

Emily Whitten '22

Political Science Major, English Minor

From Natick, MA



When Emily Whitten’s grandmother, Betsy Watkins ‘61 sent her Bryn Mawr information, she adamantly said, “No!” to the prospect of attending. It wasn’t until she began to look at the materials and liked what she saw that she decided to visit. Emily was drawn to the community and couldn’t believe how available juniors and seniors were to visiting high school students. Bryn Mawr’s traditions also attracted her and helped to make Bryn Mawr her top choice. As a first-year student, she experienced parade night in the pouring rain and was amazed to see how many upper-class students came out to welcome her and her fellow classmates home even in the downpour.

College was always her expected path, but without the assistance of aid, Emily would not have gone to Bryn Mawr. She says every donation helps send her and her classmates to the school of their dreams.

Emily holds several jobs on campus: Admissions tour guide; Career and Civic Engagement Center (CCEC) coordinator, and hall advisor. As a tour guide, she tells prospective students about the community and that “this is a place where people truly care about each other.” Her work as a hall advisor gives her the opportunity to work to foster that special sense of community in the dorms.

Experiencing life beyond the campus is also important. As a CCEC coordinator of the Overbrook Art Program, Emily helps to bring art classes to a local elementary school and volunteers as the art teacher. Taking a 360° cluster program in 2019 meant traveling to China. For a semester she was immersed in the subject of borderlands, the courses of borderlands and encounters that occur there with a particular focus along China's Southwest Silk Road. She was able to then bring her academics to life by traveling through China just prior to the pandemic.

Last summer, Emily received funding through Bryn Mawr's CCEC to work with a non-profit, fundraising to keep legal services free through their platform. If it weren't for the funding available, she would not have been as willing to take risks and get to know new employment opportunities. This internship taught her valuable skills and helped her understand the nonprofit, legal, and tech fundraising fields better.

Going forward, her future is a question mark. She will travel through the UK for a bit with her brother, see a new city and then will study in a four-week law program in Kings College. It will give Emily the chance to find out if pursuing law is something she would like to do long-term. She is also considering government work, helping to change policies to remove barriers for women, gender minorities, and people of color in the United States.

Life is bittersweet at the moment. It may be the reflective, nostalgic state she's in as a senior (time flies when you're having fun), but she feels that Bryn Mawr gave her everything and more. She continues to be thankful and awed at the commitment of alums and others to make sure Bryn Mawr is a financial reality for students.

She is very grateful for the opportunities her education will offer her in life and hopes the path she follows as she becomes an adult will do justice to the education she received while at Bryn Mawr.