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MIZZOU

Need Job, Will Travel

J-School alumnus is voice for Mizzou in New Zealand.

Story by Kelsey Allen

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Drew Dumas flew to New Zealand to interview for a job he thought he had in the bag. When he showed up for the interview, he received an apology and an explanation of why the job was no longer available. Dumas wasn't exactly stranded; he had studied abroad in Auckland as a junior. But he wasn't exactly happy either. Dumas called his former boss and mentor John Wilkerson, assistant director of international recruitment, for advice. At Wilkerson's recommendation, he went to the offices of EducationUSA, an



Drew Dumas is the education adviser to the U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa. He visits New Zealand secondary schools and speaks to young people about educational possibilities in the U.S. Photo by Ola Thorsen.

advising center where New Zealand secondary students can learn about attending college in the U.S. That's where Dumas finally caught some luck.

“They were [looking] for a young person who had worked in study abroad advising, who had social media experience and who wanted to travel,” Dumas says.

The job description fit Dumas, a 2010 convergence journalism grad who had interned in the School of Journalism's International Programs Office.

“I really liked most parts of journalism in that I got to meet a lot of interesting people,” Dumas says. “But I really liked what John Wilkerson did. To me, at the time, it looked like he was jet setting around the world. I said to him, ‘I want to do what you do. Can you teach me?’ ”

Dumas started working with incoming students during orientation week and quickly moved to running the health and safety orientation and co-running pre-departure orientation. His focused switched from finding a job in a newsroom to finding a job in an international recruiting office.

“I wanted to come back to New Zealand because the pace of life here is a little bit slower. Things are more relaxed,” Dumas says. “Ironically, not now that I work for an American organization.”

Dumas works for EducationUSA as the educational adviser to the U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa. He spends most of his time visiting New Zealand schools and speaking to young people about educational possibilities in the U.S.

“[The position] can be best imagined as the high school guidance counselor the country,” he says. “Students in New Zealand know next to nothing about universities in America.”

To create a resource for the secondary students, the ambassador, David Huebner, started a blog series that features U.S. universities. Dumas wasn't secretive about wanting to feature Mizzou, and when Huebner agreed, Dumas started reporting. He called Wilkerson to get content for the post, including rankings and citations, and submitted a draft to Huebner, who worked it into his words.

“[My job] is a special blend of what I learned in journalism school as well as the newer skills from working in educational advising,” Dumas says. “A huge part of what I do now is show up at a school and explain why I should talk to the kids. It was at Mizzou that I learned how to talk to a stranger.”

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