

“So, What Are You Going to do With That Degree?”

My name is Jadyn Zajac, I am in my third year of Classical Studies, and for two years I have dreaded that very question. Let me bring you up to speed. My university journey has been anything but linear. Over the past three years, I've switched programs three times: I started in Medical Sciences, then — after nearly deciding to leave university altogether — transitioned into Biology and ultimately found my way to Classical Studies by my second year. As you can imagine, my career plans have been uncertain at best. The transition into Classical Studies was both a blessing and a curse; on one hand, I finally discovered a field I was truly passionate about, but on the other, it came with no clear career path. And so, I found myself in a tight spot. But then, this past fall, a seemingly small moment made everything fall into place.

I had gone to a hair salon in my hometown when I happened to run into my high school French teacher. Naturally, she asked what I was studying — and then came the dreaded question. I talked about potentially going to law school, maybe teacher's college, or working in a museum. They were all possibilities I had tossed around before, but none of them felt right. Still, I couldn't bring myself to admit that, at that moment, I had no clear idea where I was headed. That's when she made an offhand comment — one that brought back a part of myself I had long forgotten: *"Oh, I always thought you'd end up in journalism."* In that moment, I knew. If you had asked my twelve-year-old self what she wanted to be when she grew up, that would have been her answer: a journalist, a writer. Fittingly, it was that very same French teacher who had first encouraged me to work as a student journalist a few years earlier. Somewhere along the way, I had lost sight of that dream, pushed instead toward a more "practical" STEM-oriented path. I had forgotten that journalism — and, in today's world, the growing field of communications — was a viable career. And it made sense; after all, my favorite part of my degree had always been researching and writing essays. Still, one question remained: how could I transition from Classical Studies into journalism and communications without starting over with another bachelor's degree? The answer was that I needed to find a way to build real-world experience in the field.

That leads me to the moment I first received an email about an available position for a marketing and communications internship with the London Heritage Council. I immediately knew it was the perfect opportunity — a chance to gain the experience I needed while continuing to work within the field that had captured my heart. Before long, I applied — and, to my delight, I got the job. And that's the story of how I came to intern with the London Heritage Council. My day-to-day responsibilities encompassed a diverse range of tasks. I regularly managed and responded to emails from teachers participating in the LHC's Museum School program, as well as with vendors for Night Market London and Canada Day. I was involved in sending invoices and designing social media posts to promote upcoming events like Heritage Fair, Doors Open London, Night Market, and Canada Day. To my surprise, I also engaged in substantial event-planning work, such as maintaining master lists of Museum School applicants and Canada Day vendors, reaching out to potential museum partners, and even designing a "Community Cultural Tree" activity for Heritage Fair.

I have to say, participating in the Arts and Humanities Internship Program has truly been one of my favorite experiences at Western. Not only do I feel better prepared to apply for a master's in Journalism and Communications this fall knowing that I have real-world experience under my

belt and a great portfolio to exhibit, but my internship has also paved the way for future professional opportunities. The London Heritage Council has offered to keep me on part-time throughout the summer, and I already have a post-graduate summer position lined up with the council for 2026. Moreover, this role, especially through collaborating closely with various museums, has significantly expanded my professional network, allowing me to establish valuable connections in the communications and history fields that I am passionate about. My internship will also provide me with strong references for graduate school applications and future job prospects within the field.

If you are an Arts and Humanities student contemplating an internship, here is my one piece of advice: go for it. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. We have all faced that daunting question: "So, what will you do with that degree?" It seems to come from everywhere: from parents, friends, well-meaning professors, and especially around the family dinner table. Participating in the Arts and Humanities Internship Program offers a powerful way to answer that question once and for all. AHIP does not only offer you an internship – it demonstrates how the soft skills you have honed through your degree, such as critical thinking, writing, and research, can translate into valuable workplace competencies. Thus, at it's core, the Arts and Humanities Internship Programs shows you just what you CAN do with your degree; and believe me, there are so many options out there waiting for you.

