

Wildcats in the World: Rylee Bell '19 at New Hampshire Department of Safety

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Ever since she was a child, Rylee Bell '19 aspired to work in the security field. She began her college career at UNH in Durham, majoring in chemistry with the hopes of pursuing a career in forensic science.

"While attending school for chemistry, I loved the academic criteria, but my instinctive mindset was telling me that I was in the wrong place," Bell said. "Through time and research, I concluded that I wanted to pursue a degree in Homeland Security."

While UNH students can pursue a [Homeland Security degree](#) on both the Durham and Manchester campuses, Bell chose the latter due to its proximity to her home. Now in her senior year at UNH Manchester, Bell is finishing up requirements for her major as well as minors in chemistry, [forensic accounting](#) and [global studies](#). She has also put her learning into action through an internship at New Hampshire Department of Safety's Division Homeland Security and Emergency Management. We caught up with Bell to learn more about her college and internship experience.

Why did you choose your major and minors?

Ever since I was a young child, I aspired to work in the security field (in some capacity). I chose to major in Homeland Security because the academic program offers a diverse curriculum and enhanced learning opportunity. The Homeland Security program opened new doors to the immediate world around me. Before stepping foot into this program, I would look around to everyday life, cities, towns, buildings, and people and admire the scenery. Now, I look around and I see critical infrastructure issues, risks of criticalities and vulnerabilities, cybersecurity issues, political violence or terrorism, environmental security concerns, and other security risks. It is through this new visual that I can identify differing strategic standpoints, along with the awakening of the concepts between problems that cannot be solved known as "wicked problems" and problems that have the possibility of becoming mitigated to avoid the risks known as "tame problems". Both problems are pertinent in vital security interests throughout the world. It is these security interests that supported my decision in wanting a future working for an intelligence agency under the United States Government.

In addition to my major in Homeland Security, I have three minors in Chemistry, Forensic Accounting, and Global Studies. I chose my three minors with the goal of becoming a well-rounded candidate for the homeland security field. Chemistry has enhanced my analytical background in research, techniques, and analysis. Forensic accounting has opened my outlook on financial accounting, which includes research abilities, mathematical concepts, psychological tendencies, and an understanding of the concepts behind financial crime. Global studies is applicable to my degree in developing the understanding of issues not only in the homeland, but worldwide. It developed my concept of becoming a "globalized citizen," meaning that one is not only secluded to problems happening in their homeland, but has an in-depth understanding of the entire world's security issues as a whole. As it has become evident through this minor, each nation faces different security issues, and to understand the needs of homeland security, a globalized outlook is needed.

Please describe your internship experience at New Hampshire Department of Safety.

While at UNH, I was lucky enough to receive an internship position for the State of New Hampshire. I had a position working for New Hampshire's Department of Safety, Homeland Security and Emergency Management as a Public Information Intern. It was during this time that I was fortunate enough to witness first hand, how the State handles emergency circumstances. My internship involved a Disaster History Project where I got to learn about past disasters throughout the states and create a document of lessons learned for future disasters. I also was able to participate in the press conference for Granite Shield (while the operation was still classified), participate in the Emergency Operations Center during drills/weather emergencies, edit audio files for radio commercials, write Public Information Daily News Briefings for Homeland Security Emergency Management, and creating After Action Reports. It was this internship that led to my first stop in the Homeland Security field as a Program Assistant for the Emergency Management Department.

What has been the most rewarding part of your UNH Manchester experience?

I have to say the most rewarding part of my UNH Manchester experience would be the class projects conducted throughout the Homeland Security Program. Usually with every class, it is in the curriculum that students have one big project due at the end of the semester. It is these projects that I cherish the most. The hard work, dedication, team work, friends, and presentations that I will remember from the program. When the final presentation day comes, and you know that your work is complete as you present to your teachers, peers, and clients, there is nothing more rewarding than that feeling. To know that you just completed a project that could potentially assist in benefiting future security and you have taken part in doing so, that is the greatest reward I have received throughout my experience. Each and every course, I would look forward for the next project to come.

If you could give one bit of advice to incoming UNH Manchester students, what would it be?

Be prepared to offer self-discipline. There is only one person that can choose your path and that is you. Be ready to take on the college workload. Meaning set aside time for assignments, study your material, review your notes, give 100%. By doing so, you will succeed.

Any other thoughts you'd like to share?

For anyone interested in the security field, I would highly recommend the Homeland Security program at UNH. The program offers a variety of disciplines that will prepare you for your future endeavors. Through phenomenal professors, amazing peers, and a remarkable curriculum, you will be well suited as the next generation to take on Homeland Security.



University of New Hampshire

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