



NATALIE DIBLASIO '11

Natalie DiBlasio's fast-track career in journalism began with her reluctant enrollment in a news-writing class taught by Chris Evans, adviser to the *Vermont Cynic* student newspaper. Reluctant because DiBlasio actually wanted to be in a different course, with a grant writing focus, that was fully enrolled.

But that Plan B moment set her path when DiBlasio took Evans's bait of extra credit for publishing in the *Cynic*. Her first two articles, with focuses on Seasonal Affective Disorder lights in the Davis Center and a student safety incident in a residence hall, helped motivate institutional change. Writing the stories and their aftermath sparked two key revelations. "People in charge aren't right about absolutely everything that they're doing?" she deadpans. And DiBlasio saw the impact journalism could have in effecting change.

A journalist was born, and Evans had a future editor for the *Cynic*. "I turned into a machine for asking questions," the alumna remembers from her student journalist years.

DiBlasio's high-voltage energy and deeply rooted curiosity — "I want to know as much as I can about

everything in the world" no less—has served her well in a career that began as a reporter at *USA Today*. Earlier this year, she moved to *WIRED*, where she is head of social media, leading efforts to adapt the publication's content to ever-emerging platforms and ever-broadening audiences.

DiBlasio returned to campus in mid-August to add her voice to the 2017 Honors College Faculty Seminar, "Journalism in a Post-Fact Age." The issues, of course, are acutely relevant across disciplines at this point in history. And, as many at the university explore the possibility of enhancing journalism study options, particularly relevant to the academic evolution of UVM.

If there's one lesson that journalism-focused students and curriculum-focused faculty might take from DiBlasio's comments, it's that today's and tomorrow's journalists must be versatile, nimble, and poised for rapid change. At *USA Today*, DiBlasio's standard production involved writing stories, tweeting, shooting and editing video, among other duties. Looking ahead to her return home to San Francisco from the Vermont trip, DiBlasio jokes that there will be four new social media platforms by the time she returns to the *WIRED* offices.