

Why College is Important to Me
by Julia Allen

It was a crisp Friday morning when my mother, sixteen year old sister, and I pulled into the campus parking lot of SUNY Geneseo. College-bound and anxious, the trip was for my sister, Stephanie, who will face the application process next fall. To many of my freshmen classmates, post high school plans are distant and unmade. While I, too, have little idea where I will attend school and what my major will be, my pursuit to make college an influential learning experience is already underway through my rigorous academics, extracurricular activities, and active participation in creative writing endeavors.

As we took a campus tour and filed through the academic facilities, it became obvious that college is not simply a school, but a distinct lifestyle for each student. The ability to create a study with discipline and challenge is embraced; this will be vital for my training in whatever occupation I choose to pursue. The most fundamental purpose of higher education is to prepare for a successful career following graduation. My immediate intention for college is to gain this required knowledge. I know that with this understanding will flourish other abilities such as time management and working with others, values which I am excited to improve.

At Geneseo, flags of the countries their students have studied in decorate the entry of the student life center, creating mixtures of vivid, noticeable colors. When students entered the center, their eyes not only came upon my passing tour, but the brilliant red that is the Chinese flag, Greece's blue, and many other hues. Cultural experiences in college, whether gained by studying abroad or interacting with foreign students attending US schools, are ones I readily embrace since I have done little traveling in my life. Familiarity with others, their countries, and their beliefs will prove to be essential no matter what major and ultimate occupation I pursue.

On campus grounds across the country, there are fixtures of colleges that personalize student life. Some have radio stations and excel in community service, while others enjoy specialized sports or unique traditions. Taking note of Geneseo's several stages; I walked with enthusiasm imagining myself reciting poetry to an interested assembly of students. Colleges have the resources for students to benefit from non-traditional forms of learning while exploring their own inner beings. It is a dimension to my secondary education that I am very enthusiastic about encountering, as I find exploring new interests crucial in self-discovery.

Our tour of SUNY Geneseo strategically concluded in the main dining hall quite a distance from the admissions office. The aroma of soups and coffee for the height of lunchtime visitors crawled into my senses reminding me of the several miles we had walked. Students enveloped hundreds of tables consumed in textbooks, laptops, and one another. College's life and prospect pulsated within, a visual reminder of how college, in fact, is essential to a being's future. It won't be long until I sit among them.