



Photo courtesy of Molly Yamanaka

## Recess Requirements

By Julie Cordova

I am enrolled as a student for one simple reason: to earn a degree. There are a plethora of universities and colleges that I could have attended, sure, and there are also several colleges within this university I could have attended, but I chose The Women's College for very specific reasons. One, as a college within the University of Denver my degree will have a fabulous reputation behind it, and, for another, the weekend format fits my busy lifestyle. Did the fact that it is a women's college play a part of my decision? You bet it did!

I like the idea of attending class with other women who have full lives. Who better to understand my struggle to balance family, other commitments, and school? These women also come to class with plenty of diverse histories and life experiences that make them broader-minded students. I believe they also have a little more passion for education than a student attending an accelerated technical school, hoping to learn as little as possible to get a degree, because being a student is so much more than printing out syllabi, attending classes, and scurrying to finish homework. At least it can be. It can be a shared experience. It can be enjoyable, and it can be chock full of good memories.

It all depends on what you require of your educational experience. I know that it seems that every one else but the student plays a role in defining the requirements necessary to get a degree. I mean it begins with the employers. Many employers define the requirements for their job opportunities and most of the time the higher paid positions require applicants to have a degree.

The universities or colleges that offer degree programs define the requirements needed to earn those degrees. Once enrolled in classes, professors and administrators define the requirements of the course work. However, there is one way you, the student, can require something very personal of your educational journey, and that way means being involved in extra clubs and organizations on campus.

For me, getting together with students outside of normal school work is akin to recess. I may not want to play hopscotch, jacks, or climb the jungle gym anymore, but I still like to play. Life is full of commitments and duties and often times we get so involved in fulfilling these commitments and duties that we forget to play, or we try to play with our friends and family at home parties or at local night spots on an off weekend. But "playing" with friends and family in our Bronco groups, or at our Pampered

Chef parties, or at our local wine-tasting events is more akin to hanging out with our buddies after school than it is to recess.

When we were kids, recess afforded us a time to unwind with the same cohorts that suffered through the shared experience of an exam or with the ones that understood how hard the last reading assignment was to finish, or the ones that helped us learn fractions. Recess was a vital part of our elementary school survival. Recess today is no different. Recess is still vital to our survival. Today, as an adult student, I still want to unwind with my cohorts. These are the ones that understand my plight to find more time to study, more time to unwind, and more time to sleep. I want to unwind with someone who can demonstrate that there is life after Spanish II and one that can convince me that I will learn math, that I can learn math, and perhaps even like it.

Sure we have our weekend lunches to visit with fellow students and laugh, but these lunches aren't recess anymore than our lunches were recess when we were eight. We wanted recess! That break between one required subject and another. That break in our day of sitting still and being good little girls and boys. That break that allowed us to run and scream and let loose our pent up energy. Fifteen minutes between classes used to be all we needed but now we require more time for recess because life requires more time from us.

For me, it just isn't enough to attend class after class and be a student at The Women's College without being a part of The Women's College community. I write for *The Weekender*. I host a talk show on KVDU Internet radio. I am a member of the Writers Club. I attend as many extra events offered on campus as I can, and soon I hope to become a member of Lambda Pi Eta Honor Society.

Now it may seem like a lot to do, and I miss a lot of the events offered on campus, and, sure, I've missed some club meetings, but that's okay. I am still a part of these groups. I am still enjoying enough recess with other students that the memories of my experience here at DU will be rich and full. I am still defining the requirements I have for my college experience.

Even if the only recess you allow yourself is to be a protégé in the mentoring program, then that is okay. Mentors have experienced and surpassed what we are experiencing now. So recess with them is quite different than recess with current students, but it is still a whole lot of beneficial fun. I've had two mentors with the program: Mary Rogacki and Janet St. John. My life has

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# Words to Live By

Editor's note: "Words to Live By" quotations are contributed by Debra Graham and featured in each issue of *The Weekender*.

*"It is never too late to be what you might have been."*

George Eliot

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*Connections - continued from page 5*

evolved several times since I first became a student, and these women helped me stay on my journey and helped me enjoy the struggle. Having a mentor is like having someone at the end of a long, dark tunnel holding up a lantern and a sign that reads, "You can make it, I did, and I'm waiting for you here on the other side!"

It makes walking that tunnel less ominous and less of a struggle. But it doesn't take away the frustration I feel when I am trying to juggle more homework and group projects into an otherwise full schedule. No, there is only one thing that helps ease that burden because being involved in a group on campus lights your

way through the tunnel, and with that light it is easy to see you are not walking that tunnel alone.

So, go ahead, take charge, define your requirements for being a student, and start filling your mind with more than just knowledge. Discover recess, and fill your mind with laughter, fun, and camaraderie. ■

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*Sisterhood - continued from page 10*

Gloria Kemp's life was rich and varied, and full of surprises. It occurred to me that was also true for every one of the alumna who attended that reunion and shared snapshots of their lives as young women, perhaps suspending the years between their past and present, if only for a short while.

It also occurred to me that the time I spent at Colorado Women's College was not really lost to me as I thought it had been, that it did have value, and had become an intrinsic part of who I am now. Had I not been given the opportunity to become a part of CWC's alumnae reunion, I might have kept my own memories of those days buried deep in some corner; I would never have felt the warmth and validation of their sisterhood.

Times have changed, and certainly the backgrounds of the women who attend The Women's College today are not the same as the alumnae of Colorado Women's College. Most of us have

careers, families, and a history of experiences that have already colored our lives. In the final analysis, I believe we want essentially the same things for ourselves as they did: a better future, a sense of personal accomplishment, finding a place in our communities, and sharing what we learn with the next generation.

Each student will remember her experiences at TWC differently. Hopefully, together we will carry on the essence of this community and, like our predecessors, keep the spirit alive. ■

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