

Communication Department Graduates vs. COVID-19: Students Find Opportunities During the Pandemic

by Jana Clark

Due to the global pandemic, 2020 has been a year unlike any other. Students all over the world were forced to cut their school years short and finish their semesters remotely from home. Unfortunately for graduating seniors, this meant they would not be able to walk the stage to receive their diplomas, but instead watch their commencement ceremonies from their computers, or defer them to some unknown time in the future. We caught up with recent Manhattan graduates to learn about what graduating and navigating the job market during the pandemic has been like.



Brittany O'Malley '20

Brittany O'Malley graduated this past May as a communication major with a concentration in advertising and a minor in digital media art. Since moving back to the city in August, O'Malley has been offered a full-time position as a Media Planner for Healix Global at IPG Mediabrands.



Michael Hackett '20

Michael Hackett graduated in May this year as a communication major with a concentration in public relations, and a double minor in psychology and marketing. Hackett is currently working part-time while on the hunt for a full-time position as a communications practitioner in New York City.



Joseph Liggio '19

Joseph Liggio graduated early in December 2019 as a communication major with a concentration in journalism and a minor in business. Liggio is currently living in the Bronx and working full time at the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, a not-for-profit home and community-based health care organization.

As the job market has become even more competitive, life after graduation amid the pandemic has not exactly been a smooth ride for these alumni.

“The pandemic definitely made my job search more difficult,” Hackett said. “At first, I could not get a job because most companies were not hiring. Now that jobs are opening up again, I would have thought it would be a little bit easier, but the search has become extremely competitive.”

O’Malley agrees with Hackett that post-grad life has its challenges, especially during the pandemic.

“Life after graduation has been tough,” O’Malley said. “After being sent home in March, I spent the remainder of my senior year at home in Boston while completing courses online. I spent the summer rigorously job hunting so I could get back to the city as soon as possible trying to return to my life in the city. The reality was, and still is, that there are not many jobs to be found during these challenging times.”

Luckily for Liggio, he was able to start his position at the Visiting Nurse Service of New York just before the pandemic hit in January.

“I was initially working part-time and slowly settling into my role, but when COVID-19 began to spike in March, my organization shifted into overdrive— and our workload became focused on supporting our health care workers serving on the front lines of the fight against the virus,” Liggio said.

To say the transition from undergrad to the ‘real-world’ is difficult is an understatement, considering the current, unprecedented times, but there is hope and a light at the end of the tunnel.

““ ***The reality was, and still is, that there are not many jobs to be found during these challenging times – Brittany O’Malley***

“While I definitely would have liked to have gotten a job immediately after graduating, I feel like being unemployed for the time being was good for me in a way,” Hackett said. “In the beginning of my last semester, I felt stuck in my major and that I would

only be qualified for a select number of careers, but now I have realized how I can shift my career path into so many directions and I am excited to see where I end up.”

As a part-time model and full-time student, Brittany’s fashion career came to a halt until a few weeks ago when her agency, True Model Management, decided to launch a PR campaign featuring five girls on a billboard in Times Square during what would have been fashion week.

“I was shocked to learn I was one of the girls featured,” O’Malley said. “It was a huge milestone for me, and it couldn’t have happened at a better time, the day I moved into my apartment. It was as if the city was welcoming me back to where I belonged, a metaphoric and physical sign.”

Making the most of these uncertain times, Liggio describes that he’s found opportunity in the challenges brought on by COVID-19.

“The past few months have been very introspective and given me the opportunity to focus on what’s important in my own life,” Liggio said. “I feel like this year has definitely changed me for the better and I’m the happiest I’ve been in a long time, which is a terrific thing to realize. With no clear idea of how the pandemic will play out, I know it’ll all work out.”