

GOLD GRADUATE OF THE LAST DECADE



Ashley Thompson '16

Majors: Communication (PR Emphasis), Spanish

Current Job: Technical Recruiter, The Latitude Group

What did Concordia mean to you as a student?

I was one of the students that wanted to do everything. But soon enough, it became less about finding my lifelong career and much more about soaking up all that I could — both in studies and experiences. I became a really confident person and, humbly, influential to my peers, which is just something I didn't anticipate. In that regard, I think it meant coming into my own and learning how to be comfortable with diving into new things.

What does Concordia mean to you now?

I still say, "Man, I miss college." It feels like a home base or a foundation for me. When I graduated, I said that I knew I'd be OK because Concordia would somehow always make sure I was taken care of. I'm always welcomed back and treated like I never left, which is not something you see everywhere else.

What is a life lesson you learned in college? What is a life lesson you have learned since graduating?

I think I'm still learning this lesson now, but that there's no one right way. When you hear other people's stories about how they found their major, how they got their first job, how they got into grad school, etc., they can be pretty different. That can be stressful for people like me who want to know how to get from point A to point B quickly, but you can always try something new or start over or learn from an experience. Why not trust your gut and do the things you want to do?

Did you have a defining moment (or moments) at Concordia that helped shape you as a person?

I remember picking my major, writing my first research study, studying abroad, long and hard-fought track meets, committing to grad school, trying clubs outside of my comfort zone, drinking coffee with friends, singing in dorm rooms until quiet hours (and sometimes later), shaping my professional life in admissions, running from thing to thing. It was all important and it all still impacts me. I chose Concordia for the very reason of being able to explore all my interests. That curiosity and the ability to act on it is what shaped me.

If you could say one thing to your past college self, what would you say?

Ask for help when you need it. You have a whole community out here being your biggest cheerleaders. You don't have to do everything on your own.

How did your time at Concordia prepare you for your job now?

I was working in the admission office my first day of school because they wanted me to be a tour guide. From there, I went on to be a rep assistant to an intern to a full-time recruiter after graduation. Besides my short break when I was getting my master's, I've been a recruiter since. I fully embraced that life and didn't even realize it. I never thought I'd be a recruiter full time, but it was something I got really good at and found really rewarding, so I stuck with it.

Do you have any favorite Concordia memories you'd like to share?

It's cheesy, but meeting my roommate. Move-in day was a hot mess for us, so we jumped out of the room for a second. We both looked at each other and said, "This is awkward and chaotic. Are you good?" Once we realized we were in the same headspace, we cracked up and knew that we were going to be a really good fit for each other. We roomed together all four years and we're still best friends.

What advice would you have for future Cobbers?

Always seek out mentorship, whether you are the mentor or mentee. Learning from others' experiences is so valuable and often these will turn into strong friendships as well. It's helpful to have a squad around you in all areas of your life, so continue seeking out mentors or the opportunity to mentor in what you do.