Grad Student Studies with Former FBI Agents

Two weeks of specialized training confirmed Kelly Brennan’s career aspirations.

This summer the Cal U graduate student attended classes offered by The Academy Group Inc., the world’s largest privately owned forensic behavioral science firm.

Brennan, of Allentown, Pa., was one of six individuals — and the only graduate student — accepted for the summer program, which focused on violent crime.

She traveled to Virginia to study with former FBI supervisory special agents and other law enforcement veterans. Her instructors combined expertise in clinical and behavioral science with law enforcement and investigative experience.

“Meeting, listening and interacting with these agents while getting a look at what they have done confirmed to me that this is what I want to do,” said Brennan, who expects to complete her Master of Applied Criminology degree in December.

Dr. John Cencich, program coordinator for Cal U’s online applied criminology program, said the in-depth training focused on aberrant criminal behavior and the tools needed for effective criminal investigation and analysis.

“I heard nothing but positive comments about (Brennan’s) work with these profilers and other practitioners,” he said. “We’re happy to provide these types of collateral programs of study for students in our program.”

Brennan’s class, which included several mental health professionals, was led by Richard Smerick, a 24-year veteran of the FBI’s National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime. He and many other practitioners gave presentations on topics such as threat assessment, letter and voice analysis, and equivocal death analysis.

“The people presenting were always open to questions as we went along, and everyone was very involved in the class,” Brennan said. “Everyone seemed to bring a different perspective to the table. It was great meeting all these people and learning from the best.”

Brennan, who has a full-time job and two children, began taking Cal U Global Online classes in fall 2014. “I was looking around for something that would work for me, and Cal U had what I wanted,” she said.

The summer program complemented her applied criminology studies and reaffirmed her career path.

“My goal is to go into law enforcement and, eventually, the FBI. The specialized training was very well worth it. It was an experience like no other.”
Kelly Brennan believes this past summer’s specialized training with former FBI supervisory special agents has enhanced her opportunities for a career in law enforcement.