, or beliefs. These attributes are unique to each individual so regardless of our career path, anthropology provides us with the perspective necessary to process and cope with the social and cultural challenges of everyday life.

I found myself keeping most of the reading material required for our anthropology classes in college. One of the first books I acquired was *Perspectives in Cultural Anthropology* (edited by Herbert Applebaum 1987). This book is loaded with interesting and relevant theories and anthropological studies that remain relevant and applicable to our daily lives today. We were assigned a number of other readings I always enjoyed so much it hardly felt like homework. We learned how anthropologists conducted their research and became immersed in a culture unlike their own, in order to understand the people they studied from the community's perspective. As researchers, they had to remain unbiased and refrain from judgement or assumptions. A reading we were

assigned that examined child labor in urban northeast Brazil examined the meaning that children going to work had for them and their families and what working children meant to the community. These examples, in addition to the insightful theories of dozens of anthropologists, trying to figure out how cultural diversity influences our perception and gives meaning to the world around us, is invaluable and applicable to every aspect of our social lives. Ultimately, the trajectory of my career thus far has been very similar to the process of completing my senior thesis project. I spent years under the helpful guidance of mentors, friends, and family as I built relationships and developed my skill set in order to create a well-rounded, comprehensive outcome. I have gotten to a place in my career I can be as proud of as I was to produce a senior thesis reflective of commitment to teamwork, perseverance, self-worth, education, and passion.

Personally, I have chosen a life working with animals. I feel a sense of obligation to honor animals as they have me, yet I am sometimes conflicted about the way others claim to “honor” or regard animals. Their standards and expectations may be different from mine, yet they consider themselves to share a genuine level of intentional care. Who’s to say the way they do things is right or wrong? By what standard is this assessed? Surely, mine is not the end all be all.

Over the years, I have learned a lot about myself and the attributes of others that I can adapt and embrace, or in other cases may need to be wary of in order to honor my own morals and values. Sometimes I have had to change my perspective to devise more effective management techniques for the morale and efficiency of the employees I managed, or I have needed to make an adjustment to my own personality in order to work better with and understand my coworkers. Despite all the small things we try to overcome on a day-to-day basis so life is positive, productive, and enjoyable, it will always be difficult to walk the line of our own personal expectations. We are all individuals, and the way we process information is unique

for each one of us. Sometimes we can't help how we feel or react to social situations in the workplace or otherwise. Anthropology has allowed me the ability to consider the perspective of others in such a way that I more actively reserve judgement and am conscientious about the way I am perceiving or responding to any given situation. It can be difficult not to let our emotions cloud or influence our judgment, yet if we try to remain objective, we will be better prepared to handle whatever comes our way.

Conclusion

In my introductory anthropology classes, I show students photos of famous people who studied anthropology in college: actors Dax Shepard and Glenn Close; authors Kurt Vonnegut and Michael Crichton; concert cellist Yo Yo Ma; singer Tracy Chapman; choreographer Katherine Dunham; wildlife conservationist Jeff Corwin; even Prince Charles of England! I recognize, of course, that most students are not in college to become celebrities or even anthropologists. My hope is that students will see that an anthropology degree can lead them almost anywhere.

I teach at a two-year community college where the majority of students are pursuing an associate degree or planning to transfer to a four-year college to earn their B.A. While some of my students develop a passion for anthropology, many more are interested in other fields: business, chemistry, engineering, history, or the arts. They are planning to work in marketing, healthcare, law enforcement, and education. They want to make a contribution in areas like public policy, social justice, and environmental sustainability. They want to work with people and make a difference—and they want to make a good living doing it.

The narratives included in this Bulletin offer my students and others a sense of what they can do with an undergraduate degree in anthropology. More importantly, these narratives help students understand how the work they do in their anthropology classes teaches them skills that are increasingly valuable in today's global

workplace, regardless of the careers they pursue. Technology is changing rapidly and we will all need to acquire new technical skills throughout our careers. Generalized skills, though, provide a solid foundation for life-long learning. Anthropology teaches students hard skills like data collection, recording, and analysis, as well as soft skills related to communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and interpersonal relations. These generalized skills are essential in all jobs.

In reading these narratives, four themes emerged. First, it is clear that students who majored in anthropology excel at working with and for people. No matter what job they held, these anthropology alumni consistently applied a humanistic approach in their work by placing people first. They emphasized the importance of working collaboratively with their coworkers, understanding the needs of their students, clients, or customers, and presenting information in an understandable and appealing way. Many are serving the underserved, fighting for social equity, and generally working to make the world a better place.

A second theme points to the scientific foundation of an anthropology education. When faced with a problem, contributors collected qualitative and quantitative data, and then analyzed information in order to draw sound conclusions. Decisions were made based on facts gathered through interviews, observations, literature reviews, mapping, and a variety of other visual diagramming techniques. Understanding the scientific method and the need for fact-based analyses is essential to solving the problems humans face today and will face in the future.

Many of the contributors wrote about being recognized in the workplace for their unique perspective. Key to this perspective is their ability to think holistically: to step back and view a problem from many angles. They frequently saw interconnections that others missed or anticipated consequences that could impact a project's success. As many professions are increasingly specialized, holistic thinking is critical. These anthropology alumni were also

recognized for their ability to “put themselves in other people’s shoes.” Their sensitivity to other people’s experience allowed them to lead the way in workplace efforts to address issues related to diversity and inclusion.

A final theme evident in these contributions is adaptability. In many of the narratives, contributors show how they approached a new situation with curiosity rather than fear, questioning what they previously knew and learning from their experiences. Even when a situation brought unexpected challenges, they met uncertainty with an open mind. Often, persistence and “thinking outside the box” ultimately led them to better opportunities and outcomes. The fact that these alumni are succeeding in such a wide range of fields is testament to their ability to continuously grow and adapt.

Overall, these four themes—working with and for people, using a scientific approach, applying a holistic perspective, and adapting to new environments—characterize the unique skill set students acquire through an anthropology education. They demonstrate the value and versatility that an anthropology grad brings to today’s workplace, and they explain why our anthropology alumni (successfully) wear so many hats.

Bridget Fitzpatrick, *Anthropology Instructor,*
Normandale Community College

Volume Editors' Acknowledgements

This project required the support of many people. First, we would like to thank the Bulletin contributors. Their willingness to share their experiences so that others could learn from them is a very generous act. Every time we received a new contribution, we were reminded of the valuable skills and unique perspective that the discipline of anthropology teaches. As educators, we are deeply impressed by the work these individuals are doing with their anthropology degrees.

From the beginning, the NEAA board has been supportive of this project. This Bulletin highlights the organization's ongoing commitment to serving undergraduate and graduate students, as well as professionals, in our discipline. We would like to give a special shout-out to Anne Galvin, Alan Hersker, and Don Pollock for their constant comradery, and to Joyce Bennett, who heeded the call when we were searching for contributors. We would also like to recognize John T. Omohundro, who welcomed Jessica to participate in his annual NEAA Career Workshop when she was just starting her teaching career—that gesture from a senior faculty member, willing to share the stage with a newly minted professor, is indicative of the support provided by the NEAA membership.

We would like to thank the Roger Williams University Foundation for Scholarship and Teaching for providing Jessica's course release and for funding the resources to get this project started. We would also like to thank several student research

assistants, some of whom are now alumni themselves and are contributors to this project: Danielle Bernier, Julia Bradley, Nathan Cherau, and Emily Wall. Hailey Langlois, a student research assistant with RWU Financed Individualized Training (FIT) program, has been the perfect “closer” for this project. Alexandra Finney, in her capacity as former Assistant Director of RWU’s Center for Career and Professional Development, served as a career advisor for many of the contributors in this collection. We would like to thank her for her unwavering support in championing anthropology.

The RWU Anthropology+Sociology department will recognize many of its alumni in these pages. As co-founder of the department with Teal Rothschild, Jessica took great pleasure in catching up with so many department alums. It was an even greater honor to hear them speak fondly of their RWU Anthropology+Sociology faculty and what they had learned from us. Thanks for being good colleagues and even better teachers.

While teaching anthropology at Normandale Community College, Bridget has also benefited from the insights and advice of many dedicated colleagues and is grateful for their ongoing support. Thanks to the Normandale students who have reached out to share their plans and seek guidance as they advanced to four-year programs in anthropology. These students helped us see the need for the narratives featured in this Bulletin.

Finally, we would like to thank our families (especially Everett, Ellie, and William) for their support and understanding. Projects like this demand a lot of time and effort, and unpredictable events in the process of publishing can interrupt family life. We hope that this project will help guide the way for many students by showing them how anthropology can benefit them in their careers and personal lives. By “paying it forward” in this way, we hope that our own children will one day come upon a helpful guide that encourages and prepares them to pursue their passions.

Editor-in-Chief's Acknowledgements

The current issue of the NEAA Bulletin would not have been possible without the work of many people. First, I would like to express my great appreciation for Bridget Fitzpatrick and Jessica Skolnikoff, the editors of this issue, who not only developed the timely theme, but also recruited recent anthropology alumni to share their post-bachelor's degree experiences for the benefit of students, parents, educators, and career services offices. The theme of the volume is timely as calls to reemphasize the value of Liberal Arts education reverberate through university systems and employee recruitment offices in the United States. Bridget and Jessica identified a significant way for the NEAA Bulletin to support anthropology students and the discipline, by providing a forum within which anthropology B.A. holders in the workplace could talk about their professional uses of anthropological methods and analytical perspectives.

Next, I would like to thank each of the contributors to this innovative volume. John T. Omohundro has been a significant supporter (and Past-President) of the NEAA, who long ago recognized the broad value of an anthropology degree for a wide range of career aspirations. He initiated the tradition of career workshops, which he developed, for student participants of the NEAA Annual Meetings, and he has now graciously taken time out of his retirement to compose a foreword for this issue. Alexandra Finney, Career and Strengths Coach at Changing Tide Counseling

and Coaching, provided a valuable counterpart to the academic side of this discussion, contributing an insightful employer's perspective on the hard to teach skills an anthropology degree offers. Finally, though there are too many contributors to list here by name, I would like to thank the anthropology program alumni for their willingness to reflect on their experiences as anthropology majors in the workplace and share their expertise with their former academic mentors and the students who now follow in their path.

We are grateful to those who helped with the production of the Bulletin: Bridget Fitzpatrick, who wore many hats, attended to the crucial tasks of editing and creating page layouts, and Angela Labrador provided us with her cover design and technical assistance.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank the Executive Board of the NEAA, which includes Past-President Curtiss Hoffman, President-Elect Allan Dawson, as well as Joyce Bennett, Alan Hersker, and Don Pollack. The Board's dedication to the mission of the NEAA and to supporting both student and professional anthropologists is evident in the care they put into their work to maintain the legacy of the NEAA and to ensure the future of this extraordinary professional association.

Anne M. Galvin, *Editor-in-Chief, NEAA Bulletin*

End Note

The Northeastern Anthropological Association (NEAA) is committed to serving undergraduate students and is planning to publish an *Undergrads in the Workplace* Bulletin every four years. It will include updates on the current contributors as well as narratives from new alumni. If you are an anthropology alum (or know one) please consider contributing to a future Bulletin. Each experience shared through this publication can help others appreciate the value of an anthropology degree. We are committed to providing free access to this resource through the NEAA's website. Please visit NEAA.org.

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BULLETIN
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Undergrads in the Workplace: The Many Hats of Anthropology Alumni

Edited by Jessica Skolnikoff
and Bridget Fitzpatrick

“I hear all too often: ‘. . . wait, you majored in Anthropology? How did you get to where you are today?!’ And, the short answer is, it’s the reason I am where I am now. My job is to understand humans and speak to them in the most nimble, innovative, and impactful ways possible – and, truthfully, I can only do that via my training in Anthropology. Now, when recruiting, I specifically look for Anthropology majors as their out-of-the-box thinking, adaptability, and ability to see humans as individuals transcends all others.

– Travis Freeman, *Global Head of Media and Social, Uber (Skidmore College, 2004)*

“This is a powerful collection of first-person narratives that highlight anthropology as a mindset. Fostering holistic thinking, inclusivity, keen observation skills, deep empathy, critical analysis, and an enduring curiosity for the human condition, anthropology offers a uniquely agile degree to traverse an increasingly diverse and complex job landscape. The candid stories shared by these alumni illustrate that anthropology provides a toolkit that enables students to thoughtfully tackle the unknown and become change agents and advocates in a myriad of professions.”

– Tanya L. Rodriguez, PhD MSW, *Senior Human Experience Research Manager (a.k.a. Cultural Anthropologist), Innovation and Insights Team, Hormel Foods Corporation*

“Not only an informative read for students pursuing or considering a degree in anthropology and their support networks, but a collection of fascinating insights and fun short stories; a must read for career development professionals and academic advisors who work with anthropology or any inquisitive and interesting students!”

– Hilary Flanagan, *Executive Director, Seattle University
Career Engagement Office and Past President, Midwest
Association of Colleges and Employers*