Meet Family Studies Alumnus Patrick Seidl

**Major:** Family and Human Services  
**Minor:** Business Administration  
**Track:** Leadership in the Nonprofit Sector  
**Graduated:** May 2014  
**Place of Employment:** Maryland Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

1) **Describe your current position at Maryland CASA and what you might do on a typical day.**

My title here at CASA is Development and Communications Associate. Because we are such a small organization I tend to wear a lot of different hats. On a typical day, I promote public awareness of CASA by drafting and submitting press releases regarding recent accomplishments of our organization and other CASA programs throughout the state (recent events, upcoming events, future information sessions, training sessions, CASA volunteer achievements and swearing-in ceremonies). I also manage our organization’s social media pages to help promote awareness of CASA and what we are up to. Currently, I am working with Ed Kilcullen, our state director, and our Towson University interns to plan a February 28th event for older foster youth (ages 16-21) who will soon “age out” of the foster care system. I am spending a lot of time seeking donations and sponsorships from the community to support this event. Finally, I constantly research funding opportunities for CASA (grants, foundations, online giving programs).

2) **What educational experiences and/or courses helped you find your position?**

The most valuable educational experiences that I had during my time at Towson University were through my internship and service learning courses. They gave me a chance to gain real-world experience, as well as develop my interpersonal and professional skills. I made some great contacts through my internship, and I frequently consult my old supervisor, Y’landa Simmons from Boys & Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Baltimore, with questions and concerns. We remain close and often share information with one another regarding upcoming grants, events and trainings.

3) **What experiences and/or courses are most helpful to you in carrying out your job responsibilities?**

I would say that the most valuable thing that I took away from Towson University’s program is learning how to learn. Of course the different theories, practices, and writing methods all taught me valuable skills, but it is different once you are in the ‘real world.’ A few times I have been assigned a task that I have not had much experience with (even after 500+ hours of internship and service learning). Towson taught me how to seek out the necessary resources and teach myself the things I need to know to get the job done.
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4) Why did you choose the Leadership in the Nonprofit Sector track?
I chose the track because it was a chance for me to incorporate business experience into my coursework. A lot of the classes for the business administration minor at Towson coincided with the leadership in the nonprofit sector track so it was almost like a two birds, one stone kind of deal.

I never expected to enjoy the nature of nonprofit work as much as I do, and I think that joy was nurtured through the great experiences I had with local nonprofits through service learning and internship. Administrative nonprofit work is something I chose because I know that I am achieving my goal of helping others (which is the main reason why I chose to be a FMST major), but from a more behind the scenes role. I decided early on that direct client interaction was not for me.

5) What advice do you have for current Family Studies students?
My advice to FMST students is to take full advantage of internships and service learning opportunities. They are a great way to gain experience and meet new people. A good letter of recommendation can go a LONG way. Also, I urge seniors to start applying for jobs early. I found my job within a few months of graduation. Also, it takes time to gain experience. And one last thing, do not feel discouraged when applications say you need multiple years of experience. Apply for the jobs anyway – you never know when someone may just give you a chance to interview. If you don’t get the job, that is okay! You had another opportunity to gain interview experience.

6) What are your future plans?
In the future, I plan to get my master’s degree. In what I am not sure yet. I plan on staying involved in nonprofit organizations for a long time, but I think down the road I may pursue my dream of becoming a high school guidance counselor. It is just a matter of finding the right time to go back to the classroom!