



LEWIS-CLARK STATE COLLEGE

LC State Graduates Do More

A series featuring Warriors, written by Warriors

Communication Degree a Perfect Fit for Connelly

“I never chose my careers; all my careers chose me.” Not many people can say this, but Daniel Connelly does because of his enduring passion for acting and directing and his degree from Lewis-Clark State College.

It was 2010 when Connelly, a home-school student, stepped foot in his first public class – speech at North Idaho College. While the topic and class may be a dirty word to other students, it was love at first sight for Daniel.

“I poured myself into these



speeches... I did it like I was doing a speech for a huge event,” he says.

It turns out he was.

After being voted the top speaker in his class, he earned second place in NIC’s campus competition. He was awarded the Communication Certification of Excellence and was selected as the Student of the Month by the Rotary Club through NIC.

Transferring to Lewis-Clark State College and majoring in communications was a natural choice. “The transfer process was simple,” he says. Daniel was able to transfer the majority of his credits from NIC to LC State and graduated two years later in 2015.

“I really wanted to stay local and I had no interest in moving away,” Daniel says. “I had too many things going on. I just wanted to stay here and keep working. School is kind of like a side job, even though it absorbed a lot of my life.”

At the time, Daniel was

simultaneously working full time at a bagel shop, teaching classes at Summit Christian Academy, and earning his bachelor’s degree with a more-than-full credit load. To lighten his schedule, his regular teaching job earned him some internship credits in lieu of other classes.

“Between (age) 19 and 21 were extremely formative years for me,” Daniel says. “All kinds of stuff fell into place in those two years, right when I was going to LC. All these

opportunities were coming at me constantly and I kept taking every single one of them. Some of them led to beautiful things.”

He was able to take hold of them because he had the “time and mental capacity to do so,” he says. “It played a huge part in where I am today. One hundred opportunities come at you, and you take all of them, and five end up being something worthwhile and worth doing.”

Teaching classes at Summit Christian Academy during his already full schedule remains one of his most rewarding jobs. It allows him to teach drama, speech and music to elementary students during the school year, and lead community theater programs during the summer.

Another opportunity came in the form of an invitation to DJ a wedding, much to Daniel’s surprise. He had never been a DJ before, but it went so well he received more requests. “It took off from there and I rarely promote myself,” he said.

In 2021, he was a DJ at 36 weddings, hired an apprentice, and bought a second sound system. If things continue on this track, Daniel says “I’ll probably get a third DJ on and just become a whole DJ brokerage.”

Daniel’s success garnered the interest of the Coeur d’Alene Resort, where he now manages the DJs in their cruise line by setting up the music and equipment, and ensuring every DJ knows what they need to do. During the holiday season, he manages the

Journey to the North Pole holiday light cruise and often plays Santa Clause in addition to hiring, training, and scheduling the actors for the elves and mascots.

One of his most notable roles in the community can be attributed to Daniel and the Gang, the swing dancing group he hosts for teens and young adults. Originating eight years ago in the small bagel shop where he worked, he now

struggles to find large enough venues as dancers from far and wide come to dance the night away.

Whether he is hosting “big, giant swing dances,” DJing weddings, teaching at Summit Christian Academy, or overseeing events for the resort, the background in communications he earned at Lewis-Clark State

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College helps him navigate his professional relationships and succeed in his endeavors.

“I am always somebody who does something 100 percent,” Daniel says. “I never do things halfway.”

He has the same drive when it comes to his family. “I spend a lot of time with my wife and kids but I want to spend even more,” he says.

When asked how his educational background contributed to his success, he said: “My schooling has really helped me out a lot. It wasn’t that I was smart – I worked exceptionally hard,” adding that his relationship with God is also responsible.

As with his life, Daniel says, “I wouldn’t change anything.”



Morganne Nutt is a senior at the Lewis-Clark State College Coeur d’Alene Center and will graduate with her Bachelor of Science in communications in spring 2022. She transferred from North Idaho College after obtaining two associate degrees, and plans to attend graduate school to continue studying communications. Ultimately, she seeks a career in media, publications, editing, mediation, and/or community relations. Morganne is the recipient of the Work Scholar Award, which provides LC State students with a tuition waiver in exchange for work service to LC State.

LC STATE BY THE NUMBERS

#1 lowest tuition in Idaho among public four-year institutions.

Ranked by U.S. News & World Report as **#3** in the West.

12:1 student-to-teacher ratio for academic programs.

Academic programs graduates have a **96%** placement rate.

80% of students receive some form of financial aid.

Ranked **#1** school for non-traditional students. (*Best College Reviews*)

130+ degrees and certificate programs.

Ranked by The Economist as **#2** in Idaho for economic value.