

Alumni Spotlight

Chantal Whitehead-Scott '08

November 2019

Please provide your biographical information (major/minor at WCU, town you grew up in, reason why you came to WCU).

I was a Psychology major and in the Honors Program during my time at WCU. I grew up in Pittsburgh, PA and decided to come to WCU because my parents believed in the value of going away to college to gain independence and maturity. WCU was a really affordable option for my family compared to some of the other private colleges I was considering! I also loved the location. The town is just adorable. My best friend went to University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and so it was important for us to be close in proximity to each other too!

What made you go into degree?

I have always been a helper and a people-watcher, even as a child! It was assumed that I was quiet but I was really just observing everyone around me. I was not typically playing with the other children in the room but hanging out with my Mom or reading books. I also come from a blended family and so I became really interested in all the dynamics that happen in other families too! I felt like I could relate to others well and wanted to be in a position to offer guidance.

What is your official title and what are your responsibilities in your current position?

I recently joined the Alumni Relations team here at WCU. I'm in charge of assisting in increasing alumni engagement with the University through planning events and coordinating communications efforts such as the monthly newsletter, emails and website.

What is a typical day like at work?

Each day so far has been different which I really enjoy! I've spent time assisting in planning events for Homecoming and we're gearing up for both Alumni Weekend coming up in April and Grandparents University in June!

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family and traveling. My husband and I are both close with our families. We live in Delaware and have weekly Sunday dinner with my husband's family (10 of us total). We often travel to Pittsburgh to see my family too.

We love to travel, although we wish we could do it more! In the last few years we've gone to the Caribbean, Florida (Tampa and Miami), New York, Jamaica, Toronto (Canada), Hamilton (Canada), South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee. We will go to Disney World in May! We also have family members involved in collegiate and professional sports and we make it a point to travel to support them at their games throughout the country!

We have a four year old son, Sammy that we're obsessed with and so we can typically be found at his soccer games, a pumpkin patch, bouncy house or whatever keeps him entertained, happy and learning something new!

Where do you see yourself in five years?

At WCU, still enjoying being back on campus and learning the University from a staff perspective. I've been so impressed with how much West Chester has grown even since I graduated in 2008. There weren't many students from Pittsburgh when I was a student and now West Chester has continued to develop such a great reputation for excellent education and affordability. I'm looking forward to growing professionally here too!

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What advice would you give to a current student who aspires to follow in your footsteps and pursue a similar career path?

A message that I gave to my Upward Bound students all the time was to explore and gain exposure to different majors and career opportunities. It is difficult at 18 or 19 to make an education and career decision that will impact the rest of your life.

The greatest investment you can make is in yourself. It is important to use your time in college to take a diverse set of classes, get a feel for what you think you like and connect with professors to gain more insight, and get internships/field placement in the field you think you'd like to go in. Gaining hands on experience is truly the only way to know if a career is for you.

The other message that I would share is that there are several different ways to reach your education, career and/or life goals. You may or may not take the straightest route to reach your goals and that's ok. You may change goals along the way and that's ok too! You should however follow your heart, your passions, your personal mission and your talents to a career and life that makes you feel fulfilled!

How has your WCU education contributed to your success?

I received a great education here at WCU and I'm grateful to the many faculty and staff that helped me along the way! However, the greatest gift WCU gave me was the ability to explore my independence and experience a diverse world outside of my family. Those great experiences allowed me to be successful professionally and be able to relate with people from various backgrounds.

What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishments (both personally and professionally)?

Being a Mom means everything to me and being a Mom while able to successfully balance my career is something that I'm really proud of! I've always been passionate about working to support people and becoming a mom and a wife myself really puts into context how many supports families really need to be successful. I wouldn't be able to balance all of my roles in life without support from my family and the awesome organizations/institutions I've worked for that value work-life balance. It's also a major accomplishment to work at West Chester University and I'm really grateful to Jenna Birch and Brigid Gallagher for making this transition such a smooth one!

What's your favorite memory from when you were a student at WCU?

I have many great memories of my time as a student at WCU. I met some really great friends as a Resident Assistant in Goshen Hall. In fact, I still have dreams that I forgot to put up this month's bulletin board or that I'm late doing rounds!

I loved being surrounded by friends all the time. My friends were really diverse and so I learned so much about different ethnicities, nationalities and traditions because we became so close and considered each other family. I'm still good friends with many of those people today!

The best thing that happened to me while at WCU was meeting my now-husband, Sam Scott '10. We met when we were both 18 years old here on campus! WCU means so much to us because this is where we began our relationship. It's even more special now that I work for the University and he's coaching with the WCU Football team. We often compare the things that have and have not changed on campus or who we ran into on campus that made an impact, in some way, on our lives!