Choose Your Own Adventure: BDIC's Jack Monaco Edition
What does it mean, to be part of the BDIC program? For BDIC alumni Jack Monaco, it meant proving to himself what he really wanted to do with his life. Always passionate about theatre and English, Monaco hadn’t fully committed himself until he chose to use both disciplines to build his own major: screenwriting.

Since graduating from UMass in 1989, Monaco has gone on to be nominated for two Daytime Emmy Awards for his work in *R.L. Stine’s The Haunting Hour* and a Writers Guild America Award for his work in *Pushing Daisies*. Over the course of his career, Monaco has worked on numerous dozens of projects, including *Star Trek: Voyager* and *The Lion Guard* (the latter of which takes place in the same universe as *The Lion King*).

Being part of the BDIC program proved to Monaco that screenwriting is something he is truly interested and invested in. That was the biggest piece of wisdom Monaco gave to fellow BDIC students who attended his lecture: BDIC helps each of its students discover that this is what they want to do with their lives.

What does it mean, to be part of the BDIC program? For Professor Martin Norden, a faculty supervisor for BDIC, it means exploring the intersections of traditional majors, where he believes some of the most interesting scholarship is happening.

“Years ago, there was a student I knew who wanted to be a medical illustrator. And she knew that there was no one major on this campus that would fulfill that interest. As I recall, she drew courses from art, zoology, biology, equine studies... and it was quite successful!”

A faculty member of the UMass Communication Department for 41 years, Professor Norden began sponsoring students within BDIC in the early 1980s, and has always believed in BDIC’s mission.

“There are a lot of students who can see that what they want to do, for their own growth as a human being, is not limited to any one...
department. They want to cross disciplines and draw from different worlds to create their own major, and the BDIC program allows them to do that.”

For more information on the BDIC program and application process, click here.

Photography by Jediah Zuraw-Friedland.