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Georgia Southern University

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Today’s alumni interview is with Lakesia (Williams) Hayes! Lakesia updates us on what she is doing, including her super cool podcast, “Curls, Confidence & Conversation,” and she encourages us all, noting that “the possibilities are limitless with your English degree.”

What are you doing now? What paths led you to this point?

I am currently the Undergraduate Program Coordinator for the History Department of Emory University in Atlanta, GA. After graduating from Georgia Southern, I moved abroad to teach English as a Second Language in South Korea. After my time abroad, I moved home and worked in the Dekalb County School System for four years. During my professional time in the school system, I also acquired my Master Cosmetologist license, as I longed not to only be creative with my words, language, and writing, but also with my hands.

In 2018, I accepted a position with Emory and most recently accepted my position in the History department. I can wholeheartedly say I’m inspired on a daily basis because I’m surrounded by scholars who take so much pride in their research and teachings. I’m pushed outside of my comfort zone every single day, and I love it.

So, you majored in English with an emphasis in Education and with a minor in writing. What can you tell us about your experiences?

Being an English major taught me how to think. Not to just read and comprehend, but to analyze language and make intellectual inferences and effective analysis. I often find myself being the go-to person for advice because I don’t just accept things for face value; I dissect thoughts and ask thought-provoking questions to aid people in understanding, and sometimes accept, a different perspective. Being an English major also gave me the foundation to become a good listener.

Wow! That’s some great insight for our readers. It’s great that your major has allowed folks to seek you out for advice; those critical thinking skills are useful in many ways! Any advice for majors, minors, or those interested?

Don’t let people tell you this is not a “real” major. The world is thriving from technology and our younger generations are now living in a time where their entire childhoods are in the palms of their hands (cellphones). Communication is an art that should not be lost, so I think it’s up to people who are fed by the liberal arts to continue shine in this technological age. The ability to understand and interpret language is a true gift not to only be used in the courtroom and academia but in our interpersonal relationships.

When you’re not working at Emory, what are you up to?

I’ve recently started a podcast about my own mental health journey and how the lack of mental health attention affects black women. It’s called Curls, Confidence & Conversation. I take an anecdotal approach to connect to my growing audience, and my English major skills encouraged me to research—research that helps me contribute substantive commentary to this growing conversation.

When asked if there was anything else she would like to share, Lakesia followed up with..
To current English majors, minors, and prospective majors: the possibilities are limitless with your English degree. I have friends all over the world because my English degree afforded me the opportunity to work abroad and experience irreplaceable cultural experiences. I also have multiple ways to market myself to employers because I have the ability to think outside the box and remain creative. And just because you’re an English major does not mean you do not possess data/science skills!

Thanks so much for sharing your experiences with current and prospective students, Lakesia! Are you an alum with an English degree? Would you like to be featured on our blog? Email us! gsuenglish@georgiasouthern.edu

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