How did you start your career? I completed the double-degree program in Communication, Management & Health (USI), and Business Administration (Virginia Tech). In my last semester of study and for one year after my graduation from USI, I collaborated with the BeCHANGE Research Group led by Dr. L. Suzanne Suggs. In 2014 I moved to the University of Miami (Florida, USA) to complete my doctoral studies under the guidance of Dr. Susan E. Morgan. In May 2018 I received my Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Miami, and in August 2018 I started my career as an Assistant Professor of Communication at the University of Kentucky (Kentucky, USA).

Why did you choose a career at University of Kentucky? The Department of Communication at the University of Kentucky has one of the leading research programs in the world in health communication. Every two years, our Department of Communication host the Kentucky Conference on Health Communication, which is an event attended by health communication researchers and practitioners from everywhere. Here at the University of Kentucky, I also have the opportunity to work with amazing Faculty from several other departments and colleges, in particular the College of Public Health and the Markey Cancer Center.

What is your current role/duties? I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Kentucky. My research is focused on advancing practical and theoretical knowledge in the area of health communication and intervention design. I am interested in understanding and addressing the challenges cancer patients and healthcare professionals encounter when discussing cancer treatments and the opportunity to join clinical trials. I also create and evaluate multimedia messages to help individuals prevent or screen for cancer.
In your opinion, what are the qualities necessary for a successful career at University of Kentucky?

I think that to be a successful researcher and professor you need to be passionate about your research area. Passion is what drives the most interesting research questions and it is also what makes your students learn and want to be part of your team. To be successful in this job, you also need to welcome failure. In your quest to discovery, you will see that many of your articles will get rejected and that some of your projects will fail to give the results you were hoping for. I want you to know that this is OK and happens to everyone. Being able to overcome these challenges is what makes this job so exciting. The important is to always be transparent and honest in the process.

What are USI’s positive features and qualities?

USI has a truly international environment where you can meet people from everywhere. In all the classes I attended, professors remembered my name and were able to provide me with personalized feedback. The courses are innovative and helped me be prepared for my doctoral studies, which I completed at the University of Miami (Florida, USA).

What competences and/or skills acquired in your USI Study Program have been useful/are useful to your professional career?

USI has had a tremendous impact on my career as well as myself as an individual. Besides the technical skills acquired from my studies, at USI I learned to work with people from all over the world and to manage deadlines and teamwork professionally. As part of the BeCHANGE Research Group, I learned how to move my first steps into academia. This included how to collect data and conduct preliminary analyses, as well as how to write a research article.

What is your advice to USI students entering the job market?

Be on the job market is stressful and can be scary. You need to remember yourself that you worked hard on your education and you will be able to find a place where your skills and expertise will be appreciated and valued. Ask for help from the people working at USI Career Center to revise your application documents. Be open to move everywhere. Don’t be afraid to contact people directly.

Read the other USI Career Stories