

Name: Michelle Alexandria Payne

Hunter Major/Degree/date received: English with minor in Theater /B.A. / May 28, 2009

Current Job: Disabilities Coordinator at Annie G. Newsome Headstart Center

How did you decide on your undergraduate major?

I decided to major in English after taking a series of creative writing courses. I realized that I had a love for writing poetry and fiction and that I would benefit from investing time in exploring the craft through my coursework.

What was your experience like at Hunter? and Career Development Services?

My Hunter College experience was indeed a valuable one. I was involved in Student Government, the Jazz Vocal Workshop Ensemble and pursued my studies. I also worked for the Public Service Scholars Program as an assistant to the Administrative Assistant and with the Liberty Partnership Program as a high school Mentor. After graduating, the Career Development Services office helped me to frame my experience with the creation of a professional resume.

Internships and Other Experience

I interned with Hunter's Liberty Partnership Program and the Public Service Scholars program. I also worked with Americorp's Jumpstart program, a literacy based program that helps pre-schoolers develop the skills needed for elementary school and beyond. Prior to these opportunities I worked with the Peer Mentoring Program at Borough of Manhattan Community College in an effort to help students reach their academic goals and requirements. I also conduct workshops for BMCC's Women's Resource Center Leadership Retreat and I am a volunteer counselor for The New York City Missions Society Minisink Camp program during the summer.

Briefly describe how you got your current job, what you do, and any other comments about your work.

My internship as a Jumpstart Mentor and Team Leader enabled me to utilize my literary skills to help young people and as a result I forged valuable connections with individuals within my own community. Upon graduation I sought employment with the Headstart Program that was affiliated with Jumpstart. After interviews, training and submitting documents, I earned a position that entails ensuring that children with disabilities receive the services needed for academic, social and interpersonal development.

What are your future aspirations?

I aspire to obtain a degree in Mental Health and School Counseling. Upon graduation I plan to seek licensure. After obtaining licensure I will pursue a doctorate degree in Counseling Psychology.

Do you have any advice for students thinking about pursuing this career?

I think that it is extremely important to find and enroll in internship programs that are directly or indirectly linked to the profession that you plan to work in. Forging these links can be invaluable experience because you begin to develop yourself and understand your strengths and weaknesses. It'll also broaden your exposure, a sure catalyst for growth. Upon acceptance to an internship, do an outstanding job. Employers will want to make you part of their team when they see how valuable an asset you are or can be.