



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT



SYDNEY NOXON

Bachelor's Degree in
Gender and Women's Studies
Bachelor's Degree in
Psychology

FUTURE PLANS

I plan on attending graduate school for Clinical Mental Health Counseling, but first I am taking a gap year to study for the GRE and take a break from higher education.

A GWS MEMORY

I took GWS100 as my first class in the department, and we had an assignment in which we had to write a paper about how we individually "do gender." For me, this felt like a difficult assignment because I had always identified myself as female but did not really know how I performed the female gender. As I was thinking about the assignment, I realized that throughout my life, I had never questioned my gender identity because everyone told me that I was a woman. I never felt like a female growing up, but I also knew that I was not a male. Until I was exposed to gender as a social construct and a spectrum, I did not know that I could identify as something other than what I was assigned at birth. This challenged the perception that I had of my own gender and led to my coming-out as non-binary.

FINAL WORDS

When I first started at UIUC, I had plans to follow the pre-medicine track so that I could pursue a career as a psychiatrist. I had taken some GWS courses to fulfill general education requirements, and really enjoyed those classes. One day, I was sitting in a biochemistry class and realized that I was miserable pursuing a STEM career. It was then that I decided to pursue GWS as a major, and I have never looked back since. **Gender and Women's Studies has changed my outlook on the world around me** and has helped me become both more compassionate and more critical of my surroundings and of the society I live in. I could never thank my professors enough for their dedication to my learning and success.