

FINDING FAMILY

AT DEFIANCE COLLEGE

Melina Alexander, Clio, Mich., graduated this spring with a degree in molecular biology. She wrote this column about her Defiance College experience as a guest columnist for The Crescent-News.

How has Defiance College helped shape me into the person I am today? Before coming to DC I had a general view of a future that I hoped for myself. Now that I will be graduating from DC in just a couple short weeks, I have an achievable goal for my life. Defiance has been my home for the past few years, and in it I have found a DC family. While here I found passion in many activities - the Women's Soccer Team, the McMaster School for Advancing Humanity, the Carolyn M. Small Honors Program, Alpha Phi Omega, Student Athlete Advisory Council, and Orientation Leaders, to list a few.

I initially chose Defiance College because I had family close, and I wanted to continue my athletic career. I just couldn't stand the thought of giving up playing the sport I love. I was able to come on an overnight stay with the team, and I just felt that I belonged. I loved the small school atmosphere and felt I was a part of the DC community before I had even made my decision. In that night, coincidentally, I met my teammate and roommate of four years, Lindsay Bubnick, and we decided together that we would take on the next four years of our life together at DC.

The beauty of Division III athletics is being not only a student-athlete but more; schooling being our first priority and being able to be involved in many other activities beyond our sport. I was introduced to the Student Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC) my freshman year by a senior on our soccer team. SAAC enables students to strive to enhance the total student-athlete experience by promoting opportunity for all student-

athletes and fostering a positive student-athlete image. Through SAAC, we provided many experiences for athletes from Champs Night, where all of our athletic teams compete against each other in small-scale obstacle courses and fun events, to putting on the first-ever Unified Bowling Championship event in HCAC history in collaboration with Special Olympics Indiana.

I was drawn to the McMaster School for Advancing Humanity by a close friend my freshman year, and in the next three years I became a part of it, and it became a part of me. I love the research I did, the people I met, and the amazing opportunities I was provided through such a beautiful program. Not to mention, I figured if I could survive research and living in the jungle for two weeks, I could accomplish anything, right?

As I mentioned before, DC has a family atmosphere to it, bringing people together and keeping them close. It isn't just my roommates, my friends and my teammates that I have grown to cherish, but the faculty and staff, the coaches, and classmates. We have all grown together in the past four years, and I wouldn't have wanted to have these experiences with any other group of people. I will cherish all of my memories of DC from community-based research in the country of Belize, to spending weekend afternoons and evenings at sporting events with my friends and peers, to sitting in the Tenzer computer lab complaining about tests with my fellow Molecular Biology majors.

When thinking about all the experiences I have had it is hard to chalk it up to saying "I will miss it here at DC." To say that I will miss Defiance College is an understatement. I am beyond thankful for all of the experiences I have had in these four years and for the person I have grown to become by being allowed to be a part of the DC community and family.



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