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The Alumni Connection: TV Producer Shares Field-Reporting Experience with Journalism Students

Kathleen Kiely '13 takes students into the field as she reports for WCVB TV's "Chronicle"



Journalism students Holly Huntoon (left) and Rachel Bimonte (right) listen to Kathleen Kiely '13 (foreground) talk about how she prepares to report stories for WCVB TV's "Chronicle."

April 12, 2018 | Jill Rodrigues '05

BRISTOL, R.I. – With a warm, salty breeze wafting up from the bay, Kathleen Kiely '13 surveyed the goat and sheep paddock surrounded by just-sprouting fields and thickets of budding oak and maple trees at Bristol's Mount Hope Farm. She spent a few minutes with the caretakers learning about a typical day caring for the animals and tending the vegetable garden, planning what to capture in her story about a spring day on the still-working historic farm.

As she spent Thursday morning reporting from the farm on "what life is like in Bristol" for a feature segment on WCVB TV's "Chronicle," Kiely – a producer for the Boston-based news show – worked double-duty as she shared what a typical work day is like for her with two RWU journalism students. Knowing she'd be in town for the week covering the Bristol community, she offered to bring along journalism students to experience reporting in action.

Rachel Bimonte and Holly Huntoon, both senior journalism majors, took her up on the field experience, joining Kiely and her WCVB cameraman, George Rodrique, at Mount Hope Farm. They observed as Kiely and Rodrique discussed who to get on camera, potential film locations, and prepped the farm caretakers for the interview.



"I usually let him decide where to set up interviews, because he's got the eye for it and knows the shots he needs," Kiely informed the students.

Another insight she offered: "Go with the flow. This scene was supposed to be filmed tomorrow, but something came up so I had to rearrange filming schedules at other locations."

Kiely, who graduated with a media communications degree, says her academic training prepared her well for jumping right into news reporting and she's been with WCVB TV since 2013.

"It was almost tailor-made for this job," Kiely said. "We did a lot of going out and doing interviews, the stories were often feature-based. I did my thesis on wind turbines, and now I do feature stories all the time for 'Chronicle.' It's come full circle."

She's remained connected to her alma mater, hiring students as interns for the television program, but saw this as another opportunity for her to give back. "I learned so much from the school that if I can help in any way, then absolutely I will give back."



Bimonte and Huntoon seized the opportunity to explore their interests within the journalism field with working professionals.

“As graduation is approaching, I’m trying to get as much experience as I can get and make as many contacts as I can” to break into journalism, Bimonte said. “And part of the reason I came to Roger Williams is that you have these kinds of connections at a smaller university to be able to take the opportunity.”

“I want to be a reporter, so I thought it would be a good experience to see what producers do and how they do it,” Huntoon said. “This is a great opportunity for me to learn from someone who’s been in the business for a while.”





It’s a lesson they’ll take with them that not only builds their reporting skills, but also helps them discover the intersection of their passions and potential career paths.

And while Kiely spent just one day with students in the field this week, she’ll continue to cultivate budding RWU journalists who qualify for internships with the news program. Check out her story below on the “Main Streets and Backroads of Bristol,” which aired April 30 on WCVB TV’s “Chronicle.”

Bristol, RI: Giving Back and Getting on the Water

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