

1 Liberal Arts Degree, 7 Job Offers

Internships helped make recent grad top candidate in political circles

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Taylor Reidy, a 2014 UNH graduate, relaxes at her family's home in Concord as their dog, Rufus, awaits a treat. Earning a bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in Spanish, Taylor received seven high profile job offers this summer .

You know those media reports about the daunting job market facing recent college graduates? And the ones that ask, "Is college worth it?" All of which might lead you to believe that majoring in a high-tech field is not just a smart path toward career success - but *the only path?*

To anyone who thinks that sums up an investment in a college degree these days, the University of New Hampshire has something to say: Meet Taylor Reidy.



Reidy, of Concord, N.H., was a liberal arts major at UNH. And since she graduated in May, she has had seven great job offers. Yes, seven. Each of them in her chosen field.

Recently, she accepted her top choice -- a coveted assignment in the office of [U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte](#), a New Hampshire Republican, serving as a staff assistant (photo, right). In fact, Reidy's final job offer, from the National Republican Congressional Committee (an especially prestigious post now, with key Congressional races looming nationwide), came just a day before she moved to Washington, D.C.

"Looking back on it, I wouldn't change a thing about my experience at UNH," says Reidy, who earned a bachelor's degree in political science and a minor in Spanish, with a 3.65 GPA.

Today, Reidy laughs to think that UNH was hardly her first choice when she began applying for colleges. A top student and member of the rowing team at Concord High, she was accepted by more than a half-dozen other public and private schools, some of which offered sizeable scholarships.

But UNH? Reidy had always thought of UNH as "just a state school," one that was too close to home and which her friends applied to largely as a backup plan. In fact, the first time she bothered visiting UNH's Durham campus – just 45 minutes from her home – was when she arrived for freshman orientation.

She enrolled, she said, because the private school she had her heart set on cost \$28,000 more a year than UNH. And Reidy and her parents decided they couldn't come up with 28,000 good reasons to justify the higher cost.

“That’s typical of a lot of our students. They don’t come here expecting opportunities to be handed to them. They come here to find how to make things happen.”

Paula DiNardo
UNH Career and Advising Center

“As the oldest of four children and with her sister a year behind her, money was a factor,” says her dad, Jim Reidy. “We wanted what she wanted, but we also knew what we could afford and that we didn't want her to graduate with a huge debt burden.”

So Reidy enrolled at UNH, embraced student life, immersed herself in her studies, connected with professors, sought out internships -- and worked up to 20 hours a week throughout college to help pay her bills.

The internships, Reidy says, proved instrumental in attracting each of her recent job offers.

By working as an intern in election campaigns and with elected officials, she not only learned the ropes of political organization, she also built networks and friendships to set her on a promising career path -- all while she was still a UNH student. By the time she graduated, her resume showed positions with the New Hampshire Republican State Committee, the New Hampshire Live Free or Die Alliance, a Congressional campaign in upstate New York and, through [The Washington Center](#), in the office of Sen. Ayotte in the fall of 2012.

Since 1976, UNH has been a key partner with The Washington Center, an independent nonprofit that provides internships to students from hundreds of colleges and universities. UNH students accepted into the program pay their normal UNH tuition, work 30 to 35 hours a week in Washington, D.C. in a government or non-government position and take a night course, earning 16 credits for a full semester's internship.

“I’ve always been interested in history and public policy, so The Washington Center was the perfect way to get experience and to get an idea of what things were really like in Washington,” Reidy says. “I really loved everything about it.”

Paula DiNardo, an advisor at the University Advising and Career Center at UNH, says internships are a great way for students to gain real-world work experience and build professional networks that lead to promising careers.

“I’m not really all that surprised that Taylor got so many job offers,” DiNardo says, “because from the day she walked in here, she has been the type of student who knows what she wants to do and who finds out ways to make it happen... In fact, that’s typical of a lot of our students. They don’t come here expecting opportunities to be handed to them. They come here to find how to make things happen.”

In its nearly 40-year partnership with The Washington Center, UNH has sent more than 700 students from a wide range of majors to the nation’s capital for internships. When they graduate from UNH, they become part of an alumni network that gives back to UNH in myriad ways, from creating student internships through their workplaces to supporting UNH scholarships.

“Connecting to successful UNH alumni has become a valuable job search strategy for our students,” DiNardo says. “I match TWC interns up with alumni in DC often, and that’s really how many students begin their network building.”

Sen. Ayotte is one of two U.S. senators who is being honored at [The Washington Center’s “Access and Opportunity Gala”](#) on Sept. 29, which marks the center’s 39th anniversary and its commitment to making its programs accessible and affordable to all students.

The center and UNH certainly provided access, affordability -- and tremendous opportunity -- for Reidy. This summer, her dad wrote a thank you note to Krystal Hicks, associate director of employment outreach at the UNH Advising and Career Center.

“In this day when you hear that college grads are struggling to find work, I am pleased to report that this UNH grad had no trouble at all,” he wrote. “She credits UNH with the background that helped her launch her career.”

He signed it, “One proud dad.”

- WRITTEN BY:

[Jim Graham](#) | Communications and Public Affairs | jim.graham@unh.edu | 603-397-9654

PHOTOGRAPHER:

[Jim Graham](#) | Communications and Public Affairs | jim.graham@unh.edu | 603-397-9654

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