

## **FIVE WITH A FALCON: Julia Grace Ducharme, English Studies and Secondary Education (ENGL '26)**

[ *Five With* theme begins ]

**McKenzie Calvao (host):**

Could you introduce yourself for the podcast?

[ 19sec ]

**Julia Grace Ducharme (ENGL '26):**

Hi, my name is Julia Graves. I'm a junior here at the university and I'm an English secondary education major.

**McKenzie (host):**

Awesome. Yeah. So tell us about your career at FSU?

[ *Five With* theme fades out ]

**Julia:**

Yeah, all good things. I just recently have presented at the Undergraduate Research Conference. So that was pretty exciting. Um, I was working with my professors and a couple of other people on a presentation around banned books in America and Robert Cormier, who's also an alumni of Fitchburg State.

So that was a really great experience. Um, I've also recently joined SEAM, which is a club for young future teachers. So Definitely had quite the career at the university thus far.

[ 54sec ]

**McKenzie (host):**

Yeah, so where do you find a sense of belonging at Fitchburg?

**Julia:**

I worked in athletics on campus, um, I was an announcer, so anytime you probably went to a sporting event and you heard, welcome to the University of Pitchfork State, that was me.

I really enjoyed working with my coworkers, they were really lovely, um, and I found a lot of sense of community there. I'd say no longer working with them, but these days now, it's honestly with the people in my major, we're a pretty small major, pretty small cohort, um, and I've gotten really lucky with those guys, like.

Make it feel like home. They're like a second family when there's eight of you in a class, right? It's pretty hard to not show up because you have people who are like really holding you accountable But you do get to really build a genuine connection, which is really great and when

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it comes to something like teaching where You know, you're constantly being critiqued, right?

Whether that's good or bad, um, having a group of people who is small and intimate, but also that you trust is super great too, because, uh, you know, that that advice is coming from like a good place and it's not coming from a person who like has no idea who you are or like has never heard of you before.

Like it's being delivered to you with love. And it also allows you to build good relationships with faculty, which. I think I've gotten really lucky at my time here, especially with English, like everyone is really great

*[ 2min 5sec ]*

**McKenzie:**

Yeah, that's fantastic. So what has your greatest accomplishment been here so far?

**Julia:**

I'd say still standing here. I had a pretty rough go academically, like towards the end of my freshman year, early sophomore year, and Um, first generation college student as well, so navigating, I think, the college life was probably like the toughest thing I've had to deal with thus far. And I think, like, imposter syndrome is so real, I, I think, like, making myself feel like I belong here has been, um, my biggest achievement.

I know like a lot of people struggle with it, but I think it's just like one of those things you don't talk about.

**McKenzie (host):**

So in what ways have you grown or transformed during your time at Fitchburg?

*[ 2min 46sec ]*

**Julia:**

I would definitely say I am more of an effective communicator now than I've ever been in education. Like I said, you know, you're constantly kind of like, Working with your peers, trying to be better.

Working with faculty, trying to be better. So, I think I'm definitely a better person. I think I'm definitely a better teacher. I'd like to think so. Um, but a lot of that is, is really just like getting positive feedback from the people around me. Or just getting feedback, period. Um, getting to work really closely with faculty as well has been super helpful.

*[ theme music fades in ]*

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**Julia:**

And also just, you know, being in a new community, going to colleges is different. It's like a new experience. Most people have never had. So I've definitely gotten a lot better with managing my money. I've got a lot better about being independent. I think it's really made me a more accountable person.

**McKenzie (host):**

Awesome. Yeah. Thank you so much for being here.

**Julia:**

Thank you!

[ 3min 37sec ]

[ *Five With* theme fades out ]

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[ *Perseverantia* network theme fades in ]

**Nick Castillo (student):**

This is Nick Castillo, a lead tour guide in the Admissions Office. And you're listening to the Perseverantia Podcast Network at Fitchburg State University.

[ *Perseverantia* network theme fades out ]