

## Intern Spotlight: Emma Ghilardi '19 at Massachusetts State Police

Thursday, July 5, 2018



 [SUBSCRIBE TO THE UNH TODAY NEWSLETTER](#)

 [SUBSCRIBE TO UNH TODAY RSS](#)

Like many college students, Emma Ghilardi '19 had no idea what she wanted to study when she began her freshman year. Fast-forward to today: Ghilardi is pursuing a double-major in [homeland security](#) and [psychology](#), a [minor in global studies](#) and, within the next couple years, a [master's in cybersecurity](#).

Ghilardi is bringing her skills to life this summer through an internship with Massachusetts State Police's Fusion Center, which facilitates the state's collection, analysis and sharing of intelligence relevant to terrorism and public safety. We caught up with Ghilardi to get some insight into her college and internship experience.

## **What was your path to UNH Manchester?**

When I was touring colleges in high school none of them really compared to the atmosphere and learning experience at UNH. It really hit every necessity that was on my list. The only hitch was that I had no clue what I wanted to do for my major, so UNH allowed me to try a lot of different things and find the perfect fit for me. Originally, I started off at the Durham campus until midway through my sophomore year I learned about the Homeland Security program, and although I had access to it from Durham, I toured the Manchester campus and I was sold. In total honesty, I wish I had done it sooner. The commute is short, the classes are small, the people are incredibly nice and the learning experience is personalized.

## **What sparked your interest in your majors?**

I started out my freshmen year with no clue what I wanted to do, but I knew that whatever it was, I would most likely need a degree. I started off taking all my discovery requirements, and one of those happened to be psychology. I was in Introduction to Psychology with Jan Tornick when I finally had that “Ah-Ha” moment, and knew psychology was something I wanted to learn more about. My passion for psychology eventually introduced me to the Justice Studies program, which I enjoyed a lot. However, I ended up weighing it side-by-side with the [Homeland Security program](#), and in the end Homeland Security was more catered to my area of interest. I can honestly say it was the best decision I could have ever made.

## **How did your internship come about, and what's your typical day on the job there?**

I started out at the beginning of the year researching different internship programs and filling out applications to various police departments, the FBI, etc. However, the Massachusetts State

Police internship stood out because it is an individualized program, which is why that was the one that I chose. One of my favorite parts about it is that no day is ever the same. I have a new task on my desk almost every day, and being part of the Fusion Center allows me to be exposed to all different areas of law enforcement and homeland security. Typically, I go in the morning and do some “housekeeping” by putting the finishing touches on any projects from the day before while waiting to be assigned my new task for the day. However, that task can change at any moment if new requests or projects come in that are more pressing.

### **How does what you're learning in your program prepare you for your internship?**

The short answer? There are too many ways to count. Every day I find a new way to apply what I have already learned to what is being shown or asked of me in the Fusion Center. Since the Homeland Security program is so diverse, I am exposed to topics like law and policy, cybersecurity, critical infrastructure, terrorism and more. I was never in doubt that the Homeland Security program was the right fit for me, but if I had been, this internship would have completely alleviated those doubts.

### **What are your hopes for after graduation?**

After graduation I am hoping to gain some job experience with a state or federal agency like Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, state police, etc. I am really keeping my options open at this point because the goal is to be able to gain some valuable work experience while also working towards my [master's in Cybersecurity Policy and Risk Management](#) at UNH (which is a new master's program being offered completely online). My dream job after the completion of my master's would probably be something in the investigations division of the Department of Homeland Security.

## What is your advice for students considering an internship?

Take as many internships as you can. My only regret about this experience was not having it sooner. With that being said, volunteer for everything. I know it sounds scary, and I won't lie because it is, but you will not regret it. Just dive in, immerse yourself and you will be able to learn so much and in the end you will have takeaways from it you never thought you would. Some "housekeeping" tips: Apply to as many internships as possible because you never know what roadblocks could pop up, and apply for them early. Even if the deadline seems like the far future, apply anyway, you won't regret it. Most of all, have a good time, be professional and responsible, but allow yourself to take a minute and be overwhelmed and excited.

UNH MANCHESTER

## RELATED ARTICLES

---



October 13, 2020 | STEM

## National Cyber Security Awareness Month

---



December 2, 2020 | FACULTY EXCELLENCE

## Homeland Security Educator Award

---



February 4, 2021 | GRADUATE SCHOOL

# A Passion for Peace

---



**University of New Hampshire**

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of **UNH Communications and Public Affairs**.

Email us: [unhtoday.editor@unh.edu](mailto:unhtoday.editor@unh.edu).

**MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION**  **CONTACT US**



UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234  
Copyright © 2022 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)

