Gemma Kehoe, Sport, Physical Education and Community Studies, 2010

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Gemma Kehoe

Current role

I am currently fortunate to be working for the Football Association which governs football across the U.K, my job title currently sits within the football development remit of the work the FA does. My role as a get into football officer looks at nurturing, developing and growing the game around 16+ and adult participation within all types of football from small sided, to futsal, to the 11 aside game. We are planning to significantly affect the decline in sports participation of the post 16 population focussing on football as a tool to drive an increase in active people.

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

The best thing about what I am doing now is hard to describe in one paragraph. I am fortunate to be able to work developing something I am passionate about. I enjoy the challenge of creating a positive outlook to football participation post 16 and enjoy developing new innovative ideas to really significantly impact the decline. Life in general is also good at the moment enriched with the continuous meeting of new people within work environment impacts on my coaching outside of work that I do with disability children and in turn develops my social interactions also.

Why did you originally apply to Birmingham?

I originally applied to the University of Birmingham for two reasons, one was the prestigious reputation the University holds for both sport and academia, being a keen sports woman I was enticed by the competitive standard of sport within the University and the high quality education provided. I was also enticed by the course itself, on the open day the lecturers were more than welcoming and helpful, it offered practically elements which no other university provided, to extend theoretical knowledge and to really appreciate the value of theory into practice. An element that, in reality, has proved to be a priceless attribute.

What were the best bits about your time here as a student?

I would like to emphasise to new students the way that at the University of Birmingham you are always made to feel welcome and at home. The support from staff on Specs goes above and beyond the levels you are prepared for. The lectures are made interesting but give you what you need to know! The specs social life is always continually on the map and the best bits for me were being part of a community that had fantastic academic credentials, superb staff support and enabled me to gain life long friendships.

How did you grow as a person by coming to University?

It changed my life as I'm now blessed with a full time job which the credentials of a degree from the University of Birmingham really supported. Also blessed with a group of life long good friends from the course and knowledge that I will always be supported from the University for as long as I want to be alumni.

What did you think of the learning experience within the University?

Gaining a Sports degree from the University of Birmingham has secured me with the knowledge I have taken into my full time post as a football development officer. It has ensured and emphasised my knowledge around NGB's, coaching styles, psychology of participation, and physical mechanics of participation and ensured my wider knowledge of sociology of sports and physical activity participation. I found all modules relevant and genuinely every module covered within Specs just within the first few months of my job I have used. So the transferability of the course to especially my job role is immense.

Did you find the degree programme at Birmingham challenging or easy?

The toughest bits of the degree program would have to be the extensive amount of reading that you have to motivate yourself to do and then pull out the relevant material to aid your assignments. The easier parts were enjoying university life, the course whilst academically gave you and extensive range of knowledge also allowed you time to socially adapt to university life and make the most of growth through social experiences at Univeristy.

Advice for current students

The advice I would give to students would be to firstly choose modules you enjoy. If you enjoy the module you are more likely to succeed. Be enthusiastic in lectures and practical sessions the more you put in during the three years, the more you will get out. Finally take every opportunity for courses, volunteering opportunities and any opportunities you get to do extra sporting activities as full time employment is getting more and more restricted to the average degree student so make sure you stand out. SPECs provide students with a lot of opportunities and access to various internal and external opportunities make sure while you have your 3 years at university you take part as when you leave you won't have the same access or time to be able to do them.

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