

# UWO SOCIOLOGY

## Alumni Spotlight



**Bailey M.  
Murph,  
MPH**

Class of  
2011

Health  
Portfolio  
Manager,  
United Way  
of Greater  
Milwaukee &  
Waukesha  
County

- **Why did you choose sociology as your major?** Sociology was about my forth choice in major after spending some time at UWO. It was something I had been interested in since high school when I took an introductory course, but never dove into. After searching for majors that didn't seem like great fits, I took my first college-level sociology course and new I was in love. At the time, I was minoring in Women's Studies and African American Studies and everything meshed together perfectly. I was able to learn and understand the concepts of oppression and how groups worked with and against each other. I've always had a desire to learn and understand people and society more deeply and sociology was my in. Since I was young, I've aspired to help people through work, through service, through any means I could, but I knew I needed to understand all people better. I couldn't understand psychology, but sociology was the thing that clicked and satisfied my yearning to understand why people behave and make the choices they make and why some of us are okay being on top while others suffer at the bottom.
- **What are some of the key things that you got out of the major?** An overall deeper understanding of people. Like I said, sociology was the perfect complement to my other studies. I'd say this is where I was first introduced to concepts of community organizing and systems thinking without knowing it, both concepts I have great interest in today and utilize in my work and everyday life.
- **What did you do following graduation from UWO?** Following graduation, I took a year off to work. I had two non-profit jobs, served as an AmeriCorps member and interned at the AIDS Resource Center of WI. Feeling burned out and knowing this wasn't going to be the life for me, I decided to go to graduate school to get my master's degree in public health.
- **What are you up to now? Advice for current students?** Today, I am the Health Portfolio Manager at United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County. I manage United Way's largest investment of 61 programs and coordinate the Healthy Birth Outcomes Initiative fund and the new Human Trafficking & Sexual Violence Prevention fund. At United Way I get to sit on several committees, task forces and collaboratives to keep my knowledge up to date on issues most pressing in our community, including infant mortality, human trafficking, teen pregnancy, mental and behavioral health, opioid use, homelessness, etc. Within my workplace, I serve on our internal Diversity and Inclusion Committee and I'm a proud AFSME Union Member Co-Chair.

My advice for students is to be invested in your coursework, get involved outside of the classroom and think hard about what you want to do beyond school. It is important to make good decisions every step of the way as you can't predict what the future will hold. Finally, civic engagement is something I'm happy to say is part of my workplace, but has become more and more difficult to do as a professional. Use your time as a student to be in your community and give your time as much as you can. If you want to see sociology in action, service with others for others is a great way to learn and grow.

