

Two is better than one.

At least Indiana University of Pennsylvania journalism students think so.

According to the 2011 IUP Journalism Alumni Survey Results, 63 people out of 240, or 26 percent, said they took enough credit hours in an academic field other than journalism that would be equivalent to a second major. The top four majors that alumni took in addition to journalism are English at 20 percent, communications media at 18 percent, political science at 15 percent and a foreign language at 10 percent, the survey said.

Currently, IUP journalism majors vary from the expected to the unexpected when claiming a second major. Yet, only 15 of the 147 majors, or 10 percent, are double majors. Communications media holds the most double majors with 5 out of 15, or 33 percent. English has 4 out of the 15 double majors, or 26 percent of the department's double majors, according to a document supplied by the journalism department.

However, how effective is graduating with a double major?

Junior Tia R. Kordell, 20 of Indiana, stressed the importance of her double-major combination of journalism and biology with pursuing her chosen career.

"I chose that combo because I was interested in advocacy for environmental conservation," Kordell said. "Unfortunately, there is no major for whatever that is, so I decided on Public Relations (PR) and environmental biology because I need the background information from the biology and the people skills from PR."

Kordell's areas of study cover environmental biology, ecology, the study of people's interactions with their environment, and conservation. She said she feels she couldn't have one field without the other. Her love of science and learning about the "whys" and the "hows" with her love of talking and public relations will mesh together toward her goal of working as a

company's sustainability manager, a job that varies with each organization, or with environmental consulting.

A double major is not just about the variety of topics a student can study at one time. With a double major, students can mold the curriculum to their goals so as to obtain all of the qualifications necessary to be successful.

"Fusing humanities and sciences is a powerful thing that unfortunately is rarely done," Kordell said. "I have literally tailored my college experience to exactly my needs, and I'm hoping it pays off."

Kordell came up with the idea to double major on her own due to her interest in just about every subject and field. She's fascinated by anything and everything.

"People could be talking about mushrooms growing on poop, and I'm sitting there like, 'Oh my gosh that is so fascinating.' If I could take 20 majors, I would. It just wouldn't make sense to take anything less," Kordell said.

Senior Colleen B. O'Laughlin, 35, a journalism and political science double major from Pittsburgh, agrees with Kordell that studying two or multiple fields will better prepare her for the real world.

"Having a double major balances out the areas I want to pursue," O'Laughlin said. "I want to work with an organization in Pittsburgh that promotes the region and our assets through public and/or private means."

She will also graduate this May with a minor in geography. She hopes combining the three will make her more marketable and help her beat out others applying for the same positions.

A similar trend appears to continue in the journalism department when looking at why double majors believe others should declare a second major.

Junior Kayle L. Scott, 21 of Harrisburg, was first an English major and then declared her second major in journalism after her sophomore year due to encouragement and persuasion from Randy L. Jesick, IUP journalism department chairman and professor.

Aiming to pursue a career with a publishing firm, Scott's interests of reading, writing and public relations led to her decision of declaring both majors.

"I feel it's more impressive for employers to see that," Scott said. "I feel I'm more appealing, and they complement each other."

Both majors are in IUP's College of Humanities and Social Sciences, overlapping each other in the liberal studies electives and the free elective slots, according to the 2012-2013 Undergraduate Catalog.

But what if students are still completing classes in a second field without declaring the double major? Does declaring the double major make that much of a difference even though students are still learning the skills?

These IUP journalism students say yes while others might say no.

Darren E. Doult, 43, a December '93 IUP journalism graduate from Franklin, is the company manager of the national touring production of "War Horse," a Broadway show, moving out of public relations and into general management shows. His PR training and education are still put to use but now as a secondary skill to his management agenda.

In college, he concentrated on PR while also following his interest in theater, adding to his qualifications and specified career goals. Although Doult did not declare a second major, he

took specific theater classes to help him strengthen his skills in both theater and public relations, hoping to set himself above the competition.

“I knew when I was accepted at IUP, that I wanted to do press and marketing for Broadway shows,” Doutt said, “which I did. I interned at the prestigious press agency of Boneau/Bryan-Brown Inc. the summer between my junior and senior year.”

Doutt said he was offered a job prior to graduation at a separate press agency, where he started at in January of '94.

Boneau/Bryan-Brown, Inc., a theatrical press agency on Broadway formed in 1991, has worked on more than 200 productions on and off Broadway, on national tour and in Europe since being established, according to its website <http://www.boneaubryanbrown.com/>.

Doutt said he feels his internship at Boneau/Bryan-Brown was the selling point for his career's takeoff as opposed to a double major.

Perhaps a double major would have helped Doutt in addition to the internship; however, no one will ever know.

But senior Junene Taylor, 26, didn't want to let any opportunities slip away.

The Philadelphia native didn't declare just one minor; she declared three minors. Combining a journalism major with minors in communications media, English and religious studies came to her after dipping her toes into each subject. Together, they have taught her skills such as tolerance, creativity and how to communicate effectively.

After graduate school, she would like to launch her own digital magazine that incorporates the topics of politics, religion, life and style, bringing all of this to “the culturally diverse modern woman,” Taylor said.

“For someone like me who loves to learn and is abnormally curious about everything,” Taylor said, “it made sense to study a little bit of a lot of things. I don’t think one major would have taught me the analytical and critical thinking skills necessary to succeed in a diverse world.”

This diverse world allows students to spread their wings into different areas of education. They want to learn while becoming more marketable and well-rounded before entering the workforce.