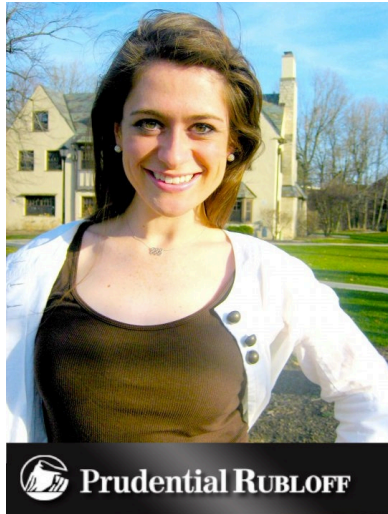


The Real (Estate) Biologist of Lake Forest College

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Clare Conlisk '10 working at Prudential Rubloff.

What does a focused, dedicated, biology major that loves performing dissections in animal physiology labs, or doing twenty-minute presentations on a new topic every week in her Senior Seminar, decide to do after graduation? Become a licensed Realtor, of course!

Real Estate has always been a passion of mine, but so has Biology. Growing up, my family lived in seven houses by the time I was in high school, so weekends spent house hunting and dinner discussions about the housing market were the norm. It's always been a matter of birthdays as to when I would be legal to get my Real Estate license, so when I saw the opportunity to take the pre-licensing classes at the Chicago Association of Realtors on Michigan Avenue during winter break of my Senior year, I jumped at it and decided the question of "when" had been answered.

When people hear that I graduated with a major in Biology, but am now a practicing Realtor, they almost always look at me inquisitively. It is quite wild, but I always defend the situation by telling them I decided to do what I loved in school, and do what I love as a career. Little do they know, some basic skills that help me most with Real Estate dealings I perfected because of my choice in major. Preparation, research, record keeping, technology and communication skills are all critical abilities that were nurtured while I was a Biology major.

As Biology majors, we are expected to research topics extensively for labs, exams, and presentations. While the specific knowledge gained through this research might dim over time, the practice of being able to gather facts and information, and then present it in a logical manner is relevant for all fields. As a Realtor, I spend two days a week dedicated solely to researching the new inventory on the market. Sometimes, I might visit 10 houses a day. While all properties have a million reasons as to why they are priced the way they are --- they have been on the market for different amounts of time, have different motivations to sell,

different structural or cosmetic issues buyers cannot seem to see past --- they all must be comparable. As a Biology major, I have been exposed to different lab experiments in which outcomes are different and the differing variables must be compared to see which condition is affecting the results. The ability to rationally sort through the confusion and be able to see a variety of possible outcomes must always be something that a Realtor considers, and something that is also very relevant in Biology.

Communication, time management, and exploring innovative and creative new ideas were all things I was able to exercise while involved with TriBeta. I joined TriBeta when it was a small honorary society that was just beginning to involve itself in campus-wide events. During my two years on the Executive board, we were able to host alumni panels, expand membership eligibility, create new officer positions based upon our growing presence on campus, organize and host the first annual Ken Weik Undergraduate Research Symposium, and party it up at the TriBeta Jungle Rumble ACP. Helping TriBeta achieve that "get up and go" atmosphere is very beneficial and practical in Real Estate. Much of what starting out in Real Estate involves is the ability to build your business through branding yourself. You have to fearlessly connect with people, think of innovative ways to portray all your knowledge, join organizations, and draw people in so that they want to work with you.

While certainly Real Estate is in no way connected to any specialization Biology majors might focus on, there are always environmental issues the Real Estate community must consider. While studying for my licensing exams, I loved that some of the information I had to learn incorporated land and environmental conditions that need to be protected through Real Estate dealings and developments. Whether it be considering land usage based upon the threat to protected species, or considering water quality and access by way of riparian and littoral rights to properties, there are shades of Biology in the Real Estate field. Luckily, I actually find these sorts of studies and inquiries fascinating; probably due to my interest and years of studying these topics at a deeper level than ever will be common in Real Estate. While others may not care much about what the biological and environmental implications of certain Real Estate decisions are, I have the ability to consider situations proactively when considering the physical surroundings of a property.

It might seem like I went in an unusual career direction for a Biology major, but I feel lucky to have studied a science I love, and then to be able to pursue a career for which I have passion. I believe that life is going to be filled with choices and chances, and I hope to keep making them exciting -- whether it be selling a house or understanding and explaining ecological succession in a deep-soil oak savanna!

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