

2016 ALUMNA ATTENDS WINTER OLYMPICS, OFFERS CAREER ADVICE

by Sedraya Fletcher

“My best advice would be to persevere. Always keep your eyes open for new opportunities. Networking is so important. It’s not just meeting people, but actually building professional relationships with them and keeping in touch,” said Tina Fernandez, Manhattan College Class of 2016 communication alumna. “Sometimes, it can feel like a second job. It’s a lot of work, but it’s very important to the industry.”

While she was a student, Fernandez was hired as an intern at Saturday Night Live. After interning for two consecutive semesters, she was hired to work as the personal assistant to Leslie Jones, a cast member and writer for the show. Her work includes coordinating all aspects of Jones’ life - from professional meetings and projects to more personal matters.



Tina Fernandez, Class of 2016, with Olympic figure skater Adam Rippon.

“I plan and coordinate all travel logistics when Leslie travels,” explained Fernandez. “So wherever she goes, I go.”

This led her to South Korea earlier this year for the 2018 Winter Olympics.

“At the Winter Olympics, my main focus was scheduling,” said Fernandez. “With the 14-hour time change and only being in PyeongChang for five full days, there were a ton of events that Leslie was attending. So making sure her days went as smooth as possible was my main goal, because there really was no down time.”

Overall, Fernandez described her experience at the Olympics as unreal.

“All the different sporting events and competitions I got to attend were truly so special,” she said. “We had a translator with us at all times and she really helped us understand the lay of the land and the culture over there.”

Fernandez reflects on how the Communication Department at Manhattan College prepared her for her time as an intern on Saturday Night Live and for her current position.

“Being a communication major at Manhattan College benefitted me going into my internship because I felt like the professors did a great job replicating a professional environment in the classroom,” said Fernandez.

She recalls the best advice she was given from media production professor Michael Grabowski, Ph.D., who always said to “make yourself useful.” She believes this is the key to turning an internship into a job, and a job into a career.

“Always be readily available to help and constantly making connections with other workers no matter the department,” she advised. “This way, people there can see you fitting into their work life and it gives them a real idea of how you would add to their workplace.”

Whether you’re a first-year student or a second semester senior, Fernandez stresses the importance of networking. The goal, she said, is to make a lasting impression on everyone you meet, so that when opportunity knocks, your name is the first one at the door.

“Keep in touch with your professors, your classmates, and people you intern with, because chances are they will go on to do great things, just like you,” she said. •