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Mission and Scope of the Student Journal

Culture Shock

“The creators, editors, and advisors of the journal have in mind to produce a collection of essays, poems, narratives, etc. that reflects students’ experiences adjusting (and not-adjusting) to the cultural climate at Gonzaga University. Submissions will be solicited throughout the campus and should encompass a diverse mosaic of creative, thought provoking, and inspiring material.”

It shall be left to the reader to decide whether we have fulfilled our goal. These pieces may resonate with your own experience, or clash markedly with everything you know of Gonzaga. They may demand careful reflection, or prompt instantaneous rejection.

Know only this: that here there be honesty. Here there be truth, though it be true only in the eyes of the one who first beheld Gonzaga in such a guise--as monster, or fair maiden; as stranger, or sweet sanctuary; as drunkard, or deeply sober. Here you will find the school seen through different eyes. Who sees most clearly? Who knows most truly?

Seek to discern, as is the Jesuit way. Look for the spirit of truth, or the deceiver. Listen to the promptings of your heart, and learn from that what direction we ought to take--we, a community mirroring the Church. Gonzaga Militant, Gonzaga Suffering, and Gonzaga Triumphant: the students at the school, the students just graduated, and the students long since gone, the alumni who descend every so often to bestow a building, an endowment, a scholarship, upon the school striving for graduation here below.

What do these stories tell us about ourselves, about this institution which has shaped our lives and continues to do so? How successful have we been at living our mission, at being the sorts of students, teachers, Catholics, Jesuits, humanists, humans that we can be proud of? How have we manifested the sort of Christly character we are committed to share? How have we done at loving our neighbor as ourselves, as our God loves us--that great key to forming any healthy human community? How have we done? Here’s one set of grades.

--Chris Sparks, Editor

Disinterest and Beer:

An All Too Prevalent Gonzaga Experience

Jourdan Cruz

This is not an attack, but a disenchanted observation. I once thought that in attending Gonzaga I would be intellectually challenged at every turn by my professors and peers. The professors have not let me down, but an overwhelming majority of the students have shown me an indifference to their own education that is matched only by their blind obsession with basketball and craving for an alcohol induced euphoric state of tumbles, laughs and heaves. I concede that I have not met everyone in the school--far from it, in fact. But I have spoken with many students and professors on this issue and perhaps some examples will shed some light on the less than impressive academic showing some of my peers have put on thus far.

In high school, my perception of college professors was daunting and imminently dim to say the least. I half expected to walk into class staring up at a robot that has devoted his or her entire existence to one area of expertise, demanding utmost obedience and perfection. This did not take into account the human aspect of any of my professors. They all want their students to do well and are passionate about the subjects they teach, or they wouldn't be here. The knowledge--and grades--the teachers give to students is not free, it costs about \$36,000 a year last time I checked and is steadily increasing. Nor is it bestowed upon adolescents with no stake in their own education. It is not spoon-fed like in elementary and high school but rather earned, and earned by adults ready to work for it. One professor gave the opportunity to raise test scores by two percent given that the student visits the professor during office hours to review each test. This professor disclosed that it is in fact the students who receive B's and A's that go in to review the test rather than those who need it the most. I was dumbfounded at the lack of interest that the majority of students, who do not actually get the above average grades, show towards one of the categorically rare complimentary contributions to better grades that a professor decides to give. This leads me to my first example: those students who are not in the "upper" echelons of academia are not there specifically because of a lack of effort or interest.

I applaud those students who are making ends meet all while meeting expectations and making it through this place. I also wish to commend those students who participate in the habitual process of self motivated learning and the uncommon task of venturing into the supernatural realm of exceeding what is necessary to pass a course. It is not these students that have ruffled my feathers enough to cause me to write this article. It is the students who could easily be pulling a 3.7 or higher but instead have chosen to go to class every so often and hit the house parties more frequently than sit down and complete assignments. Perhaps they do turn in all of their work, but it is worth it to finish homework or write a speech with a hangover? Is it even possible to do a job worthy of pride? Maybe I am over-reacting and finishing a speech outline or writing a paper with a beer in one hand is an effortless task. I have not challenged myself in that way, nor held myself to those kinds of standards. Instead of just taking a shot at the students, why not try my hand at putting some heat on the administration?

Gonzaga wants us to be inspired and to find our passion. This can be known by the myriad of signs plastered around campus, half of which are falling off and the other half are yearning for the same undesirable fate. The signs, more importantly, are easily categorized as an epic fail. I see that many of the students have no passion to inspire themselves. I gleaned this from one of my peers critiquing a professor for not inspiring her enough. If I had the mindlessness to come up with such a comment, let alone the gall to write it on a teacher's evaluation form, I might agree with her. Certain students have been lulled into a falsely secure illusion that the professors' job is to mystically create a world of education that is free of student involvement. The administration may have to answer for this by holding students to a higher standard of scholarly demeanor, including attendance and even a tougher curriculum. A less lackadaisical attendance policy would increase student awareness of the importance of class and would eliminate the waste of someone's \$36,000. The stronger the curriculum, the less likely kids are to blow off studying in exchange for keg cups and sweet jell-o shots. If anything, it would weed out many of the students who are less than willing to pull their weight in class. Both courses of action would create a more prestigious university with an elevated academic atmosphere. Isn't that what Gonzaga claims to be: a top tier university? This is what I thought before coming, and why my notions of college were torn apart by the very prevalent culture of apathy and the devastating fear of being labeled as someone who "studies too much", especially

when the alcohol is flowing or when it is game time.

If you wish to comment on my views, or just tell me to get off my high horse and relinquish the keys to my ivory tower, please do so in email at jcruz3@gonzaga.edu. Please make the responses intelligible, and try not to further my point by saying that I am taking school too seriously or that I am just racking on those who like to have fun. Those are useless arguments because students should be here to learn how to produce in a business world that does not have a lenient attendance policy nor tolerates lax to non-existent work ethics, not to drink or yawp barbarically during games.

Not in Idaho Anymore

Kim Sather

What would my roommate act like? What would be her name? What would she look like? Would she like me? These questions were not causing me anxiety as I started my first day at Gonzaga University. I knew exactly what my roommate would be like. I knew that her name was Erin. I knew that she had light brown hair and big blue eyes that made me extremely jealous. And, I knew she would more than like me. She was my sister; she had to love me. I was living with my sister, and I was going to school like I had done for the past twelve years of my life. Nothing could go wrong, or so I thought.

The only problem was that this was like no school that I had ever attended. I should have realized that this graduation to a higher level of education would not be like the others. The American school system had attempted to prepare me for this transition but with no success. It had eased me into the scarier parts of school, started me out with a year of half days in Ms. Epling's kindergarten class before sending me into the harsh world of full days and eating lunch in the cafeteria. But it hadn't prepared me for moving to Gonzaga where I would encounter a whole new culture full of professors, thousands of kids I didn't know, and fears associated with a big city—well, big compared to my hometown of three thousand people.

In the town of St. Maries, Idaho, nearly every single person knows every other person by name, knows where everyone works, knows where everyone lives, and knows everyone's dogs' names. I was used to being in a classroom of kids I knew. In St. Maries, I had gone to kindergarten with everyone I graduated with twelve years later. I had grown up with them; I watched our valedictorian eat paste when she was six years old.

Now, I suddenly had to worry about making friends and what the people I met would think of me when I told them I was from a town that prided itself on being a logging community and showed that pride with a twelve foot tall lumberjack in the middle of town right on Main Street. The first conversation with every kid was the same: where are

you from, what's your major, and what dorm do you live in, and usually after I explained that I did not live on campus, the conversation was finished. We could not continue by talking about the crazy water balloon battle the boys on the third floor started last night or the girls at the end of the hall who would not stop fighting; my mind would become a complete blank with no conversation topics in sight, and we would both become awkwardly silent. All I could think was that awkward small talk with my neighbor before class was not even close to the twelve year friendship I had with my friends back home.

I could not look to my right and see my best friend since the first grade and know she was thinking the exact same thing, holding her laughter in just like I was about our teacher saying "asymptote". All I saw when I looked around the classroom was a bunch of freshmen who were all chatting away without me. Before long, I came to the realization it was going to take a lot of small talk and some effort to make close friends.

And then, class would begin and my worries would turn to the lack of chemistry I was finding with my professors. At home, not only did my teachers remember teaching my older sisters, but most of them also remembered teaching my dad and all my aunts and uncles, and they probably saw my grandparents once a week at church or at the Elks Lodge. I did not have to worry about making sure I made a good impression on the first day of school; my family had been doing it for me for the past forty years. All my teachers already knew me as one of the "Sather girls," a polite, shy, bright daughter of Russell Sather and granddaughter of Kay and Owen Sather. I recognized during my first week at Gonzaga this was no longer the case.

My professors did not even know how to pronounce my last name; I had entered a completely different environment. My professors had no idea what kind of person I was, how dedicated I was to my schoolwork, or that it took a while for me to come out of my shell, or that once I did they would wish they knew where I hid my mute button. I instantly missed that personal relationship I had with my teachers back home. During that first day of class, I just sat there praying the teacher would not call on me; I wrote down nearly every word my teacher said so I could avoid getting called on and making a fool of myself in front of my new classmates. My stomach dropped at every word that sounded remotely like Kim; if one of my professors did call on me, I knew whatever words I managed to get out would sound like gibberish because

of my nerves while my face would turn a deep shade of red and the room would suddenly feel twenty degrees hotter. It took forever to get through an hour of class, but it did not take long to grasp that Gonzaga did not resemble St. Maries in any way.

After each day of class, I would return to my little apartment full of hand-me-down furniture and tackle the new world I paid two hundred dollars a month to live in. It was not the responsibility of paying the rent and other bills every month that had me edgy; I was already used to being in charge of my own finances. It was just the little stuff that changed that I had not even thought would bother me. I had never realized how annoying the art of grocery shopping was, an art I have yet to perfect. My dad had always made sure we rarely ran out of anything, and when we did, I never took on the role of the one who traveled to one of our two grocery stores to make the purchase. Now, it seemed like every time I wanted something to eat the fridge and cupboards were as empty as my stomach.

And after one week away from home, there would be no question about what I thought the greatest invention was; the dishwasher will always win in my book. Somehow even though I never seemed to have any food to put on them, all the dishes were always dirty.

Besides worrying about the chores I now had to take care of, I also I had to worry about the fact that I no longer lived in a safe little town in Northern Idaho. I was not used to needing to lock the door or hearing the sirens that sang past my window at least twice a day. That first week I jumped at every little noise I heard when I tried to go to sleep at night. My first reaction was to blame one of my four cats, but then I remembered that they still lived in St. Maries, and a myriad of images raced through my mind of what horrible things could happen to me in this big city. My dad's delicious dinners, my noisy cats, and my uneventful town were things I began to put on a pedestal now that I was without them.

So, grocery shopping has replaced volleyball games, reminiscing with old friends has been traded for making new friends and new memories, and communicating with teachers through email has taken the place of chatting with teachers in the hallway. That first week of classes seemed to be the most nerve-racking and longest week of my life, but now that I am comfortable where I am at, I am sure my time at Gonzaga will be one of the most memorable experiences of my life, and I am sure

it will go by far too quickly. Before I know it, I will be applying for jobs and going to interviews wishing I could go back to being stuck in those classrooms for endless awkward hours. The change from high school to college caused me more stress than the switch from recess in elementary school to seven class periods in middle school, but it is something I learned a lot from. I have learned how much it takes to keep a house full of food and clean dishes, and I have learned the amount of energy it takes to make close friends. My first few months at Gonzaga showed me to never take a full fridge, a dishwasher, or a dear friend for granted.

Thank You, GU!

Gabi “Neni” Leite Soares

I started as a freshman at Gonzaga University in 2005. I had been in the States for a year when I began my college year here. As a 20 years old girl who carries a status as an “alien” on her visa, I was scared that I would not be able to adapt to college life in the States. I did not know what college is like in the States. I was sure it would be very different from college in back home. Although to many Americans, Gonzaga is considered as a small school, Gonzaga campus is considered huge to me.

I met many friends during orientation, some whom I am still very close with, some whom I exchange a nod or a smile when we pass each other on campus, and some whom all I could think of when I pass them is, “Wow. I can’t believe he and I were friends on Facebook once!” However, I think most people regardless of what their nationality is experience these feelings. They are part of life, especially college life. I am happy to say that now I have best friends and my own family here at Gonzaga University.

I have been touched by the support, help, love, and friendship that I have learnt since I came to Gonzaga. I believe I have changed a lot since I came to this country, especially since Gonzaga became part of my life. I have learnt about my strength, aspiration, and my passion.

Gonzaga allowed me to travel with other students through study abroad program. I would have definitely not been able to study abroad if Gonzaga had not agreed to support my decision to pursue this program. Just in the AD building/College Hall alone: from the top floor where my advisor’s office is located at, the second floor where the President’s and Vice President’s offices are, the first floor where office of student employment, financial aid, switchboard offices are, even to the basement where university relations and student account offices are, I always receive love and support from everyone here. If I am to list all of the people who have supported me here at Gonzaga, I am sure that I would be able to come up with at least two pages.

There are many definitions of home. To some people home is

the place where they were born. Some argue that home is where their families are. I have a wonderful family in the country where I come from. I also have wonderful friends who have become my own family here.

Even though I am carrying a visa to study in the States, even though I still have an accent whenever speaking in English, even though I have only been here for five year, there is never one single day where I feel out casted from this community. I love being a Zag because this is where I have learnt about my strength, aspiration, and my passion.

My point is everyone at Gonzaga has helped my transition as a fresh off the boat girl aka fob to a freshman in college and to a senior also the woman who I am today.

I am confident to graduate because I believe that with the education and experience I have learnt here including all the challenges, struggle, and joy, I am ready to be contributing my part to God, my family, my society, the world, and to myself.

Thank you-Obrigada-Arigatou/ありがとう—Merci.

Gabi “Neni” Leite Soares

Class of 2009

From: Timor Leste

Culture Shock

Madeline Edson

10th of January, 2009. Boarding the plane in Auckland, New Zealand, was one of the toughest experiences I have ever experienced in my 19 years. 20 hours later, arriving in Spokane, my life had been turned around. The milky piles of ghastly snow turned my face pale and set my body into shivers. The 28 degrees Celsius heat was nowhere to be felt, and my sun-kissed tan started to fade immediately. Not knowing a single soul, drawing attention to myself when I spoke, and jumping 10,822 kilometers out of my comfort zone gave me the most daunting feeling in my personal history. Culture shock is a prime word for my instant emotions.

Moving half-way across the world at 19, is not a normal journey for a young adult, but I thought of it as an 'adventure.' The culture shock affected me differently than I expected it to. Living in an unfamiliar environment, with unfamiliar faces, made me feel lost, but in the same way, taught me to be independent. Now, weeks later, I realize the experience gave me self esteem and taught me to be confident around others. But I still miss the view of the serene beach out my window, my lived-in bed, and finally my comfort zone.

Looking back at Tuesday the 12th of January, I remember the thought of moving into my dorm room made me feel sick in my stomach. Once I arrived at Madonna Hall, it was like reality hit and there was no going back. I thought to myself, "This is where I am going to live, sleep, and breath for the next five months." My feelings about having a roommate were unsettled. I was scared, nervous, excited and overwhelmed, all at the same time. I moped into the building, climbed to the third floor, and battled with myself to find room 329.

"Hi, my name is Courtney, nice to meet you."

"Hi, my name is Madeline, nice to meet you too," I replied.

The conversation was quiet, and a little awkward. Ten minutes later we had spilled our lives to one another and were acting as if we had been friends for years. Already, my homesick feelings were fading.

Still one of the hardest tasks to do when I arrived here was coming to terms with the fact that I knew no one. The first day of classes made me feel like a 5 year old starting kindergarten. I walked into room 245 of College Hall, overwhelmed with anxiety, and sat down as fast as I could. I had printed off a map of the campus and marked out my classes, minimizing my chances of being embarrassingly late to class whilst getting lost. My first day went by and I survived. I felt as if I had been away from home for months, but it had only been 96 exhausting hours. I went to tennis practice and before I knew it, my first day as a foreign freshman was thankfully over.

I soon realized that being on the tennis team would make it easier as it kept me busy and gave me a way to meet people. The intensity of my first practice shocked my body and led me to reflect on my decision to play college tennis. Conditioning, lifting, and practice were taken so seriously, which wasn't something that I was used to. Pushing myself in the gym, on court, and during sprints was definitely physically and mentally beneficial, not just to my game, but also how I coped with being away from home.

English is my first language; however, this is occasionally questioned by a few people, so speech diversity was definitely part of my culture shock. People regularly stare at me when I speak, blatantly wanting to know where I am from. After opening my mouth and saying New Zealand I receive various, but comical, responses. "Oh my gosh, New Zealand, that's where Lord of the Rings was filmed..." "I looovvee Flight of the Concorde" "That's like down under, right?" "Do you guys have McDonalds?" "Oh wow, is English your first language then?" The questions continue, and people always ask me to talk, just because they 'like the sound of my accent.' American colloquialisms and slang are also part of the culture shock I have experienced. Words that us 'kiwis' use are not necessarily used in the United States. Swimsuit (Togs), Trash (Rubbish), Candy (Lollies), Flip Flops (Jandals), and Sweatshirts (Jumpers), are all words that no one understands when I say them. The uniqueness of this is fun and amusing, as I know that I am something different; but also hard, because I want to fit in unnoticed, which can be difficult.

My first experience at the COG is one that will be with me forever. I had heard various opinions about the food; some said it would give me indigestion for hours after I have eaten, and others said it could be worse. I took the optimistic opinion and headed in with an open mind. The COG reminded me of the typical college movies, the

big rooms, the bulk food, and of course the different classed groups of people. I looked around at the hundreds of students, I saw the different status's that emerged from the crowds; the cool kids, the plastics, the jocks, the geeks, the norms and the loners; or a nicer term, the 'independent' ones. At that stage, I was a nobody. I didn't fit in to any of the above categories, other than the 'independent' ones. Soon enough, my first COG experience had come to an end and I hadn't received my indigestion yet, thankfully. The days flew by, the nights passed, and before I knew it, I had inserted myself into one of the categories at the COG: a norm.

Still, the variety in the food overwhelmed me. 'Down under,' we have no Cheetos, Reese's peanut butter cups, Kraft macaroni and cheese, Dr Pepper, and Hershey's chocolate. We also have no Taco Bell, Del Taco, Carl's Junior or Sonic. Trying to control myself from indulging constantly in American food was hard at first, but the novelty soon wore off. The flavors seemed delicious, but my taste buds soon rebelled and the fat content struck me like lightning. The weather has also been a huge shock to my body. Swimming at the beach on the 9th of January, and striding through piles of snow on the 10th stirred my emotions. Knowing that my 'mates' were at the beach sunbathing while I was swarmed with -7 degrees Celsius temperatures, was one of the hardest culture shocks I experienced. Being positive about the masses of snow was challenging but I soon realized that summer would come back around before long. Living 100 meters from the beach in New Zealand was definitely hard to leave behind. The purity of the beach was sometimes deserted, leaving me the only person to walk on the sand. It made me feel better about leaving home realizing, though, that the beach was never going to change in my lifetime.

Looking back, the airport terminal feels like a thousand years ago. When I go home, it will feel like I had never gone away. Making friends and becoming familiar with the environment made a huge impact on how I fit in. Experiencing extreme culture shock, and overcoming the fears, changed my personality and my outlook on life. At the end of the day, it's all just 'one big experience.'

It Seemed the Snow Would Never Stop: A Saudi's Experience of Culture Shock

Museb Alkhomshi

Culture shock is a common experience for most people who go to live in other countries for school, a job, for vacation, or any other reasons. All my Saudi Arabian friends studying in foreign countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, or England are experiencing culture shock. Some of them are having a culture shock with the change in weather. Others are having a culture shock with the way they communicate with native people. Many of my friends have said their culture shock is still going on, years after moving to a different country. My experience, on the other hand, only lasted a few months. When I first came to Spokane I definitely experienced culture shock because of the weather, the way Americans communicate, and the awkwardness of some social interactions.

First, the weather has been the biggest shock I experienced when coming to the United States in January of 2007, especially Spokane because there is so much snow in the winter. I absolutely was not used to the snow and was definitely not prepared for it when it came. There was snow everywhere, at least six inches, and it seemed the snow would never stop. Before coming to Spokane, I thought the weather in Saudi Arabia was cold in the winter, but after I came to Spokane, I realized that the weather in Saudi Arabia is extremely warm during all seasons. The snow in Spokane was also very shocking because I had never seen it before. I was really excited the first time I saw it, but as I began experiencing it more, I realized how unprepared I was for it. Driving in the snow was really hard for me, and I still haven't quite mastered the technique of it. I almost got into an accident because of the snow and the black ice. I knew that the weather in Spokane was cold in the winter, so I brought my warm clothes such as thick undershirts, sweatshirts and sweaters. These clothes make me warm in Saudi Arabia, but they did not work in Spokane. I had no idea what I was getting into and arrived unprepared. I even wore them when I first arrived, but they did not make me warm. I was sure they would work, since my cousins told me to bring all of my warm clothes. They didn't warn me well enough for what would happen. Honestly, I wasn't happy about the weather and felt like I'd made a mistake coming here.

In Saudi Arabia, the weather is generally variations of warm and hot, even in the winter, compared to most other places. This is because of how close the country is located to the equator. In the summer, temperatures can reach up to 118 degrees Fahrenheit in Saudi Arabia, which is so hot. People don't even going outside because they will get heat stroke, heat exhaustion, really bad sunburns or just horrible feelings from the extreme heat. Most people sit in their homes until the sun goes down or the weather is a little better. In fact, most people leave the country for the summer season because of the extremely high temperature. People always look for places where the weather is mostly colder. My family rarely stays in Saudi Arabia during the summer season, saving our "vacations" for that time. These vacations can last for up to three months. In fact, I can't even think of a summer I spent at home.

In Spokane, people love the hot weather because it is usually only 80 degrees or so. Actually, I have noticed people all over the United States are jealous of the really warm weather I live in, even people from the southern part of the country. They love their hot weather, but I don't think any of them have any idea what hot really is until they go to Saudi Arabia or neighboring countries. I have been all over the world, and I find the weather in the United States to be the most moderate. I wasn't expecting that at all. I have really enjoyed my summers here because I can go outside, play sports, go swimming or just walk around. The summers here are like the springs in Saudi Arabia. I feel active and always busy. I have come to enjoy the summer activities of the American culture in Spokane, such as camping, barbeques and going to the beach. I had never experienced a barbeque until I came here. In Saudi Arabia, if we cook outside, it's always kabobs. But here, people cook hamburgers and hotdogs. It seems there is a specific cuisine for eating at American barbeques. I was surprised that people here all know what is "expected" to be eaten at such gatherings. Also, these barbeques can be for special occasions, holidays or just every day life. This has become my favorite part of the summer season in Spokane. My first summer in Spokane was spent mostly at my friend's aunt's home. Every week we would go over there for dinner and she always barbequed. While there we would play outdoor games, such as horse shoes and frisbee.

Another culture shock for me was experiencing different ways of interacting with people. When I first arrived in Spokane, people were saying hi, making small conversation, and asking me questions about where I was from. I was surprised at how friendly and open people

are. In Saudi Arabia people only talk to people they know. Speaking to strangers is considered odd, so I wasn't prepared at all to speak with people I did not know. It actually shocked me how open people are in the United States. After a few months, I started talking to people and starting conversations everywhere I go. I was talking to people in restaurants, coffee shops, the mall, and many different places. Now, I really like to talk with new people, or people I have never seen. This was one of the things that shocked me at first. It also helped me, and is still helping, me improve my spoken English language and learning about the American culture. I have visited many other countries and never experienced the amount of friendliness as I have in the United States. People here are really friendly and like talking to strangers in a polite and friendly way. In fact, I purposefully go to coffee shops or restaurants just so I can talk to Americans.

But sometimes there are problems. On my second day in Spokane, I went to the mall with my friends, and I saw a cute baby, so I wanted to play with him. I looked at him and said, "Hi", but his mom got so mad she gave me a look. Then, she took him and left. I was so surprised and shocked when this happened. I realized that something was wrong. The next day, I was talking with my advisor in the ESL program, and I told her about what happened. She informed me that playing with babies I do not know is bad because parents do not think this is a good thing. They think if I play with babies, I am going to steal them or do something with them. In Saudi Arabia, playing with kids, even if we do not know them, is considered a good thing. Parents in Saudi Arabia always get excited when a stranger plays with their babies, because it is like saying "You have a cute baby" but in another way.

I really like kids and love to play with them. Nowadays, every time I see babies. I think about touching their heads or telling their parents they are cute, but before I do this, I think about it and the thing that happened to me in the mall, so I stop and go to the other way. When I learned that playing with babies I do not know is considered rude, I was really shocked because in Saudi Arabia, the reaction is so different. In Saudi Arabia, parents get excited, and here they get so mad and think about it in a different way.

Another experience that was really shocking for me was when I learned that in the US, teachers are not used to getting gifts. In Saudi Arabia, teachers get so happy when they get gifts from their students. It is a sign that the student has learned lots of good things in the class and

enjoyed it. In Saudi Arabia, I used to give teachers I like gifts such as wallets, cell phones, watches, or other things after each semester. Also, my dad was always encouraging me to buy gifts for them. He said that when I think I learned valuable material in the class and the teacher is nice, I should buy something to him as a gift. Buying a gift for teachers in Saudi Arabia means thank you.

However, in the US buying gifts for teachers mean something else. For example, one of my friends, Mohammed, who is studying in Denver called me in May of 2007 and asked to help him with doing something for a teacher he really enjoys his class. He said that he really learned new and excellent things in the class, and I suggested that he should buy a gift for him. We were arguing because he said that one of his friends told him it is bad to do this in America. I said that it is fine, so he did it. The next day, he went and bought a watch for his teacher. He went to the teacher's office and gave him the gift. At that time, still two weeks until finals started. He said he opened the door and smiled. He thanked the teacher and gave him the gift. Suddenly, his teacher got mad because he thought that it was a "bribe" so he could get good grades. Mohammed tried to explain, but he did not want to listen or he did not believe him.

Mohammed called me and told about what was happened. I was really shocked. I thought giving a gift meant "thank you and I really enjoyed being in your class" but I was mistaken. Now lots of my professors are really nice and always try to help, but I think saying, "thanks" is enough.

Anyone who decides to live in other countries will have culture shock. I really encourage all people who decide to live in other countries to have an idea about the culture they are going to live in. I encourage them to read books, look online, or ask about the new culture. Sometimes doing something is considered a good thing in one culture and bad in another. Everyone should be aware of the new culture he or she is going to live in. After having experienced culture shock in the United States, I think I will be able to adjust more quickly and easier to another culture I may encounter. Culture shock has taught me to be more aware of my surroundings, never assume anything is appropriate until I ask, and always try to speak with the people.

Confessions of an Oreo

Lucas Sharma

My eyes perked as I heard the words, “A couple of us are going to Starbucks if you’d like to join us.”

“Ok...” I thought, “I am at the right college. I have been at Gonzaga for about two minutes and have already gotten an invitation to Starbucks. This going to be a great four years for sure.”

Because of my statistical status as a minority, I had been invited to participate in the BRIDGE Program. BRIDGE is a pre-orientation program, occurring a couple days before orientation, intended to help minority students adjust to the change of moving to college and begin with a sense of community. I had really wanted to participate in the Reality Camp program, but my parents were instantly drawn to words in the BRIDGE Packet, “Optional Parent Feature.” So I arrive at the BRIDGE program and found myself at home with a couple of minutes to spare because of the invitation to Starbucks.

I suppose you could say that since I am adopted from Nepal, I qualify as a minority. But that’s never been the way I had seen myself before. With a Nepalese father, Caucasian mother, and a very rural extended family, being categorized as a minority was not really part of my identity. In fact, words to describe me had always included JCrew, well-dressed, Starbucks, and Catholic. Another word could be “Oreo” (dark on the outside, white on the inside). This is how I see myself. Minority is the farthest word from my personal vocabulary you could imagine (you should have seen the turmoil that this caused without an eraser on the recent Senior Survey I filled out—all of a sudden I remembered that every interaction I have is with someone of another race).

The BRIDGE program was a fun new experience filled with pre-orientation activities and with great people I still enjoy seeing today. However, as some of the people have faded away during my four years at Gonzaga, I will never forget some of the moments of confusion I felt during the BRIDGE program. Sitting in the grass every evening, we discussed our transition to Gonzaga. I was shocked to hear students worried about going to school with *white* students. Over and over, I heard “I

have never gone to school with a white person before... Spokane is the whitest place I have ever been... I just need ethnic food... Why doesn't Gonzaga have many more minorities? Where is all of the diversity?"

Perhaps I missed the memo, but this didn't seem like that big of an issue to me. I sat dumbfounded. *Is being a minority really that big of a deal?* Don't get me wrong. I'm clearly not racist (I'm not white myself, remember? Don't worry. I also forget). During these evening discussions, my mind was flooded with contrasting thoughts – Gonzaga seemed to be diverse to me. Granted, I was surrounded by 25 other minorities...Would going to school with white people be any different from going to school with them? They didn't seem any different from me at my high school. And can I just comment, forget the ethnic food, the real question is where is the JCrew? Why are they all on the west side of the state? I believe one would fit next to Pottery Barn in River Park Square.

I've made myself out to sound like a shallow yuppie. I'd like to keep the yuppie part but discard the shallow portion. As my time at Gonzaga continued, I found myself drawn to the students in my dorm, deepened my connection with my faith as a Catholic, spent countless hours at that Starbucks I first heard about having "Starbucks Chats," studied with Gonzaga-in-Florence, and developed a profound attachment to social justice. I've found the Economist magazine, NPR, and have filled my mind with sociology and economics. I'd have to say Gonzaga has helped me "develop my total self" and I truly feel ready to leave Gonzaga to engage and change the world.

Leading By Example: The Shocking Power of the Long, White Cane

David Paullin

I was accepted to Gonzaga University in the spring of 2002. I had many colleges and universities to choose from and I chose to go to college in the Pacific Northwest. I almost went to the University of Oregon. I had committed to Oregon and I had paid my registration fees for the first semester. Then, I got my acceptance letter from G.U. with a much better financial aid package. Plus, it was Catholic, Jesuit, and Humanistic. I came to Gonzaga University without even visiting the college, taking a look at any pictures on the Internet, or even talking to any of the departments. I took a leap of faith and came to Gonzaga University and I am glad. It was the greatest four and one-half years of my life.

I was shocked by how big the campus was for a student body of 4,800 students when I entered in the spring of 2003. The college dorms, classroom buildings, library, cafeterias (dining halls), and other buildings were spaced out very far apart from one another. At the time, I was the only blind student on campus using the long, white cane. It took students, staff, and the community of Spokane, Washington some time to adjust to seeing a young blind man on campus. Some of my professors had never had a blind student before, so there were some awkward conversations that had to take place those first few weeks. I think some of them were shocked and stunned to see a legally blind student in their classroom. Some of my professors had never seen a blind person in their lives before. I was shocked and surprised that I was the only blind student on campus. I may not have been the only legally blind or visually impaired student on campus at the time. However, it felt like I was the only blind student on campus using the long, white cane. I felt like I was setting a precedent for other students to follow in the future.

It took me about 6 weeks to learn how to use my excellent orientation and mobility skills with the long, white cane to navigate Gonzaga University. I was shocked and surprised by the different varieties of surfaces on campus ranging from concrete sidewalk to asphalt to cobblestone/brick to stairs made of different materials with different sounds and echoes to grass. My roommate in my freshman year, Ben

Foley, made a map of the campus for me. He used white chalk on black poster board to make drawings of the shapes and sizes of the buildings. He used arrows, cardinal directions, and shapes in different colors to help me figure out how to get from point A to point B. I am able to see things with high to very high contrast. I can see white letters on a black background better than black letters on a white background. Ben wrote the letters of buildings in large print for me to read.

I was nervous and anxious during the first few weeks and months of my freshman year. It helped that I had the same 18 students in three of my classes: English 101, Philosophy 101, and Speech 101 (Thought and Logic or Thought and Expression block classes). I met Andrew Canfield in my Philosophy 101 class on my first day. He was from Spokane and he and I hit it off well from the very beginning. He and I would become very good friends. I would make many friends in those three classes, including Laura Swanson, Jemma Hatab, and Nathan Buck just to name a few.

I thought it would take me less time than it did to learn to navigate the campus and orient myself to my new surroundings. It was a trial and error process to get to and from one class to the next one on time. I had to use my Braille reading skills to find the numbers for the rooms and ask people lots of questions.

Over the next four years, I would have to learn how to read my books on tape and CD, take my own notes in Braille to read and write or use someone else's notes that were taken for me, learn how to take oral and written examinations, how to use readers and scribes, and how to hire and fire my own readers and scribes. I went everywhere with my long, white cane. It was a sign and symbol of my disability. It helped me to be free, independent, and mobile. I could go anywhere on campus whenever I felt like it. It was great to have that freedom and independence to make those choices and decisions about where I was going to go. I made many friends very quickly. Club Fair helped me to pick and choose what clubs and organizations I wanted to get involved in. I got to dictate my life. Before I came to the university, I did not always get to make those important choices and decisions for myself, because they were made for me. It was always my parents, V.I. or V.H. teacher (Visually Impaired or Visually Handicapped) and Staff, or other people pushing or pulling me in one direction or another. The biggest and best shock and challenge for me was to take control of my life during those four and one-half years to learn, grow, and mature. I had to

learn to not feel sorry for myself. I will admit there were times when I was sad, depressed, and wallowing in self-pity. I had to pick myself up, dust myself off, and move forward with my life. It is not always easy moving forward with your life. Nevertheless, I did and earned a B.A. Degree in History. I had to go through the good times and the bad times to get to the here and now in my life. I am happy that I graduated and did not fail or quit. I am happy that my professors made certain that I did not fall off the radar screen, fail, or quit. They loved me and cared about me. They continue to love me and care about me. Gonzaga University is a community and family of students, staff, professors, friends, and neighbors. I am very glad I came to Gonzaga University. I have come to accept my blindness, which has enhanced my confidence and self-esteem. I am proud to be an Alumnus of the class of 2007 and a member of the Gonzaga University community and family.

What Does Jesuit Education Really Mean?

The Gap Between Promise & Practice at GU

AJ Manry

The idea that a higher teaching of moral obligation, spirituality, and self knowledge was a definite part of the Jesuit education that I thought I would get at Gonzaga University. But I did not really know what a Jesuit education was, or why I should choose it over any other type of education. What exactly does a Jesuit education entail? According to the mission statement of Gonzaga, the Jesuit education offered here is as follows:

We seek to provide for our students some understanding of contemporary civilization; and we invite them to reflect with us on the problems and possibilities of a scientific age, the ideological differences that separate the peoples of the world, and the rights and responsibilities that come from commitment to a free society.

Just what exactly does this mean? When I applied to Gonzaga, I thought it meant that this school was strictly for people with highly developed good and just moral and social views. I was wrong.

Something that I would not have predicted upon coming to Gonzaga is the laxity of rules. I expected Gonzaga to have a strict campus policy because of the idea that it indeed is a Jesuit educational school, one that strove for higher moral excellence and sought to teach people about what we as Catholics should believe about controversial issues such as abortion, the death penalty, etc. Instead of finding this out, I find that in the freshman only dorms, they have a "Substance-Free" community. That in and of itself is an affront to what the Jesuits are trying to accomplish. Since Gonzaga is an alcohol-free campus and none of the freshmen are twenty one years old, it is extremely hypocritical to put a substance free wing in the freshman dorms. There is not a night that goes by that there is not at least one stall taken up by a drunk, no matter the day. Most of the figures in authority positions just turn a blind eye.

I have come to lose respect for the school, being completely disappointed with the laxity of the moral rules at Gonzaga. It is supposed to be teaching moral and social goodness, but it turns a blind eye on its out-of-control student population. Jesuits are loyal to the Pope in Rome no matter what-- it is the vow they take. The Pope has high moral standards for society as he should. Therefore as a Jesuit school they should be upholding the vow that they took. To set an example you must lead by example, and turning a blind eye to the hundreds of underage students drinking and smoking weed on campus each night is a ridiculous joke. I thought after reading the mission statements of schools committed to providing a Jesuit education that in this time of social injustices they would be a beacon of hope for a higher level of Catholic morality.

After learning what a Jesuit education should be and what it claims to be, I have no problems with the ideas behind it. The first line of Gonzaga's mission statement reads "Gonzaga University belongs to a long and distinguished tradition of humanistic, Catholic, and Jesuit education." But from my experience at Gonzaga, it does not always teach the way it claims to in its mission statement, or act according to it. It does say Catholic and therefore should uphold the teachings socially as well as spiritually and intellectually. They turn a blind eye on illegal activities on campus that they preach harshly about in the classrooms. This has been quite a disappointing eye opener about the school Gonzaga is and the school I thought it would be.

Missing Home

John Yen

Before I came to Spokane a few weeks ago, I was really thrilled to experience something new. I was happy that I was about to leave Hawaii to finally get off the “rock”, which is what the locals say when they are leaving for a significant reason. In Spokane I am adapting to a drastic change of lifestyle for a variety of reasons.

I am a “homegrown” local, as we say back in Hawaii. At home there is never a dull moment. I can go to the beach obviously because of our location. We can also go hiking without having to fear certain animals. Honolulu is a city with everything is close. I was so used to this lifestyle that when I got to Spokane, I could not find much to do here. My friends and I went to the downtown mall for the first week, but as we kept going every day, this got boring. The next week we went to the movies every day. That got old really fast, too, and I started to really miss home.

Another issue that is affecting me is the weather. Moving from below the Earth’s equator to above it is a drastic change, and this is only summer. I am not looking forward to what is coming up in winter. I am used to walking outside in flip-flops; in fact, I wear them all the time. Here in Spokane, I am lucky if I can wear them at night because it is really cold. So far the weather is nice, though. I like how it does not rain as much here as it does in Hawaii.

A major difference I have noticed here in Spokane is the diversity level. I have found that there is not much diversity here at all. Most people here are Caucasian. Back in Hawaii, the diversity is amazing! Everyone that I know at home has an Asian background or comes from at least two different nationalities, neither of which is European. Here I feel so out of place because I come from an Asian background. I am used to Asian customs. For example when we enter houses in Hawaii, it is proper for us to take off our flip-flops or shoes as a sign of respect. I know that it is only the summer and I look forward to seeing much more diversity during the school year. I hope to join the Filipino club, which would be good for me because I am Filipino. I like having diversity because I can

learn new things from other people about how they adapt and change.

Food has been significant in my life. A lot of what we do in Hawaii is centered around food, and because there is so much diversity, there are lots and lots of different foods to eat. People bring food from all different cultures when we would get together for a barbecue. My favorite, of course, is Hawaiian food. We set the table with lau lau, lomi salmon, poi, and haupia. I miss eating Hawaiian food because it has that mouth-watering taste, and I would always go back for more. I also miss eating lumpia, a Filipino food that my grandma would make for me. All these foods have been a part of my life, and I miss them so much.

I have become sad lately because I miss my way of life back home, but the number one reason why I am sad is because I miss my friends. I miss going to the beach with them and having them over to hang out. In Hawaii we all grow up close to each other. I guess you can say that is a benefit of growing up on an island. It's hard to be away from home for such a long time.

It was a major culture shock to come to Spokane. I felt like an outsider and did not know what to do. I did not know if I was saying the right words when I was speaking or if people could even understand me. I did not know if I was using slang that I picked up at home by accident when I was speaking to people. Also people here say that I talk with an accent. It's hard for me to tell what accent they are talking about but apparently what they are saying is true because there have been numerous occasions when people have noticed it.

All the experiences that I had adjusting to Spokane up till now will only make me stronger as a person. Leaving the islands does not always have to have a negative effect. I am enthusiastic about the new things that I will learn. I am excited about the new friends that I will make and the people that I will encounter. I know that I will go through a major culture change, but I know that the hardest part about going to a new place is adapting, and I know that I will be able to adapt to do it. It will take time to become use to the many new customs, but it is not impossible to do.

“And He Was...Naïve”

Chris Sparks

I grew up all over the country. Dad was in the Coast Guard—he’s now retired—and so we moved a lot. Each time, my sister and I went to a public school. We learned the usual things perpetually new kids learn: how to fit in (or at least make yourself invisible), how to deal with an ever changing peer group, how to play well with others, how to adjust. I’m good at moving, good at cultural change, good at overcoming the challenges that come with being new to an area—I’ve done it a lot. It’s never easy, but I can do it.

So college was not going to be any bigger deal than all the other moves. In fact, I found it easier than usual—because we freshman were all new kids. There was no crowd of people who’d all grown up together, or all had the same experiences. Some people came to GU along with a bunch of others from their school, of course. My freshman roommate was from Spokane and had brothers going to GU, so he had a good support network already in place. But for the most part, we collectively were the new kids, so if I ever got lost or confused about something, there were tons of people who could sympathize. It was a nice change from sitting in class, listening to people talk about favorite teachers I’d never met, or favorite activities I couldn’t begin to relate to, because they were such a particular part of the town or state that we happened to be in at that moment.

Gonzaga did shock me in some ways. I discovered quickly through being part of both the Young Democrats and the John Paul II Fellowship that the liberals were all convinced the conservatives ran everything and oppressed the liberals, and the conservatives were all convinced that the liberals controlled the school and oppressed the conservatives—leaving me, who was determined to remain more Catholic than political on either end of the spectrum, in an odd place. In fact, the apparent inability of a good chunk of the student body to show signs of comprehending what Catholicism was all about threw me for a loop. Debates would rage in the Bulletin over abortion, gay rights, feminism, and so forth, debates in which the Catholic side never fully made an appearance because people never seemed to be clear on the foundational

teachings of the dignity of the human person, the great commandment of charity for all humanity arising out of love of God, and the vital importance of truth. There was a rebellion against Catholicism at a Catholic school, a rebellion against a caricature of the Church I follow, not against the actual teaching of John Paul II in communion with the popes stretching back to St. Peter.

That year's controversies befuddled me. How could anyone think the Church teaches hatred of gays, or that the teaching on abortion is an attempt to keep women down? How could anyone take seriously the claim that the social justice teaching of the Church was in tension with Her sexual ethic, when both arise out of the same Christian anthropology? Most ridiculous to me were the controversies over the focus on diversity, and the fear that giving emphasis to either one meant the exclusion of the other. What? In an international Church with leaders from all races and peoples, in a Church which gave the world the idea of the basic equality of humans in the eyes of God because we are all sons of Adam, somehow a strong Catholic identity at the school would be destructive to our commitment to diversity, educating the world, and serving all people without fear or prejudice?

I tried to help out by creating Coexist, a well-intentioned effort that may have opened a few doors, but whose long term impact does not seem promising. We shall see. I tried to defend the Church in the forums available to me, hoping people would see that fidelity to the vision of the Church laid out in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, *Gravissimum Educationis*, and the documents from the USCCB offered a great road map to a community pursuing truth in love, realizing the goals of every faction on the most important point: care for the whole person, every person, developing humans of great skill and knowledge able to become beacons for the world. I read Fr. Spitzer's *Healing the Culture* and discovered there a great Christian philosophy to help achieve the goals of the Gospel, the best goals of the university. We have been blessed with this extraordinary priest's leadership and teaching for 11 years—and yet there is such deep-rooted resentment of Spitzer here, given strong proof by his departure.

I tried to help out—I don't know if I succeeded. My efforts have been driven by my reaction to the culture shock of coming to a place with so much to offer, with such great resources, with the best mission in the world—and so many people who could care less, or who have opposed it with vigor, or who have not bothered to learn from the

Church and the mission what we truly ought to be. My culture shock stemmed from the difference between the labels on the university and the reality within. There is something very wrong with our campus culture and climate that I don't think was captured by the campus climate survey. There is something very wrong with a Catholic university whose members, to a large part, attack the Church they think exists while not learning from one of Her own universities (founded by the order whose fidelity to Her was once renowned) who She actually is, what She actually teaches, and why Her teachings are as they are.

I came to Gonzaga hoping to be supported in my faith, and instead found myself having to defend the Church more than I ever had to at a public school. I came to Gonzaga trusting the advertising, and discovered that train had left the station a long time ago. Gonzaga remains a beacon of light, teaching truth, raising up people of service and compassion, helping to heal the problems of the world. But GU, as of right now, is not what she says she is. The consequences of this gap are large, and subtle, and until the university has decided to either return to its mission or change it fully and openly, the community will suffer.

But I am graduating, and now is the time to remember the good and forget the bad. So farewell, GU. I wish you well. For those who come after: good luck, God bless. I wish you all the best.

Conclusion

So the reports have been tallied, the judgment given. What do you think? Do you agree? Disagree? Hope some person is right, and another wrong? Think them all wrong?

These are the stories of things as they have been, not necessarily as they are now, or will be in the future. As Scrooge discovered, “A man’s life may be made right.” Or perhaps there is nothing to make right.

What is the truth of the matter? Gonzaga is a human institution with an attachment to a divinely established Church. We shall have faults and flaws till Judgment Day, or the destruction of the university, whichever comes first. In the mean time, we are to love one another and follow the great mission of pursuing the truth in faith, hope, and love, animated by the slogan “Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam”. Pursuing truth means listening to those around you and standing strong for the truths you know. Loving each other means supporting the other’s best aspirations and instincts, helping out the newcomer struggling or giving room at the table to the outcast.

Know that others have come before you, and others will come after you. Each time, there shall be shocks and surprises, hard times and good times, failures and successes. Learn from these stories--prepare as best you can for what comes, and make things easier for the others.

As Red Green says, “Remember, I’m pulling for ya. We’re all in this together!”

May you be forever blessed.

--Chris Sparks

Contribute!

Tell us your story!

Coming to college, Culture Shock hits everyone in some way or another. Let other people learn from your mistakes and successes!

Requirements: More than 500 words, less than 2000

To submit, e-mail your story in a Word document to cultureshock@gonzaga.edu