

UWO SOCIOLOGY

Alumni Spotlight



Pat
Hager,
Class of 2011

Owner of
Squashington
Farm

- **Why did you choose sociology as your major?** I came to UW Oshkosh as a declared sociology major because it offered me a critical lens to view the world with. Most of my schooling up to my first sociology class in high school was based around right versus wrong, or accepting and thriving among the status quo. Sociology offered something deeper than that. It opened me up to the complexities of the world and the problems we face. It helped me understand privilege, race, gender, and economics with theory that didn't seem bland or overstated. I couldn't get it out of my head, so I just kept on learning about it.
- **What are some of the key things that you got out of the major?** Sociology allowed me to look at things in a new way. Before college I felt like I was living in a world full of problems that were beyond my comprehension. Learning about theory and research helped me to organize a system of understanding that went beyond my own experiences. By the time that I graduated I felt like I understood the state of the world and what I was capable of doing about it.
- **What did you do following graduation from UWO?** After college I applied to some jobs for nonprofits I thought I would like to be a part of, but did not have much luck. I ended up doing trail work in the Adirondack Mountains through Americorps the summer after I graduated. From there I did some odd jobs. I tried being tour guide in Alaska, worked in a door factory, cooked at some restaurants and so on. I found my way back to the outdoors in 2013 when I started managing an Organic Farm near Mount Horeb.
- **What are you up to now? Advice for current students?** After a couple years of experience I decided to start Squashington Farm with my partner. We currently farm on 3 acres of tillable and 6 acres of pasture. We run a small CSA where we market our vegetables, eggs, chicken, and pork shares. I am an active member of our farmers market board as well as the Fair Share CSA Coalition. Being a part of these organizations helps us to strengthen our cause to provide good food for people with less privilege, which is one of our main motivations for farming. The work itself has little to do with what I learned in Sociology, but the reasons for doing it are directly related to what I learned.

The main thing I would say to Sociology majors is to try to balance idealism with materialism. By that I mean using the ideas that interest you to do something active. Start a research project or an independent study in an area you are interested in. Join some college clubs or go to city meetings. Talk to people about the things that concern you. Look for internships and other opportunities that might help you focus your passions to real world applications. Gaining knowledge is just the beginning, figuring out what to do with it is the real challenge.

