

Francesca Romano '16 (MS)

Degree: Master's in data science

Data science area of concentration:

Computation and statistical methods

Hometown: Rotterdam, New York

When Francesca Romano was an undergraduate at Siena College, she majored in math, with a minor in computer science.

"The thing I loved about math, the thing that drew me to it, was using my problem-solving skills and applying them to all kinds of problems," she says.

Data science seemed to her the best way to continue to do that. This spring, the Rotterdam, New York, native is earning her master's degree in the field.

"It's made me confident in my analytic and programming abilities. Everything that we're learning, we can apply to all sorts of different problems—health care, market research. It's a really diverse degree."

Although opportunities are plentiful, job hunting can actually be tricky, she says. While a lot of employers are realizing they need to hire people to help them make data-driven decisions, they're not yet experienced in how to describe what they're looking for. "I had to be creative in seeing what companies are calling these positions," she says.

Her creativity has paid off. She's accepted a position in cardiovascular services at Ellis Hospital in Schenectady, New York, where she'll be analyzing data from cardiovascular patients to identify trends or patterns that may be useful to the hospital in providing care.

"Society is becoming more and more tech-savvy and technologically advanced," she says. "We're collecting massive amounts of data, from phones, from everything we buy online, and more. Even if you're not totally aware of what data science is and how it applies to you, I think it's important to know that it's become an important part of business and decision making."

One thing Romano particularly likes about Rochester's program is the range of students. "I think it's been great that the first year they accepted people from so many different backgrounds," she says. "It's been really nice to see that everybody has a bit of a different strength—and that we can combine our strengths to accomplish something."

PROBLEM SOLVER: Romano says that data science draws on her problem-solving skills. "It's made me confident in my analytic and programming abilities. Everything that we're learning, we can apply to all sorts of different problems—health care, market research. It's a really diverse degree," she says.

