

College is Exhausting

Thank you for that introduction/Hi I'm AnnaMarie McCorvie, the student body president that none of you voted for.

It is my honor to welcome you to our beautiful campus. Whether you are beginning your college experience here or giving it a second go, I am filled with excitement for you and this college journey that you've begun.

I don't want to begin with some cliché that you might have heard in high school, about how the world is your oyster or how your whole life is ahead of you, but there is something about being in college that makes it feel precisely that way. Like every single door is open for you, no matter how many mistakes you make or what obstacles you might face. Rationally, we know that the barriers of socio-economics, race, gender, sexuality, and ability matter still in this world and because we all come from different backgrounds, we will face different challenges at Whitman too. Being here does not protect us from the hate, violence, and inequalities that plague our nation today but the magic of college is that those things sometimes seem small next to the immense opportunity laid out in front of us. At Whitman, we gain the knowledge and skills to be able to tackle all those problems our predecessors have left for us, but faced with those challenges and possibilities, I want to make a plug for taking naps.

My first year at Whitman, I learned something new every single hour, and though it was occasionally about macroeconomics or Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* I spent the vast majority of my time learning about myself. Epiphanies about how I wanted to develop my friendships, about what was important to me, and about who I was becoming, were constant. I thought I knew a lot about myself as a first year student: I knew I was a Coloradan and a sister. I knew I loved activism and children's TV. But in my first year here, I learned the things about myself that come a little harder. In college I have been faced with the kind of hard decisions that have forced me to reckon with my own values. I have had to figure out how AnnaMarie responds to stress, to betrayal, to anger, to love, to joy, and to excitement. And all of that was exhausting but there is no substitution for getting to know yourself. No way around it. You will do so much learning here, in and outside of the classroom, but this particular piece of the puzzle, figuring out who you are, is more important than all of it—if we are even going to begin to consider tackling global climate change and growing wealth inequality and a whole host of other overwhelming issues. E. E. Cummings said that "it takes courage to grow up and become who you really are" and Spongebob Squarepants said "If I've learned anything, it's that you are who you are. And no

amount of mermaid magic... or managerial promotion... or some other third thing... can make me anything more than what I really am inside.” And they were both right, the years we spend here deciding how we will care for our people, when we will choose to pull away, and how we will have hard conversations, they take a lot of bravery. But it also takes a lot of time and energy to do all that growing— at least as much as we spend struggling through homework or with our teammates in the gym or in senate working on student government legislation. And this? This is where naps come in.

Naps should be 15 to 20 minutes, but sometimes they have to be 2 hours, because of circadian rhythms or rem cycles or the moon or something. I do the thing where I take a shot of espresso and then take a nap, because you can sleep while the caffeine kicks in and wake up feeling like a superhero! I suggest napping in your bed when you can because it can be a little disorienting to wake up, drool caked on your chin and hair ruffled, lying under a table in the dining hall but you gotta do what you gotta do. I know that I can't stop some of you from spending your nights in the library, but just like your RAs I'm looking to mitigate risky behaviors here so just take a nap if you're going to do the all nighter thing okay? Nap when you get home from a class debate where you felt rage boiling up in your chest, nap when your stomach is full of butterflies before you go spend time with a new group of people that might go on to be your closest friends, and nap on lazy Sunday afternoons just because your homework can wait and brunch was so delicious.

You are going to need all the energy you can get to take on college, to write papers and conduct lab experiments and to figure out who the heck you are.

Best of luck to all of you, and congratulations on beginning your Whitman journey!