THE APPEAL OF APPAREL

Allison Williams, a UNI STEM ambassador, is a senior in the Textiles and Apparel program at the University of Northern Iowa. However, she was not always looking at that field of study. After 2 years of studying in the medical field, Allison decided she wanted to pursue something more creative.

“My sister had gone through the Textiles and Apparel program and told me to look into it,” she explained. “I liked that there was a mix of both science and creativity. I decided to try it and I never left!”

It was UNI’s TAPP program that led her here. “Other programs for Textiles and Apparel don’t include a comprehensive education of the industry. UNI offers both the business aspects as well as the science and deep analysis of the field, including a state-of-the-art testing lab.”

Allison was not sure exactly what she wanted to do at first, but some of her coursework helped her figure it out. Two of her favorite courses, Textile Science and Quality Assurance, not only covered material she found enjoyable, but also helped shape her career interests.

Allison’s experience at UNI has been made special by the fact that she’s been able to get involved. While she was attending Kirkwood Community College, she only went to class. This changed completely when she enrolled at UNI. “Now, as a senior, I am secretary/treasurer for the Textiles and Apparel Association, a member of the Student Sustainability Engagement Committee, STEM ambassador, and have found other volunteer opportunities that I’ve really enjoyed. I will be studying abroad this May as well!”

Her study abroad trip will be to Sweden as a capstone. Once there, students will “explore the cultural relationships among social values and practices as well as how people across cultures implement sustainability.”

In her free time, Allison likes to spend time with her friends and enjoy the outdoors. She also continues to express her creativity through reading and painting.

If she could offer advice to future STEM students, it would be this: “Look for chances to try something new or just meet new people. Go to guest lectures, find events in town or on campus, study abroad! You’ll open opportunities academically as well as make memories. Then you’ll never have to sit and think ‘what if.’”

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