

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



CHAMPLAIN
COLLEGE

Dominique Cornacchia '18 / Broadcast Media Production Alumni Profile

Recent graduate Dominique Cornacchia, '18 reflects on how Champlain was the perfect fit for her and how sometimes staying close to home for your degree can be the best decision you ever make. Read more here:

How a small, private college located minutes from my hometown allowed me to grow in ways I never anticipated

Searching for the ideal college

When high school students begin the daunting college search process, they often start with schools that are far away from home, hoping a new location will equate to new beginnings. I was no exception to this rule. Champlain College seemed too close to home for me to even consider.

I grew up in Essex Junction, Vermont (20 minutes from Burlington), which would be considered a "small town" by most standards in the United States. At first, I wouldn't even consider attending an undergraduate program in Vermont. I wanted to grow academically, professionally and personally, and I thought I needed to go to a big city far away to do so. However, I decided to apply to a few local schools just to see what they offered.

Just how close to home is too close?

After applying to Champlain College, I was awarded the Vermont First Scholarship, which is bestowed upon first generation, college bound high school seniors from Vermont. The scholarship gave me the opportunity to enroll at a fraction of what I would've paid at schools in metropolitan areas. Honestly, I was still apprehensive about attending a college down the road from where I grew up, but I gave Champlain a chance and declared a major in Broadcast Media Production. After just one year, I knew I had made the right decision.



Living Locally, Growing Globally

What you can do from here?

During my first semester, I participated in the Emerging Leaders program, which teaches first-year students about leadership and engages them in activities to help them find their own voices and leadership styles. In the spring, I traveled internationally for the first time on a service trip to Nicaragua. I gained new perspectives on cultural exchange and global citizenship during the experience. Both of these programs gave me the courage and confidence to continue challenging myself academically and personally at Champlain.

The service trip also sparked my passion for immersion learning, and since I loved my time in Nicaragua so much, I declared a minor in Global Studies. And, I went back the following year as a student leader for the trip. I also wanted to take full advantage of Champlain's study-abroad program, so I traveled to three continents throughout the next three semesters.

Living internationally...intentionally?

In the fall of my junior year, I lived with a host mother in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and studied Spanish language and literature while taking tango and wine tasting classes. In the spring, I moved to Dublin, Ireland, where I learned about international relations and traveled all across Europe on my weekends. Finally, for 10 weeks in the summer, I interned at an international marketing and event planning firm in Shanghai, China, where I took Mandarin classes and visited Nike's headquarters in one of the largest cities in the world.

IRL: Getting Professional

I came back my senior year feeling fully prepared to take Burlington by storm. In the fall, I interned at WCAX News Channel 3, wrote news packages, assisted producers and followed photographers and reporters in the field. During my final semester at Champlain, I interned at Skillet Creative, a local marketing and design firm. I had the opportunity to film, edit and produce promotional videos for clients, such as Reinhart Food Services and Vermont Creamery. In between all of that, I found time to edit and co-produce a documentary, *Ingredients*, about the connection between food, culture and identity, which I filmed while I was abroad. The documentary was part of my senior capstone project. It aired on Vermont PBS and won first place in the Personal Stories category at the Vermont Freedom & Unity Film Festival!

Look through every open door

At Champlain, I found a community where I was accepted, challenged and empowered. I gained invaluable leadership skills, work experience and truly grew in ways I never could have anticipated. Even though I had feared choosing to attend a small, local college in Vermont would limit my chances of expanding myself beyond the comfort of my home community, in reality quite the opposite occurred. Attending Champlain allowed me to participate in once-in-a-lifetime experiences and travel to faraway places I never dreamed of visiting before.