

MAJOLA TATILI CRONSTRON '10/'11G, MBA CANDIDATE, INTERNS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Jennifer J. Waltner '02G
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"I'm learning new laws and the terminology of international business inside and out."
—Majola Tatili Cronstrom '10/'11G about her internship at the United Nations



(PHOTO BY LORENZO CINIGLIO)

When Majola Tatili Cronstrom moved to the United States from Albania in 2001, she didn't speak English. "I came here at 20 years old and didn't know the language—I had to learn the monetary system as well. I like challenges. I'm always looking for something better, something harder for myself," she says. Her latest challenge: an internship at the United Nations that will help her complete Rivier's M.B.A. program.

When Cronstrom applied for the internship at the U.N., she was working as financial operations manager at a small construction business. "The woman from the U.N. who interviewed me over the phone asked, 'If you have such a good job, why do you want to be the underdog here?' I told her it's been my dream since I was a little girl—it's an opportunity you don't get twice," Cronstrom says.

However, as a wife and mother, Cronstrom thought that the opportunity to follow her dream had passed. "I didn't want to put my family second," she says. Instead, when her family learned she had been accepted as the first Rivier student to intern at the U.N. they showered her with support. "My husband knows how important this internship is to me. He didn't think twice," she says. Cronstrom and her five-year old daughter are staying with her in-laws in New Jersey for four months while she completes her internship.

“People don’t know where Albania is—they don’t know the country,” Cronstrom says. Albania was communist for 45 years, until 1991. Since then, the country has faced many challenges, including corruption. Cronstrom says, “I love my country and want to help. Albania is part of the U.N.; it just became part of the European Union and NATO.”

A dual citizen of the United States and Albania, Cronstrom recently visited her homeland for the first time in six years. “I saw changes. There is development going on, and big things happening, but it takes good people,” she says.

Cronstrom says she’s excited about the networking opportunities her internship presents, as well as the chance to practice all four of the languages she speaks—Albanian, English, Italian, and Spanish. Work at the U.N. is much different from the small-business environment in which Cronstrom has worked. She’s looked forward to the change. “I’m learning new laws and the terminology of international business inside and out,” she says.

Cronstrom earned her bachelor’s at Rivier in 2010 and continued straight into the graduate program. Once she completes her M.B.A., she hopes to work in international business—possibly even at the U.N.

Cronstrom says when she arrived in the United States, the place where she worked looked down on immigrants. “I’ve been through a lot that if it was thrown at me again, I don’t know if I could go through it again. I’m proud of what I’ve achieved—I had to work really hard, but I know that nothing is impossible,” she says. ■