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University Honors

Year-In-Review

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A Year of Growth

When I look back at this year, I notice how the techniques and practices I have learned merged together to create theatrical, dynamic, and believable performances. In acting this year, we did learn a new method and delved into much more monologue and scene work. In fact, in terms of acting, this was my busiest year, because we were not so much practicing in class or gleaning knowledge from our professor, though we of course did do both of these things, but we were much more so preparing all of our work outside of class and then being adjusted in class – and there was a tremendous amount of work. There was a new assignment due almost every week, and coupled with our Audition Techniques class, there were times when my distinction between the class got blurred keeping track of everything I had to do. Still, I believe all of this work and the success I achieved with it left me stronger and more aware of my ability as an actor and performer than I ever have been. I pushed myself to the edges of my known talent, and now my initial talent and work ethic has been stretched so far, I cannot and will not shrink back to my original form. I now carry my newfound acting tools with me wherever I go for the rest of my life.

This year I also realized my increased ability in dance. I surprised myself with the opportunity to call myself ‘a dancer’. I believe I look like a dancer, act like a dancer, and dance like a dancer. Of course I don’t have more than four to five years of dance training, but I have learned to adjust my body to make my presence more akin to a dancer. To say, “I am a dancer” is an incredible achievement for me. This might seem melodramatic, but for someone who started in the lowest level of jazz coming into college, I think my dance ability has grown by leaps and bounds.

I feel my presence outside of CCM expanded significantly this year. Not only did my involvement in ROAR Tour Guides and the Honors Ambassador program increase, but I was also tapped and inducted into the Cincinnatus Honorary Society. In the first two years of college, I felt that I have many friends outside of CCM, but this year especially, I saw my social circles collide together in the best way possible. I am proud to say some of my closest friends are friends I met through other organizations and opportunities. I do not think that my involvement outside of CCM detracts from what I do in CCM. Personally, they go hand in hand. My work in CCM complements my interactions with the people outside of CCM. I smile when I remember telling Erin Alanson that I wanted to be more involved during our first advising meeting because this year was the fulfillment of that goal. And at this point, I will be challenged to take on any more responsibility to other organizations while keeping my sanity – I think I have to limit myself to what I am currently doing. I do not want to stretch myself too thin, and I want to thoroughly enjoy my senior year. I know I will have enough stress as it is with my class’ New York Showcase looming around the corner, so I want to maintain the relationships and friendships I made these last three years, but now is the time to focus solely on my current goals within these organizations and my professional goals. By all accounts, I am a ‘yes man’. I need to steel myself to say, “No” more often than I am used to.

I was elected to serve as CCM Tribunal’s President for the 2016-2017 academic year, which is an opportunity I am very excited about. In fact, I spent most of the year as the Vice-President filling in for the President because he could not make the meetings during the second semester. In the couple of months that I took on more responsibility than I am accustomed to, I learned some valuable lessons about leading a group of people, most importantly, how to delegate. I found that it is completely unrealistic to expect myself to carry all the weight of an organization, and in fact, our members actually want responsibilities for themselves. When I involve other people in the actionable items of a project, those people have an opportunity to feel fulfilled and involved, and I can feel less stressed because I trusted someone else to work toward our mutual goal. Ultimately, I discovered that leading is about trusting. The act of delegation implies a trust in other people to actively work toward a common interest. I trust people very naturally, almost without question. I care that other people are engaged and have the opportunity to better themselves. I think that is why I want to continue to lead – I care about the experience others are having, and I think I can have a positive influence on that experience. And it could be easy to say that I learned about this at Leadershape, especially with being an On-Site Coordinator this year, but there’s

I was only cast in one show this year, but I was still challenged to go beyond my comfort zone both in and out of class. I took advantage of every opportunity that came my way, and I expanded my social circle even farther into the University. If there is one thing I am proud of, it is my ability to balance both my CCM life and my UC life. The idea that I could be at such an amazing learning institution and simply stay secluded within CCM is unfathomable to me. My college experience is that much better because I pushed myself to get involved and not accept the path most travelled. I forged a way that speaks to my values and goals. This year, especially, took fortitude, endurance, and humility to overcome. The spring semester seemed to drag on with endless engagements, auditions, and a long winter. In this moment, I just realized that will be the last fully complete spring semester I ever finish at UC. Next year, I will move to New York around the end of March/the beginning of April, and I will complete my undergraduate career. I recognize that I have grown immensely during this last year, and especially since my freshman year. What a fascinating process this has been, though. I am excited for what the next year holds, for the discoveries I will make, for the new people I will befriend, and the new opportunities I will take advantage of.

I think more frequently about the type of impact and legacy I want to leave. I do not know if next year the path I have laid will inspire others to do something similar. I think about inspiring musical theatre majors to push beyond what is simply offered to them in CCM. I want to show them that there is more to the college experience beyond the walk to Center Court. I do not want to be an anomaly of a musical theatre major. I want everyone to rise up and challenge themselves to understand a new perspective, no matter how confusing or confounding. I think that by doing this, we not only better our college experience, but we also equip ourselves to venture into a heavily polarized society, where progress can only be achieved by empathy, patience, and a commitment to work together toward a shared future.