

## The Liberal Arts Experience by Janice Chan

Many relatives and friends of mine wonder why I picked a liberal arts college to continue my university education. The first thing that comes into my mind about liberal arts college is: small. For universities, being small in size is such a big advantage for small class teaching and learning; closer interaction between professors and students; students to get to know each other; and to enjoy hall life.

I remembered my first day of university life as I walked into my first class: I was shocked. I was expecting a huge lecture class with around 100 or more students, but instead all I saw was a small classroom with around 25 students. As the semester went on, I enjoyed going to classes more and more. Small class sizes allow students to get to know each other better, compared to huge lecture classes where students would not even know that others exist. Also, the professors get to know their students so much better and on a more personal level.

You may ask: why is it important that a professor should know a student well? The realistic answer is: you need a good reference letter for future use. A professor who knows you well will be able to write the best and most appropriate reference letter for you. On the other hand, it is good to have a more mature and wise person as your friend, especially when you are alone studying in the States. Professors are able to give good advice regarding knowledge, writing research papers, school administrative system, choosing majors, and even life.



Another reason for choosing liberal arts college is the college's broad education requirements. My college requires every student to take a course



from seven areas of knowledge: mathematics, natural sciences, human sciences, history, literature, performing arts and philosophy. When I read about the General Education Requirements (GER) in the college's information guidebook, at first I thought this requirement would be so hard to fulfil. Being a typical Hong Kong high school student, I had taken only science classes for 6 years. I had no confidence that I could manage any literature or history classes.

However, I found out that my worries were totally unnecessary. All the introductory courses for GER purposes are very detailed and basic. Even for students like me, who did not have any background knowledge for arts courses, it was not hard to pick up the pace and get good grades for the class. The key to success is to work hard. I really like the GER system because it broadens my horizons, and it helps me to realize what I want to major in and decide my career path.

Last but not least, students of liberal arts colleges share a relatively small and close university community. Most of the students live in on-campus dormitories. Hall mates are usually close to each other and it is easier to build up your connection. I enjoy my university life a lot and I strongly recommend liberal arts colleges to all students.

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