

Outstanding Cronkite grad finds purpose in the ASU charter

By Tracy Nicolle Lewis, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [fall 2025 graduates](#).

When Hannah De Leon Bolick started thinking about college opportunities, Arizona State University was not on her list.

"Growing up in Southern California, the University of Southern California was my dream school," she said. "It wasn't until my partner mentioned the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication that I started researching and got excited for the opportunities Cronkite offered."

Bolick said she was impressed by Cronkite's faculty and hands-on learning, but what inspired her most went beyond classes and student clubs.

"Every person I have interacted with embodies inclusivity, accessibility and the belief that students of all backgrounds deserve a place to thrive," she said. "That's what gave me the confidence to move 400 miles from home, and I haven't looked back."

Downtown Phoenix became Bolick's home away from home. There, she found an affordable cost of living, professional development opportunities and access to internships and jobs across the Valley.

Bolick will graduate with a bachelor's degree in [journalism and mass communication](#), a minor in [digital audiences](#) and recognition from [Barrett, The Honors College](#), as a top graduate. She will start working on her [Master of Public Administration](#) through ASU's [Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions](#) this spring.

"I've learned so much at ASU, everything from hard skills like developing Meta ads and mastering AP style to soft skills like networking and identifying the experiences I need to become more career-ready," Bolick said. "But the biggest shift in my perspective was realizing just how empowered I am to make a difference."

As she prepares to continue her journey as a "double Devil" at ASU, Bolick shared with us more about her college journey.

Question: What were some of the benefits of coming to ASU from California?

Answer: Outside of the traditional considerations for an undergraduate student, my then-boyfriend (and now husband!) and I knew we wanted to build a life together — get married, establish financial stability and eventually buy a home. That path simply wasn't feasible in California. Some of the things we wanted to do felt out of reach. Here in Arizona, he works in sustainable energy, and we are preparing to buy a home, which is incredibly surreal and exciting!

During my time as an undergraduate, I have had the privilege of meeting some amazing professors and building my professional network here in Arizona much quicker than I would have anticipated. I feel greatly connected with my community, between supporting The Sparkle Bar, a makeup studio in Scottsdale, for my Cronkite Agency capstone experience, to my kind colleagues at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, I feel completely assimilated into the Valley community.

Q: What was your “aha” moment when you realized you wanted to study the field you majored in?

A: My real aha moment came only a few months ago after conversations about what I truly wanted to pursue. I knew I wanted to work with people and foster community, but I didn't know exactly how, or in what scope. After some real soul-searching, I looked back to what brought me to Cronkite in the first place, which led me straight to the ASU Charter. I realized this is exactly the kind of community I want to uphold, foster and support, one that is welcoming and offers opportunity to anyone willing to invest the time it takes to gain transferable skills for the workforce. I began bridging my skills in audience analytics, writing and mass communication with my growing passion for nonprofit work, which ultimately led me to pursue my master's in public administration.

Q: What was your favorite spot on campus, whether for studying, meeting friends or just thinking about life?

A: The First Amendment Forum may seem obvious, but as a commuter who crammed as many classes into the morning as possible, my 15-minute pit stops to reply to emails, see what's happening in the world or text a friend were all on those couches!

Q: What's something you learned while at ASU — in the classroom or otherwise — that surprised you or changed your perspective?

A: Before entering Cronkite, I was aware of systemic issues, community needs and areas where people face real hardship, but I didn't feel I had any agency to meaningfully address them. That lack of agency often left me feeling apathetic. I assumed I had to choose a career based solely on what I was naturally good at and what would reliably support me financially.

Coming to ASU completely reframed that. I realized how much impact one person can have when they choose to advocate for an area of need, and how communication plays a central role in that. Watching the next generation of journalists grow their skills and harness their own agency to create change has been incredibly inspiring. It showed me that I don't have to choose between stability and purpose; I can build a career that does both.

Q: What would you tell someone from California who is considering attending ASU?

A: California is beautiful, has amazing culture, and I love the Dodgers (even before they became a juggernaut). But Arizona is also beautiful, has rich culture too, and the community and opportunities are unmatched. My mind was blown. The Valley is so vibrant, and with a “Cali

commuter's driving stamina," the world is your oyster.

Q: What inspires you most about the future of journalism?

A: I am inspired most about the future of journalism by the students I've met at Cronkite! Watching my classmates bring so much passion, curiosity and professionalism to their work makes me incredibly hopeful for the future of journalism. They're thoughtful, well-prepared and genuinely committed to telling stories that matter. It's hard not to feel inspired when you're surrounded by people like that. Go Devils!

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Text image(s)



After graduating with a bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communication this December, Hannah Bolick will begin her Master of Public Administration at ASU this spring. Courtesy photo