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Through Psychology and English Classes, Mariana Mellado '16 Developed Skills to Serve People in Need

As social media consultant for United Nations (UN) Women in New York City, Mariana Mellado '16 is living her dream to have a job where she can serve

photo of Mariana Mellado

others in need and be a voice for the voiceless. "I've always believed and lived by the idea that we are here on this earth to lift each other up, and not tear each other down due to our differences," Mellado asserted. "I am grateful that I am able to serve people of every gender, socio-economic level, disability, sexual orientation, and religion."

UN Women is the global champion for gender equality, working to create an environment in which every woman and girl can exercise their human rights and live up to their full potential. Mellado develops and implements social media campaigns to promote international days such as International Women's Day or conferences like the Commission on the Status of Women. Some of her favorite projects include using Snapchat and Instagram to highlight the triumphs and challenges of women and girls.

"At 22, I never thought that I would be able to get a job at the UN following an internship there," Mellado observed. "I have always felt the odds were against me, but God has an interesting way of defying and surpassing our expectations for ourselves and overcoming obstacles so that we go where He wants to take us. That is, if you decide to leave your inhibitions behind and go forward in your journey."

Mariana Mellado, right, with the UN Women Deputy Executive Director, Lakshmi Puri, on the International Day of the Girl

She is grateful for the GWU professors who encouraged her to explore her beliefs and build her own views of life and the world. Her research adviser, Dr. Cheryl Duffus, showed her how important words are when studying history and different cultures and pushed her to excel on her Senior Honors Thesis. For the project, she received a travel grant from the GWU Undergraduate Research Program to go to New York City and study the rhetoric of the first responders to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. Her work on the thesis helped her secure the internship at the UN. "Who would have known that the people I learned about for a year would be based in the same city I would later move to?" Mellado

speculated.

As she does her job, she relies on other lessons she learned from her English and psychology professors. Some are academic, like improving her writing or studying statistics, and others are interpersonal skills, such as being secure in her identity and having empathy for others. “The psychology and English departments are filled with the most encouraging professors and mentors,” Mellado described.

“Their character and how they truly live what they teach helped me decide to declare my double major. The quality time they dedicated and spent with me are the building blocks of the person I am today.”



Mariana Mellado interviews a group of women from China for the 61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.