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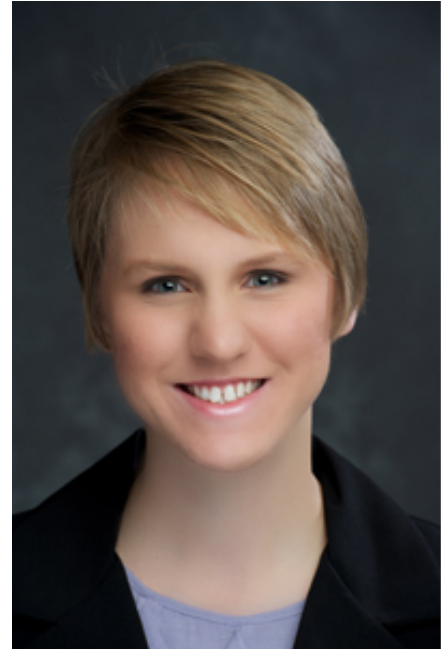
Lytwyn '12 Pursues Passion for Politics

March 18, 2013

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— At Illinois Wesleyan University students are encouraged to pursue their passions, a sentiment that Tracy Lytwyn, Class of 2012, certainly took to heart.

During her time at IWU, Lytwyn played saxophone in campus musical groups, was a DJ for the University's radio station, wrote for the IWU student newspaper, worked for the Hart Career Center and interned with two local politicians. Along the way, she perfected the art of multi-tasking, a skill that she has found useful in her current position as a press secretary for the Indiana Senate Republican Caucus.

"I think the number one thing that impressed my employers was how much I juggled at one time. IWU really taught me how to multitask and prioritize my commitments, which has been incredibly valuable in the "real world," said Lytwyn, who majored in political science and minored in business administration and religion at IWU. "I'm often working on press releases for all of my senators along with newsletters, reporter phone calls, and making sure that I eat something before 2 p.m. It's chaotic at times, but I definitely spent four years preparing for it."



Tracy Lytwyn

Responsible for managing all communications and public relations for eight senators from the Northeast and East Central region of Indiana, Lytwyn counts herself lucky to have the opportunity to interact with senators on a daily basis and see first-hand how politics and government function.

"What really appealed to me about this job was that I would be right in the center of all the political action," Lytwyn said. "It's a really exciting and daunting feeling that, at 22 years old, I have an effect on state government."

Since legislation covers a wide-range of issues, Lytwyn credits her diverse academic background to her success in a political environment.



Tracy Lytwyn on the Senate floor discussing a project with Senator Jim Banks (R-Columbia City)

"I'd always heard about the value of a liberal arts education, but I never really understood how important it is until after I graduated," Lytwyn said. "You wouldn't believe how often issues or subjects that I learned in classes outside of my major have played into my job."

Lytwyn's road to the Statehouse wasn't all smooth sailing. She originally applied for a job with a different government institution but they needed to fill the position before she was to graduate. Lytwyn followed up closer to graduation, but when they still didn't have a job opening they put her in contact with the Senate who had an opening for a press secretary.

"The title "press secretary" automatically makes you think of people like Jay Carney who stand in front of television cameras and speak for the president," Lytwyn said. "So I initially thought,

'Am I really cut out for a job like this?' However, after reviewing the qualifications for the job, I felt pretty confident I could handle it."

Two interviews later, Lytwyn was offered the job in late May.

"We always tell students to follow their passions and become a person with passionate interests," said James Simeone, professor and department chair of political science. "That is the liberal arts way, but it is also the way to succeed professionally because people want to hire interesting people."

When she was at IWU, Lytwyn worked closely with the political science department to tailor her education to fit her interests.

"The liberal arts are about intellectual curiosity and a thirst for knowledge. You never know where your intellectual interests will lead you," Simeone said. "In Tracy's case, she was interested in American religion and the Supreme Court. Since we do not have that class, but she was exposed to it in my Constitutional Law class, she persuaded me to work with her on an independent study on the topic."

Lytwyn's time at IWU might have been busy, however, the chance to pursue multiple passions made it all worth it.

"I am so blessed to have gone to a college that gave me limitless opportunities to do all the things I love. My hope is that more students realize how valuable that is before they graduate."

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