

Catalyst Profile
Cayli Meizel-Lambert

For Cayli Meizel-Lambert, who graduated in 2012, the bare bones of academia boil down to just that—bones.

While pursuing a master's degree in anthropology from the University of Central Florida, Meizel-Lambert chose to analyze the chemical differences of osseous vs non-osseous. In 2015, she published a piece on evaluating osseous materials done with dispersive x-ray spectrometry in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*. Appropriately, her Facebook cover photo is even a collection of yellowing cow bones.

This affinity for all things skeletal was the impetus behind her double major in anthropology and forensic biology, which she began pursuing at WCU in 2008. Working between both departments, Meizel-Lambert quickly became involved in research, understanding the “importance of being able to explain projects to individuals from different disciplines.”

Guidance from professors such as Leonard Knight, Mark Wilson, John Williams, Brittanica Bintz, and Jessica Jones allowed her to present at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research three times. Meizel-Lambert’s 2011 presentation, titled “The CSI Effect: A Few Rare Cases or a Changing of Juror Mentality?” analyzed how criminal investigation television shows have changed the public perception of legal justice. Other projects focused on serial killers, heavy metal, and body piercings.

Years later in a graduate school, this eclectic approach to academics gave Meizel-Lambert a competitive edge, allowing her to work on anthropology research in the chemistry department. That experience taught her the “value” of being able to perceive projects from “different perspectives.”

In 2015, soon after enrolling in a biomedical doctorate program at Indiana University's School of Medicine, she also learned to perceive her professional pursuits from a different perspective.

“I decided after a few months that the program was not a good fit and I took a personal leave,” said Meizel-Lambert. “I am still looking for a career that utilizes my education and experiences.”

Since then, Meizel-Lambert has secured an adjunct faculty position at Ivy Tech Community College in Central Indiana. She also serves as an account coordinator at Heritage Environmental Services, an organization that offers anything from waste treatment to laboratory testing services.

“I would not change any part of what I did to get here,” said Meizel-Lambert. “I know it will one day pay off and it will be worth everything in between.”