

Why College Is Important to Me

By Megan Woelkers

I imagine high school like a hole in the ground. Students must fill this hole with knowledge and experience in order to function in society, but after the work is done there is a choice to move onto greener pastures. However, during this season at school, students plant seeds—opportunities that will not blossom immediately, but could come to fruition in future years.

I imagine college is those future years. It may not happen immediately, but college is a river of knowledge, a place of enlightenment, and for those willing to pursue their passions, a sanctuary to grow upon. With time, care, and curiosity, the seedling will sprout, laying forth an exciting new world full of possibilities, opportunities, growth, and discovery.

As a high school student, I have constantly absorbed and echoed the opinions of mentors and peers. The close-knit community around me, although comforting at times, only provides one lens in which to view the world. In college that will change. I crave to challenge my beliefs and redefine my thoughts with students from world-wide communities. In this collaborative environment of contrast, opinions are independently forged and braced until another original idea restarts the process. This constant creative cycle pushes everyone to advance their understanding together.

The ability to think differently feeds into another significant factor of college: learning. I anticipate courses consisting of deep dives into specific concentrations rather than broad overviews of an entire field of study. My interest in molecular biology was sparked through my AP Biology class but gained momentum over a summer internship on environmental science at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography. It was there that I experienced one such deep-dive, where I collaborated with graduate students to analyze carbon emissions data and presented it to the U.S. Representatives in hopes of sparking policy change. While working beside the college students, I was immersed in a learning environment driven by passion, enthusiasm, and a desire to help the world—an environment in which I

want to contribute and inspire. Studying a specific area of interest fueled my desire to understand the relationship between molecules and the environment, and this passion made my education meaningful.

Learning from classes and lectures is crucial, but the most arduous yet fulfilling part of college is discovering how to use this newfound knowledge to make a positive impact on the surrounding communities. I have aspirations to study molecular biology with the intention to find solutions to modern problems like ocean acidification and increasing atmospheric carbon emissions.

College is important to me because it is an opportunity to think differently, learn ardently, and grow freely. It provides a trellis to support my upward climb for knowledge, but ultimately it is my decision in which direction I take. The possibilities are infinite and beautiful. Most of all, college is my commitment to use my education alongside equally inspired people to leave the world in a better state than we inherited it.