

Morgan Sarber gained lifelong friends, an associate's degree, and the foundation she needed to succeed while studying at Black Hawk College.

Initially she decided on Black Hawk College because it was cost-effective and close to her hometown of Geneseo. The college's music opportunities happened to be a huge bonus, though.

Sarber earned a Music Achievement Award for singing that greatly reduced the cost of attendance, making Black Hawk College even more affordable.

BHC experience

Sarber worked multiple jobs while balancing schoolwork, BHC Concert Choir and Chamber Singers rehearsals, monitoring the piano lab, and singing at nursing homes and community events with the Chamber Singers.



"We worked hard, but it was fun, too," she said. "We're all still friends."

Since graduating from Black Hawk College in 2017, the group of friends makes it a priority to meet a few times a year to catch up and sing together.

Sarber wants prospective BHC students to know that you do not have to miss out on anything if you opt to attend: you can get a great education and have a fulfilling college experience.

Many BHC instructors stood out to Sarber, including Jon Palomaki (now retired), Tamara Fudge, and Dr. Edgar Crockett, whom she describes as tough and caring.

"He definitely pushes you, but he does everything he can to help you, too," Sarber said.

Outside of music, assistant professor of English Andrew Hoogheem was her favorite instructor.

"He's passionate about what he does," she said. "When a teacher is excited about what they're doing, it really makes the students excited about what they're doing."

While earning her Associate in Arts she interned at Quad City Symphony Orchestra. She managed youth ensembles and organized a family music carnival.

After graduation

When she transferred to Western Illinois University, she was prepared. The transfer process went very smoothly, and all of her classes transferred.

This spring, she graduated from WIU with a bachelor's degree in music business with emphases on administration and marketing.



She accepted an interim position as Director of Worship & Music at First Lutheran Church in Geneseo in January 2019, while completing her last semester.

Sarber became active at First Lutheran Church in middle school, after a friend invited her to sing "Amazing Grace" with her during a service.

"Music is what brought me to this church, and I just kind of never left," Sarber said.

Although originally she was only filling the Director of Worship & Music position temporarily, she applied for the permanent position in June and was hired in July.

She wears many hats, but one big part of her job is planning and conducting music for the church's bands, choirs, and bell choirs. Sarber enjoys it all, but her favorite part of the job is working with kids.

"I had teachers who inspired me to want to do music who still inspire me, so to be able to inspire kids to want to do music and to want to learn instruments is such a pleasure to me," she said.

Sarber loves giving back what she received.

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