

English Alumni Panel at SNC

Hung Dao | Sports Editor



For Feb. 25, Dr. Deidre Egan-Ryan of the English Department at St. Norbert College organized a panel of SNC alumni who graduated with an English major to talk to students about their careers post-graduation. The three alumni were Stefanie Jochman ('07), Zach Willis ('07) and Gina Bortel ('09).

Jochman studied English as well as Secondary Education. She first taught English at Notre Dame Academy in Green Bay for 10 years before she moved to Virginia where she is now based. Her teachings led her to the Folger Teaching Shakespeare Institute where she got the opportunity to write a new teaching guide for *Hamlet*.

Willis majored in English and minored in American Studies while at SNC. Afterward, he got his JD from the University of Denver. He now works as the Associate Director of Communications of the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS) at the University of Denver. His job entails overseeing marketing and communications efforts such as print publications, branding or media.

Bortel also intended to teach English in Secondary Education like Jochman. After graduation, She taught high school English for a couple of years before returning to St. Norbert to work in Admissions. She got her MBA while in higher education, but as of a few years ago, she now

works in telecommunications. Currently, she is a Technical Project Manager for Cloud Infrastructure at Oracle: her team is responsible for developing the Cloud.

During the course of the panel, the speakers described how an English major helped them in their professional life, whether their career is what they intended to do in college or in the case of Bortel, her English major made her more employable in her previous company. They also talked about how they balance their time for their jobs, hobbies and family. The panel also spent considerable time talking about how unpredictable their lives have been, whether it is the job they ended up at, when they started their family or where they ended up residing. They stressed to the students that not everything can be planned out and part of life will be improvising in response to changes that will come.

Egan-Ryan said that she hopes the English students recognize that English can be used in a variety of ways because English is fairly generalized, but the attention to details that an English education teaches students can lead to many possibilities. She also wished that students would think about their purpose, that “[they]’re more than [their] work, and college should be more than preparations for a job.” This desire of hers led to her organizing the panel because she noted that it is inspiring for students to see people who do well after graduating, and it allows professors and students to see the impact of education. Egan-Ryan also planned another alumni panel for March 11.

Photo:

<https://snc-edu.zoom.us/rec/share/w2zy-c-JZfx3pnazuqLoLyz-cS8e0ChxZxWWCxOp1x-5-xHckdurAFK3YUH-SkSV.y1SUZRJyD0Son2nk?startTime=1740513627000>

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