

My favorite quote from the alumni interviews I conducted this semester has to be, “I know it sounds corny, but it was that liberal-arts education.” It was Gregg Gruizenga who answered with this response to my question, “What prepared you the most for your career after college?” as we sat in JP’s Coffee House.

As a 2006 graduate double majoring in Creative Writing and Management, I definitely feel like the product of a liberal-arts education. It was comforting to hear, not only from Gregg, but from the other alumni as well, that my background would serve me well as I entered the “real” world. **The “real” world, the alumni explained, will hit you hard right out of college, but a liberal arts education will provide you with much needed flexibility in our ever-changing economy.**

My favorite story was told by alum Matt VanderWende about how he broke precedent to become the first freshman on the London May Term experience. My favorite interview involved alum Derek Torno asking me if Professor Smith still incorporated the exercise of timing cars through fast-food restaurants; then, three weeks later I had to complete that very assignment in his Operations Management class.

The most interesting interview had to be the one with alumna Anna Santibanez Zamora which we conducted over the internet in a private chat room since Zamora currently works in Mexico City. What also made the interview interesting was being able to discuss with Zamora her experiences as a woman in the business field. It was timely, because I was dealing with insecurities of being the gender minority in some of my management classes. Talking with Zamora gave me confidence to assert myself in class.

The quote that sums up what every alumnus told me was something else Gruizenga said. “Follow a long-term vocation that fits your passion and not a short-term occupation that fits your pocketbook.” My passion is to enter the publishing field. It is my desire that I will continue to take this great piece of advice to heart in the face of crazy “real world” decisions to be made. I feel all the alumni I spoke with were challenging me to live up to this and other pieces of wisdom that I will keep close as the future plays itself out. It has been a privilege to converse with these people and I am thankful I was given the opportunity.