

FIVE WITH A FALCON: Annabella Valle, Theater & Film/Video Production (COMM '25)

[Five With a Falcon theme fades in]

McKenzie Calvao (Host): If you could, could you please introduce yourself for the podcast?

Annabella Valle: My name is Annabella Valle. I'm a junior year film student. I have a double concentration in film and theater. I'm originally from Braintree, Massachusetts, and this is my first time ever on a podcast. So pretty exciting.

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McKenzie: Awesome. All right. So if you could, could you tell us about your career at FSU?

Annabella: So I decided to come to Fitchburg because it wasn't so far from home and had the only public film program in New England that I could research, at least, and it was a small community, so I had more opportunity to rise up, and once I got here, I kind of fell in love with it.

The film program is amazing. It's immediately hands on, and the professors are all experienced and kind people who actually care about what you do in your career. Around my sophomore year, I decided to claim my double concentration in theater. And that was also one of the best things I've done for myself here.

The two professors, Kelly and Mary, are amazing people and they helped me so much, not just in my film career, but in my acting career as well. And even in my personal life, they're great.

McKenzie: Yeah, that's awesome. Okay. So where do you find a sense of belonging at Fitchburg, do you think?

Annabella: So I've been a member of the dance club since I was a freshman. I take six classes right now. I have taken 10. The dance club was the best thing ever here. The people in the dance club are my best friends. I spend so much time with everyone there. It's like a sense of family. We just like mess around in class and we have a recital and we get to dress up and perform at our recital and it's absolutely amazing and it's not so serious to where it's so stressful but it's not so silly to where no one's getting anything done.

It's a perfect balance and yeah, the dance club here is amazing.

McKenzie: That's fantastic. So, what is your greatest accomplishment been here so far?

Annabella: My greatest accomplishment, I would say, has been teaching at the dance club. I teach two classes. It's my first time teaching outside of my hometown studio. So, I balance that as well as all of my theater stuff, as well as all my film classes.

And that has been difficult, but I'm proud of myself for doing it. And I think every student here can relate. It gets so busy, especially as a film student.

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You just are constantly in meetings, constantly doing everything. And it's really challenging, so I'm proud of myself. And it's been a big accomplishment for me.

And also finding out exactly what I wanted to do in my career. The professors have helped me a lot to navigate what I wanted to do. Because film is so broad, how do you narrow it down to just one thing, just two things. So they really helped me think of how I'm going to succeed the farthest in my career.

And because it's such a small campus here, it's great. They, there's so many opportunities for you to grow as a person.

McKenzie: So, in what ways have you grown or transformed in your time at Fitchburg?

Annabella: So like I said, obviously it's been great to figure out what I wanted to do in my career. That's been a big part and just lessening my anxiety levels.

But also I have taken advantage of the counseling services here and obviously that just makes you grow so much as a person and getting therapy and improving yourself and staying consistent with therapy. I've grown a lot. and college in general. It just really helps you grow up and your emotional maturity levels, your thinking, your independence, everything.

You just become a real person. And I've just grown and found exactly who I am and what kind of people I want in my life and what I want to do in my life and what makes me happy.

And you will learn all about yourself when you're put on your own. So. Yeah, I've grown a lot at Fitchburg.

McKenzie: Awesome, yeah. And is there anything else that you want to add or say about your time at Fitchburg, about anything you want to shout out, anything you want to add?

Annabella: I'll shout out a little bit more about the theater program here. The theater program here is very small, but it's super impactful. And there's not only just acting, there's stage combat, and there's different programs for technical theater majors, and I feel like it needs more attention for sure. You get to work with different types of people and challenge yourself, and it's great, and I wish more people could put themselves in there, even if they're not interested in theater.

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You just learn so much as yourself. It helps with public speaking It helps with coordinating and memorization and time management so I hope that the theater program gets more attention.

McKenzie: Absolutely. Awesome. Okay. Thank you so much for being here and thank you for listening.

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Annabella: Thanks for having me.

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Geybrell Liriano: This is Geybrell Liriano, a sophomore at Fitchburg State University, and you're listening to *Perseverantia*, the Fitchburg State Podcast Network.

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