Bri Crumbley

Meredith’s Remarkable Women Essay Contest Entry

The Meredith community would not function the way that it does without a plethora of strong female figures, each one of them adding something special. During my time here at Meredith I’ve met many of these strong women; some are other students, some are alum, and some are faculty and staff. Many of the skills that I have learned here are largely due to interactions with these women. From things as simple as figuring out how to create the perfect spreadsheet, to more complex endeavors such as learning how to be an effective leader, Dr. Shannon Grimes has been a role model, a supporter, and an inspiration. Working with her has added greatly to my Meredith experience as she embodies strength and success, and does so with a disposition that makes even the most daunting of tasks a little more enjoyable.

As a scholar, she radiates an empowering intelligence that is reflected in the knowledge that she passes on to her students. Whether challenging a classroom full of first year students to look at a text they may have seen a million times through a new pair of eyes, or asking a group of upperclasswomen to suspend all of their preconceived notions of a historical figure and jump into a new way of thinking, Dr. Grimes’ fun loving-spirit provides a new and different perspective into some heavier areas of study. The work that she does is not only impressive, but inspirational, as she regularly finds ways to make such specialized information relevant in daily life, tracing thought patterns and ideas both backward and forward in a way that sheds new light on aspects of life that are often taken for granted. Her passion for the subject matter shines through the lecture material, and creates a classroom environment that makes learning enjoyable, and accomplishments rewarding.

As an adviser, she willfully listens and provides useful feedback that perfectly bridges the gap between objectivity and subjectivity. Her genuine care for her student's success and willingness to invest in those that are also willing to work hard speaks to the compassion that she carries. In acknowledging goodness, she pushes to greatness, always equipping us to take the next step. She does not hand hold, by any means, but her guidance and direction always place you on the right path directed towards the work required to achieve the end desired, but
the effort must be your own. Her words, whether of criticism or encouragement, are always kind, honest, and purposeful, and her presence makes meetings and gatherings more enjoyable.

The mark that she leaves specifically on my Meredith experience is a great one. As a 1st year Meredith student, I came across Dr. Grimes at a Major/Programs fair, and found myself in a class with her the following semester. As my interest in the subject matter grew, she noticed and encouraged me to continue to explore and study. Out of that Abrahamic Faiths class, came the discovery of my heart for Interfaith Cooperation, a cause that allows me to explore the overlap in my interest in religious studies, fascination with people, and love of ideas in a way that I never knew to be possible. Now as not only a Religious and Ethical Studies major but the President of Meredith’s Interfaith Council, with Dr. Grimes as one of our advisers, I get to see those passions intersect in new ways every day. Dr. Grimes’ continued encouragement to share my opinions and experiences with not only my community but the interfaith community at large plays a major role in my successes as an organization leader, an intern, a student, and, most importantly, my overall development as a person. I am now directly connected with the Interfaith Youth Core, and was recently selected as a member of their National Leadership Team, a group of students across the US who work together as a network to develop new ways to reach, connect to, and heal our communities. These are opportunities that while there before were opened up to me through my interactions with Dr. Grimes, as she’s also played an integral role in preparing me for them.

One on a team of many, Dr. Grimes adds something special to Meredith College. For me, she’s been a source of support, as well as a driving force, and a huge part of my accomplishments here at Meredith so far. I am in no way surprised by the fact that a typical response to the mentioning of her name is “OH! I had a class with her. She’s great,” because though trite, the statement is true. Though some may initially find themselves surprised by the juxtaposition of her approachable demeanor and the breadth and depth of her knowledge, they often come to realize that these things combined with her likeable personality and fun anecdotes and asides add greatly to the classroom experience in a way that few can. As a scholar, professor, adviser and remarkable woman Dr. Grimes gives of herself in a way that every student that encounters her leaves a little better, a little stronger, and a little wiser, whether they know it or not.