

# Alumni Spotlight: Dyanna Grondahl remains involved with CSS post-graduation

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After graduating summa cum laude from the College of St. Scholastica in May 2019 with a degree in psychology and peace and justice Studies and a minor in German, DyAnna Grondahl set out to help the community. Graduation didn't change her plans immediately, though, as Grondahl continued to work at the Safe Haven Shelter and Resource Center, as she had done through the last few years of college. "I picked up that job when I was a junior here at CSS and was an intern, and then was hired on," she said. A year later she was promoted from her intern role. "My senior year I worked there, and after I graduated I kept doing that. I was the self-sufficiency coordinator at Safe Haven and in that role, I assisted survivors of domestic violence with getting them community resources like housing, education, and employment."

Grondahl continued her new role through the year until she got a new job at TakeAction MN, along with a few other "side gigs," as she put it. "I was an organizer with AFSCME Council 5 part-time. I was on the executive board for AFSCME and I was the youngest member that they've had on their board." Her experiences expanded as Grondahl reflected on her brief time in politics. "I did a lot of work with the local labor around the 2019 municipal elections and ultimately landed a spot as the campaign manager for representative Liz Olson for her 2020 campaign. However, I had to leave that role after the few months I was there when I

took my role with TakeAction, due to campaign finance."

At TakeAction, Grondahl is "the greater Minnesota organizer, where I organize within the 74 non-metro counties across Minnesota to try to build the progressive movement in our rural or non-metro areas. I'm cut out for that role since I grew up in a small town near the Canadian border and have all sorts of self-interest in organizing in communities and pushing the envelope for what our rural communities can look like."

Grondahl said, "We have built up a really powerful debt cancellation campaign, and I am the main organizer of that. I work with a leadership team that actually consists of four CSS alumni, including myself."

She also works to bring national issues into a more comprehensive setting around the Northland. "We are working on addressing the nationally growing issue of critical race theory. We are building a campaign to support parents and teachers who are organizing in their communities what equity could look like and what they want to do in order to support that. What that looks like on a day-to-day basis is talking to a lot of people, a lot of meetings, putting together resources, writing blogs, and blasting information. It's a really cool job."

Grondahl has also picked up other ways to serve the community aside from her TakeAction roles. "I serve on the board for the Duluth YMCA, which is a nonprofit that seeks to empower women and eliminate racism. I have actually also been facilitating

a domestic violence support group for survivors. That's what I've been up to."

When asked if she missed life at CSS, Grondahl said, "Of course. However, putting it into a student debt perspective, I have a lot of gripes about the amount of money that I owe and how

with CSS isn't done just yet. "I'll be working with two advisory boards for CSS, the Honors board and the Peace and Justice Lecture Series board." Grondahl also spoke at the alumni sustainability talk that took place at CSS on Oct. 27.

Grondahl said, "In

to law school or grad school forever, but it's a no for now."

"Right now the plan is to continue learning and growing in my work as an organizer, because it is a role in the world in which I'm using my gifts and talents and learning a ton every single day. I'm also learning to fully



Submitted photo/DyAnna Grondahl

the institution of higher education consistently fails people and students and folks who want to learn. I came to CSS to get a degree, and now I owe \$93,000 in student debt. I'm never gonna pay that off. You can't put a price tag on what I've experienced here, but maybe \$93,000 is it."

She continued her reflection of her time at CSS. "As a community-centered person, I miss being on campus every day and running into people to randomly gab about what's going on in the world. I miss mixing the academic approach with the 'what you can do about it' approach."

However, her time working

September 2019 [four months post graduation] I was retaking my LSATs, and while I was taking that test in the test room, I really thought about whether I wanted to go to law school or if that was something I was supposed to do. I also felt this way about grad school and had to take a moment to evaluate what I wanted to do. At that time I was in the middle of a big breakup and there was so much on the table at that moment that I felt like I was dropping things in my life to chase something I wasn't sure I wanted, but what society wanted me to do." However, Grondahl also said, "I'm not saying no

take care of myself and keep an open mind about what the future will hold for me as I figure it out. I think it's bullshit that we ask people to go to school when they're 18 and sign up for a bunch of loans and if they change their mind, it's on them."

"Life is OK enough in the real world. We live in a place and we live in a time where we have seen unprecedented change and growth." Grondahl foresees seeing herself at TakeAction for the near future and taking action one nonprofit at a time.

## Club Spotlight: CSS Education Association ready for a big year

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The College of St. Scholastica Student Education Association, also known as CSSEA, is ready for a big year. CSSEA is a student affiliation of Education Minnesota. This year, the club is advised by Neil Witikko and its co-presidents are Elise Hintzman and Jenna Meyer.

The Script spoke with Hintzman to find out a little more about this club on campus. She said, "The Student Education Association is a group of students in the education program. We don't meet every week, it's usually more of a monthly thing. We kind of are the face of the education program. We do a lot of volunteer work at local schools, supply drive and also just give back to teachers. Lastly, we help provide outside of class support for the education program."

CSSEA leaders and members are hoping to learn more about what is happening in the field of education this year. Hintzman was asked about the panels that the club is planning on hosting this

year. She said, "Our first one is called 'A Word from the Field' and that is going to be first year teachers and student teachers from CSS. They are going to talk about what's actually happening in the field."

They also plan on having a panel with Dr. McDonald to talk about her experience with English language learners. Later in the year, the CSSEA wants to have panel discussions about more controversial topics in the world of education such as critical race theory. Hintzman said, "It's definitely not that you have to be an education major to come to any of our events. Especially now with the special education minor, anyone with a different major is totally welcome to come."

CSSEA's first event, "A Word from the Field," will occur on Tuesday, Nov. 2 at 6:00 p.m. in Tower 3121. If anyone is interested in joining the CSSEA, reach out to the advisor Neil Witikko (nwitikko@css.edu), or co-presidents Elise Hintzman (ehintzman@css.edu) and Jenna Meyer (jmeyer11@css.edu).

## Word Search: Halloween Edition



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|---------|----------------|------------|
| Candles | Ghost          | Scarecrow  |
| Candy   | Ghoul          | Spell      |
| Cider   | Halloweentown  | Vampires   |
| Costume | Horror         | Werewolves |
| Crows   | Jason Voorhees | Witches    |
| Dracula | Leaves         |            |
| Fog     | Potion         |            |