

Samantha Michelle Grey

Reflections Speech

ECC-Civil Engineering

Saturday, May 21, 2016

---

When I was young, my aunt and uncle, both Chico State graduates, always talked about Chico People. Now you all probably have your own ideas about who Chico People are, but according to my aunt and uncle, Chico People were well rounded, easy going, and accomplished people. Accepting my admission to attend Chico State, I looked forward to becoming a Chico Person. In truth, my road to becoming a Chico Person started a few years earlier. When I was a freshman in high school I wanted to become a junior coach for my swim team. I helped everyday around the pool and I was a strong swimmer,

but after a while I became frustrated that no one approached me about becoming a coach. I went home and expressed this frustration to my mom. She asked, "Have you ever told anyone you would like to be a coach?" I said, "No. I just want them to ask me." She laughed. She said, "If you want the opportunity to be a coach, you need to tell them you want to be a coach, no one is going to ask you if you do not tell them that is something you want." Later that week I told the coaching staff that I was interested in becoming a junior coach and the next year I was "Coach Sami." My mom taught me a very important lesson, which was to be proactive about my goals, instead of waiting for the opportunities that may not ever materialize. Little did I know, this would be a theme throughout my college career.

My first year here at Chico State was a challenge; trying to acclimate to college level courses, living on my own, learning

to live with roommates, and making friends with similar interests. Anyone who knows me knows that I like to be very, very busy. So my first semester here not having a job left me with more time on

hands than I knew what to do with, which was also a challenge. While trying to find a job, I applied the same lesson my mom taught me, and I reached out to the Department Chair of Civil Engineering, Dr. Haselton and asked him if he knew of any student positions available in the department.

Within a week, I had a job working as a Student Assistant in the Civil Engineering Department Office, where I had exposure to professors, other students, and innumerable resources.

The faculty and students at Chico State reinforced the lesson my mom taught me by encouraging me to pursue

opportunities regardless of my age or experience. Dr. Mehl encouraged me to become a part of our American Society of Civil Engineers student chapter to develop contacts within the industry. Other students encouraged me to become a part of a MidPac team to utilize the skills I learned in the classroom in a real---world setting. Dr. Derucher encouraged me to get more involved within the college to learn the importance of working with people of other interests. In pursuing these activities, I realized that I was experiencing what my aunt and uncle had always talked about. I was experiencing what it was like to become a Chico Person.

The support given to me by my mentors and peers helped me develop the tools to be successful, both inside and outside the classroom, and gave me the confidence to achieve greater goals than I had imagined. I took this confidence and I ran with

it. As I completed these accomplishments, I would go out and share with my friends, and for every story I had to share, they had an equally impressive accomplishment to share. I took two key points away from these exchanges; one, that I now was a part of an amazing network of people who could share successes with each other, and two, that they had developed these same tools to be successful.

My experiences at Chico State have helped me understand what it means to be a graduate from this university. I now understand that a Chico Person is proactive. A Chico Person is polished. A Chico Person is proud. As we all move on from Chico State, we will encounter new environments, new people, and new challenges. While these may be intimidating, all we have to do to achieve success is remember our training. Take charge of our goals. Be outgoing and be well rounded.

Share our successes with the ones we love. Remember that the relationships we developed here will support us for a lifetime.

I am a Chico Person and you all here are Chico People.

Congratulations Class of 2016.