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Reflection Spring 2017

Many elements of CEP make me feel fortunate to have chosen this path. CEP gives students the opportunity to pursue their passions, take responsibility for their education, develop a community, experience self governance, and much more.

Taking responsibility for one's education seems like an obvious concept but it is not a reality for many students. For many students, the classes they are in is strictly dictated by the major they are in, and they are often surrounded by a sea of strangers. On top of that, the content is often passed to students didactically, significantly reducing the level of engagement and interest students feel towards the content. This traditional education has its merits but can begin to put out the intellectual fire that students have for learning. I am thankful that I was able to recognize that my fire was being put out by classes that I wasn't inspired or stimulated by during my freshman year. Recognizing this, while simultaneously taking CEP200, set me on a path towards a fulfilling educational experience.

The CEP curriculum opens with 301, The Idea of Community. This has been one of the most interesting classes that I have taken throughout my college experience. This *philosophy of community* gave me new ways to look at the world in its current and historical context. For the first time in my college experience, I was inspired and dedicated to completing the readings. Part of that is because it is nearly impossible to participate in class without reading them. The other part is that the discussions were so intriguing and thoughtful that you would want to be prepared enough to participate. Although articulating what I had learned in the class was more difficult than explaining what I learned in a biology class, for example, I had never felt more intellectually stimulated in a class, largely due to the discussion foundation of the class.

This discussion element that is continuous throughout the CEP curriculum is something that makes me thankful for choosing the path that I did. I am so much more engaged in what I learn because of how I learn it and why I learn it. Of course, it is more difficult to have a deep discussion about calculus, and that is not necessarily the point of calculus. But being able to identify what fields of study make me happy and be able to intentionally pursue those fields is something that I am fortunate to be able to do.

My boyfriend who took a STEM path is always surprised by how much I like school, how involved I am, how close of a community I have, and how fulfilling my education is. I owe much of this to CEP. With CEP's mantra of being in control of your education through intentionality, I have been given the flexibility to pursue classes that keep me engaged, and that contribute to a larger goal that I have identified and devised how to get there. Not only do I feel prepared for the workforce in terms of my knowledge and skills, but I also feel prepared to make big life changes and overcome hardships, because of the interpersonal skills and strong support group that I have come out of CEP with.

Perhaps my favorite thing about CEP is the quality of students in the community. I love that every person brings their own unique strengths to the table. I especially love how active people in the CEP community are on and off campus. CEP attracts leaders, change makers, and overall passionate people. Our diversity in skills and interests, combined with our shared sense of leadership make us a powerful group. CEP shows that we value these qualities by allotting time for announcements every Friday in governance. It is amazing how much time announcements take because of how many awesome things students are a part of. The things that my peers have accomplished and are going to accomplish is inspiring and I am so proud to be surrounded by them. Not only is there a time and place to share our projects and passions, but there is also a receptive community to support you through these accomplishments.

Announcement time is filled with rounds of applause, impressed gasps, and smiles. Students mark their calendars to witness their peers in action and those who could not make it are excited to hear about how it went. This kind of support is largely due to the size of our cohort and how often we see each other. This kind of support system is not common in majors across campus and I am continuously reminded of that when I speak with friends about their majors. Many of them do not even know how many people are in their cohort and haven't had the opportunity to build such a strong and supportive network.

Being involved and active is something I admire in others and is something my own happiness is influenced by. I remember being repelled by extra curricular activities in high school. I wanted to spend as little time as possible at school and around my peers. Much of this speaks to how unengaging high school is and my own teen angst. I am glad that as soon as I entered college, I grew to love being involved on and off campus. I believe valuing being involved is one of the most important things anyone can take away from college. Once people leave academia, the obvious queues to get involved in your community fade away, making it more difficult to be an active citizen and be a part of communities around you. Not having the experience of being brave and seeking out communities that you want to be a part of in college can make trying to do so in the real world seem very intimidating and unattractive. The biggest thing I would change about my college experience is being even more active on campus. Although I was fairly active throughout my time in various clubs and projects, there are just so many awesome clubs, programs, and people around campus that I would have liked to have more time to interact with such as the Student Food Coop, the Vietnamese Student Association, and the Campus Sustainability Fund. I appreciate the UW for providing so many resources and being home to all of these great clubs and projects, and I particularly appreciate CEP for attracting so many active students. Perhaps one other thing I would change about my

experience is taking more advantage of governance. My time could have been used more productively by being more intentional with what I wanted to accomplish and by trying out more committees. Trying more committees would have allowed me to develop stronger relationships with my classmates and gain more skills since each committee offers its own experiences and challenges.

All in all, if I could do it all over again I would. Not because I would go back and change things, but because I had the most rewarding, interesting, positive, supportive, and inspiring educational I could have ever imagined with CEP. Although it saddens me to leave this way of life, I can leave happy knowing that the CEP family will always be there and that we are all going off to do great things (where we will try to incorporate as many CEP elements into what we do as possible, whether our new circles are ready for it or not).