

Anna Jacobellis

Bachelor's Degree Title & Year (Ex. Chemistry, B.S., 2026)

Communication Studies 2026, Minor in Tourism and Hospitality Management

Graduate Degree(s) Title & Year/Expected Graduation (Ex. Chemistry, M.S., 2026)

Management, Organizational Leadership, 2027

Why MTSU?

During my undergraduate experience at MTSU, I became heavily involved in Fraternity and Sorority Life, the Student Government Association, and various campus leadership opportunities, which helped me build meaningful relationships, take on responsibility, and grow personally and professionally. College was about more than earning a degree; it was about finding my community, getting involved, and developing into a stronger leader and young professional. After graduating, I realized I wanted to continue building on the experiences and relationships I had developed at MTSU. When I learned that I qualified for the Lightning Track program, I saw an opportunity to pursue graduate education while remaining connected to a university that had played such an important role in my growth. The opportunity to pursue graduate assistantships further influenced my decision by offering hands-on experience, professional development, and the chance to take on new responsibilities beyond the classroom.

My interest in graduate school also grew during my Communication Studies senior seminar, where alumni shared their graduate experiences through breakout sessions and workshops, encouraging me to consider how graduate education could support my career goals. I chose MTSU because it provides opportunities to strengthen my leadership skills, contribute to campus initiatives, and continue developing through meaningful involvement. Returning for graduate school allows me to challenge myself in a new capacity while building on the foundation I established as an undergraduate and preparing for my future career!

How did/is your program helping you prepare for your career/industry?

My master's program in Management with a concentration in Organizational Leadership is helping me prepare for a career in event management by strengthening my leadership, communication, ethical decision-making, and negotiation skills. During my undergraduate experience, I planned MTSU's Homecoming and started an annual philanthropy event for my sorority that has raised significant funds for Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) and received two university awards, which sparked my passion for bringing people together through events.

My graduate program is helping me build on those experiences by teaching me how to lead teams, empower others, and approach challenges with a strategic mindset. These skills directly

connect to my goal of pursuing corporate event planning, where collaboration, organization, and relationship-building are essential. MTSU's connection to Nashville and Middle Tennessee also provides a valuable environment for developing professional relationships and learning about opportunities in the event industry. In the long term, I hope to use the experience I gain to open an event venue in Middle Tennessee where people can gather and create meaningful experiences. My program is giving me the foundation to connect my passion for events with the business and leadership knowledge needed to make that goal achievable. Ultimately, I am learning how to turn the initiative and creativity I developed through undergraduate organizations into a career that combines leadership, event planning, and community-building

