Because the INDS major covers so many fields of interest, its alumni are arguably more diverse than any other program. Many of them have done great things during their time at UMBC, and after they left. I was lucky enough to sit down and listen to some of their experiences, and absorb the advice they wish to pass on.

While some students know that INDS is the right choice for them when they enter college, other students do not figure it out right away. Dr. Lisa Vetter fit it into the latter group. According to her, “It was the end of my first year (when I decided to join INDS). She says that “part of it was that I didn’t even know it existed.”

She quickly discovered how much the program had to offer. She rapidly developed a passion for political theory and philosophy courses, but also says that ancient studies intrigued her. For her major, she took a thematic approach when planning her courses, and didn’t particularly focus on one subject.

She would later go on to earn her PhD from Fordham University, and currently teaches Political Philosophy and Theory classes at UMBC. During her professional career here, she has been an INDS advisor. Considering all the students she has mentored, she concludes that “the best type of INDS student has to be self-driven.”

Some members of INDS, however, do declare from the start, such as Christine Osazuwa. She graduated in 2011 with a degree in Music Entrepreneurship and Journalism with a concentration in marketing.

Her capstone was a 90-minute documentary on musicians in pop culture and how the increased accessibility of social media has changed the nature of these celebrities. While she had been heavily involved with the music industry, she had no previous experience making movies. However, this did not impede her progress for long. She was quickly introduced to Vin Grabill, who would become her film advisor during the project.

Because her project was research based, she was eligible for a $1500 research grant to travel to various locations in the US to film. As Osazuwa points out, “Not a lot of students know that non-STEM majors can receive research grants.”

Osazuwa now works in the UMBC Department of Professional Studies as their social media and web coordinator. “I handle the social media accounts for various programs, and set up the ads for twitter and Facebook. I also am in charge of website edits,” she said. Achsah Joseph, an INDS alum who graduated just three years ago, also got to travel during her time in the program. She had a passion for international relations going into college, and ended up with a focus in Genocide, Human Rights and International Diplomacy.

She was able to study abroad, and believes that her experiences overseas are extremely valuable. She adds, “I loved incorporating all of my study abroad experiences into my degree.” She advises that others should take the time to study abroad, “because it’s pretty rare to have the opportunity to spend a few months studying in another country outside of college.”

As we can see from just these three graduates, the road to success is different for each person. Inevitably though, it seems that the unique experiences that an INDS student accumulates during their time within the program, result in them reaching their desired destination. Not by taking the well traveled road, but by blazing their own.