Student Speaker
Allegra Smith, MSU
May 2013 Commencement
by Rachael LeFevre, Professional Writing, 2015

ALLEGRA SMITH DOES IT ALL. A senior double major in Professional Writing and Women’s and Gender Studies, Allegra divided her time between working at the MSU LBGT Resource Center, assisting Religious Studies professor Amy DeRogatis with her research, serving as the president and outreach coordinator of the Professional Writing organization Writers’ Bloc, and continuing her research on Mormon women in the blogosphere.

And if that wasn’t enough to keep her busy, Allegra was also the Michigan State University spring 2013 undergraduate student commencement speaker.

“HUGE OPPORTUNITIES, INDIVIDUAL FOCUS”

Allegra credits her success to the wide range of opportunities the College of Arts & Letters provides, as well as the meaningful relationships she’s developed with her professors. When she switched her major to Professional Writing, Allegra met with Professional Writing advisor Professor Laura Julier to discuss her program. From the start, she was impressed with Laura’s deep interest in her goals and dreams. Allegra says that Julier’s care and consideration ignited her creativity and excitement within CAL, helping enable her to do all the things she does.

Allegra adds that she is grateful for the personalization and customization the College of Arts & Letters offers in its degree programs.

“MSU is a huge institution that offers you world-class opportunities with 47,000 students here,” Allegra says. “But the College of Arts & Letters gives you the individual attention and focus to be able to take those resources and fashion them into something that’s impactful.”

SPARTAN IDENTITY

In her commencement speech, Allegra addressed the multitude of opportunities MSU offers its students, along with the ability students have to customize and make their experiences their own. Allegra focused on “the unique and individual experiences we all have as Spartans and, then, how that all relates back to our shared identity.”

“Ultimately, what I argue is that the values that made us Spartans in the first place, the stuff they saw in our admissions materials—our initiative, our drive, our global citizenship, our community engagement—all remain the same. They’ve just been strengthened and molded into something—something profound and impactful—through our four, five, or six years here.”

While Allegra’s vision applies to all students at MSU, she feels her experience in the College of Arts & Letters particularly reflects this vision.

“The qualities we have here will remain the same and have only been highlighted by our undergraduate education,” Allegra said. “And I think that’s exceptionally true of my experience in CAL. I was always a writer; I was always a humanities scholar; but the College gave me the tools to speak about it and to cobble it into something cohesive and valuable.”

This fall, 2013, Allegra will be starting her master’s degree in the Digital Rhetoric and Professional Writing program at MSU.