

Addendum to the Reaccreditation Surveys of Alumnae/i & Students

Alumnae/i and student responses to questions regarding the most influential people they have interacted with at Grinnell and why.

In response to the question “Who are some of the most influential people, in terms of your vocation, you interacted with while you were at Grinnell and how did they influence you?” many alumni/ae mentioned professors, coaches, and friends. They also mentioned and pointed to specific ways that they were influenced by staff members. Among staff, virtually every office and type of position is represented (administrative, support & technical, and service & trade).

[Several staff members]—all of whom gave me an opportunity to work in [...], observing and interacting with them [...]. These experiences, and their tutelage, contributed enormously to my readiness for a lifetime of new experiences with persons of all stations and stripes.

[Staff member] for teaching me that someone who listens, smiles, and supports, is always appreciated and that kindness is free.

[My boss] gave me the independence to perform my job how I thought best. No other [person] affected my development as much as [she was] able to do. [She was] truly inspiring, and I don't think even realize it.

[My supervisors] were the best supervisors I had—I am a better supervisor thanks to them.

[A staff member] was very instrumental in helping me to see that I need to be aware of my responsibility to know my surroundings and that there is always a friendly face nearby to lend a helping hand.

[A staff member] was the kindest, sincerest person and truly believed in me. She believed that I could do anything and made me feel special. Her presence was calming and she always made me feel welcome and had a way of positively critiquing my [work] in a way that inspired me to [do] better and not give up.

Also working in the office of [...] taught me to be a kinder person. She was always so sweet at the face of adversity, that I now look at challenges with a smile, and hope to find solutions to any arising situation.

I worked in [...] office for [...] who was very encouraging and supportive when I looked for my first job after Grinnell.

[Two staff members] encouraged my continued development in this area and how [that kind of work] is a good place to work with equity and access issues.

[Supervisor who] mentored me as a [...], she was the first person who ever liked my [particular kind of work] enough to pay me, and therefore helped me to think of [it] as a potential career.

I also recall [...] one of the women who ran [an office] where I worked for a couple of years, was such a frank and normal person, so outside of the world of academia, that she inspired me to take a look at the whole wide world of work and really consider what I wanted to spend my days doing.

[...] helped mentor me in my volunteer activities and encouraged my leadership in [...].

Working for [...] gave me valuable experience talking with people I did not know about common values and commitments. I was empowered to unabashedly encourage them to support a cause [...] we both believed in and benefited from.

[...]—value of service with a smile, positivity.

[A variety of staff people, including] my former supervisors [...] all of these people have known me for a few years and were there to help me with any problems, encouraging me to go on when things don't work out for me. They were my confidantes.

[A staff member] took interest in me as a person outside of just academics.

[Staff members] Best Friends that grew to be College Mothers to me! Their support and encouragement fueled me to the finish line!

[A staff member] demonstrated thoughtfulness and trust in others daily

[A staff person] with whom I worked [...]. She kept me connected to the non-college life and was truly a great friend and co-worker. [She] encouraged me, recognized and celebrated my successes, and helped make my experience at Grinnell a memorable one.

I was very interested in [a certain career] and my boss [...] was wonderful. I also worked at [another site on campus] and I learned a tremendous amount there. Both how to be [a certain kind of professional] but just how to talk with people period. [The people who work there] are amazing and it is such a great resource.

Without a doubt, my supervisor in [...] was my most important influence at Grinnell. [...] He has an uncommon gift: the patience, diligence, selflessness, and enthusiasm that defines his persona, teaching philosophy and practice. He taught my fellow students and me to develop what is finest in ourselves through hard work and constant opportunities to learn through experimentation, through making mistakes and then rectifying them. All of us struggled with the challenges [...] at times during our careers at Grinnell, but [he] never let us fail; instead, he worked only harder to help us succeed. His optimistic enthusiasm and passion for what he does are infectious! No motivation was more valuable for us than seeing, on every occasion, his unwavering dedication to helping us achieve the high standards that you set for us, and more importantly, his commitment to helping us develop and expound the values of leadership, compassion, and magnanimous generosity that he embodies and that were so important to our growth and education at Grinnell. Under his exemplary leadership and sound counsel, we became better students [...] and better people in general. We cannot express how grateful we are to him for his willingness to fulfill any role, perform any function, and make any personal sacrifice, in order to further the interests or enhance the experience of the students in his care. May his irreplaceable talent, integrity, warmth, and generosity continue to transform the lives of [Grinnellians] for another lucky generation! I join a large and growing group of alumni to say: I am so proud to have learned from [him]!

Working for [...] was fun and also good preparation for my current job. [...] were wonderful too and tried to teach me about time management (I'm still learning).

[...] was also encouraging and supportive and taught me a ton about practical matters in my vocation.

My supervisors at [...] for the opportunities and trust they presented me with and for modeling professional roles that sparked my imagination.

[A staff member]. While I didn't interact with him much as an undergrad, he made himself available during my time working at the [...] office. This led me to seek out his advice during a job search during the year following graduation.

[...] was a very nice employer and a model Grinnell community member.

Working in the [...] under [...] gave me a good chance to work with students who had various [...] challenges, which definitely gave me a good background on which to build.

[Part-time employee.] He was my mentor and I still call him about once every 3 months to catch up. He [...] provided guidance and assistance when ever it was needed. When my mother was hospitalized during my junior year, he provided me with a shoulder to lean on. Currently, he has been helping me with my application process to Law School. He helped me to clarify my goals and aspirations.

[...] allowed me to take many leadership roles in service and was a mentor in helping me resolve peer conflicts. [The support person] was also very supportive.

[Staff person.] He helped me think about how I could use my life to make social change.

Among the off-campus influences, people mentioned include business owners, area religious organizations, employers, co-workers, internship supervisors, alumnae/i, and even clients that they served as volunteers.

[Director of the local institution where I worked]. Incredibly tolerant and understanding, she was the embodiment of compassion, even while being firm in her goals.

[A] volunteer at [a local non-profit] became my mentor and gave me the gift of my first semester's tuition for Grad School. [Owner of a local business] was my 'host father' and responsible for bringing me to Grinnell and advocating for me. Changed my life!!

[A variety of people and business owners] from the community are people I remember fondly—they went out of their way to make a difference in my life—and I continue to do that in my professional and personal life.

[Mentor-teacher who] more than any other person influenced the way I talk to students, the way I manage a classroom, and the way I interact with my colleagues.

[Religious leader] showed me ways to be religious, just, and judicious in both faith and social matters. [The religious community] also embodied a faith community that was a healthy and balancing counterpart to my dorm and cafeteria existence.

[A Grinnell alumna/us and volunteer coordinator of a non-profit] helped support and inspire me to be involved in [that type of] volunteer work and provided transportation to volunteer commitments on many a snowy day.

Volunteering at [...] It is interesting because I think that was one of my formative experiences in trying to understand the many issues around [...] in this country.

[...] These were my co-workers at [...]. They always supported me in any of my activities. They also introduced me to rural Iowa and the life of a farmer. [An internship supervisor.] She was my boss at [...]. She helped me to land my first job by acting as a reference and she was an inspiration in continuing my volunteer work. She also helped me to consider working for a non-profit after graduation [...].

[An alumna/us] helped me learn more about what it was to have a sense of community and care for the needs of others.

[Community member]—for showing me that you don't have to sell your soul to work in the system.

Comments similar to the alumni/ae's are provided by current students in their replies to "Who are some of the most influential people you have interacted with at Grinnell and how have they influence you?" Again, they mentioned professors, coaches, and classmates. They also mentioned and pointed to the influence of staff members and people who are off-campus. Again, virtually every office and type of position on campus is represented.

[...] is so amazing. She is great at keeping everyone who knows her sane.

[...] my supervisor [...] is a great boss and an amazing [...] who is constantly working to better serve the students. He is someone who everyone seems to enjoy working with [...] He makes me glad to come into work.

[My supervisor] helps me through tough times and has become a friend.

[...] with her ready smile.

[...] with her powerful and unassuming commitment to social justice.

[A department's] supervisors/staff are quite influential: they have to deal with [Grinnell students] and do so with a

smile on their faces. They work quite hard to provide for everyone and everyone fails to see and/or give them credit for that.

[Three staff members who] inspired me to study [...], and in time I became passionate about it and more or less proselytize it on others.

[A number of staff members] who keep the best interests of students at heart and work twice as hard as required to make a crucial part of this school strong (demonstrating the importance of work ethic, even when those around them were not as outwardly committed). [... A staff person,] a partner in several projects whose love for Grinnell and belief in its mission taught me that the spirit of Grinnell community and fellowship in my life will extend far beyond just those who have attended this college. [Another staff person,] my supervisor [...], whose genuine gratitude and constant sincere thanks taught me what it feels like to be appreciated and what it means to motivate coworkers through trust and encouragement. [...Another staff person] who helped me recognize that everyone has had an experience that qualifies them to contribute to the diversity, location, or community, and reminded me that anger is a sign of caring and potential, not impossibility. [An administrator,] a longtime collaborator on different projects, who revealed to me that the faculty and administration of this college care just as much about our culture as the students do (and thus, just because someone is in a position of authority doesn't mean they don't care about the same things as those they serve!). [...two alumni/ae] who gave me faith in post-Grinnell community that will last a lifetime.

[Staff member] was a role model for me in thinking about future careers.

[...] staff member—introduced me to geography, my passion.

[Two staff members] helped me gain confidence [...]

Everyone at [a particular office]—they have helped me SO MUCH over the past 3 years [...]. They've [...] helped develop my interests both personal and career-wise, and are always willing to squeeze me in [...] or work the extra hour with me—all with a smile. [Staff member] has been a great friend and mentor at Grinnell, always with a smile, a joke, and the sincerity of someone who genuinely enjoys working with students and loves his job. He's made me love my job, and helped me to understand the importance of townspeople in the Grinnell community instead of letting me get jaded by the Grinnell bubble. [... Another staff person] has helped me through many very hard times. I think in some ways she must have the hardest job in the school, and yet she is always so friendly and calm that she exudes a wonderful sense of peace to the students and faculty around her, which was the best thing I could have asked for in those situations. The school is very lucky to have her, and without her help, understanding and willingness to help students [...], I'm not sure I would have made it through.

[Two support-staff people] for their ability to converse with the average student and really encourage them in any endeavor they choose.

[My boss]—always puts a smile on my face and gives me a perspective—so kind and a pleasure to work for—can't say enough good things.

I got to know [a staff member] through visiting [a campus office] and also by babysitting for her. She welcomed me into her home and acted as a mother to me when I was going through a rough time. She also has a wonderful way of calming me down when I am going into [her department] stressed out. I always leave [...] feeling calm, collected and empowered. She makes me feel like I can do anything!

[A staff member] by taking pride in his work and continuing it even in the face of adversity.

[A staff member]. It's hard to find a more kind and generous soul at Grinnell College. He's helped me appreciate the all important, and not so visible, work the [service] staff does.

[A staff member] Inspired me to reach farther for my goals and never sell my self short.

My boss at [...] from first year was wonderful. She was always there to listen and very understanding as a boss. Also she gave me hope after Grinnell. She showed me what a twenty-something life was like, and it made me happy to grow up.

[A staff member] is great to just have an older person to talk to that is still familiar with college life, but also has adult experience too.

[A staff member] has been an inspiring person to learn about devoting your life to a single cause.

[A staff member.] Has anyone ever met this guy and thought he wasn't genuinely concerned with your well being and you as an individual member of his community?

[A staff member] is the one I look up to, who can keep the order without being too strict, who is very popular, charismatic, and hardworking, while also disciplined. I believe him to be the living example of how to be a good leader.

[A staff member] who works in [...] and makes an effort to interact with student is wonderful.

[A staff member and his wife] have shown me that good, caring people really do exist in this world. Together they do so much to offer help to anyone that might need it.

[A staff member]—encourages me to pursue my goals, an excellent role model.

One of the people I look up to in Grinnell is [a staff member. He ...]is known and loved by many. I've never worked in [his department,] but I still know him because he is the nicest and most friendly person I have ever met. He not only fulfills his job, but he is active in other parts of campus life because he volunteers [his resources... and] his time for [students....] He inspires me because he always has a positive attitude and goes beyond the call of duty.

[A staff member] in terms of creating community, caring about people, and setting boundaries.

[A staff member]: she comes every day to work REALLY early, and she is always incredibly kind and cheerful.

[A staff member and her husband]. Outstanding community members who helped me get through a tough roommate situation. [Another staff member] role model, employer, shows that I can do anything I set my mind to.

[My boss in an office on-campus] has been like a second mother to me while I'm here. She has attended my [...] performances and recorded them so that I could show my parents at home, and is always concerned with motherly things like staying warm and asking about my weekends, etc. She manages to do all this while still teaching me the ropes and getting me to work.

[A staff member]—demonstrates the ability to be cheerful and helpful at all times, motivates people to work.

[A staff member]. Most motivating man I have ever met. I spoke in depth with him in the Dining Hall, and I have never felt so encouraged in my life.

Current students also identified their work or interactions with people off-campus as very influential.

The locals at [an establishment in town] remind me not to get blinded by the Grinnell bubble every time I see them. My experience at Grinnell would not be the same without [that place.]

The [religious leader from a local organization] helped me realize that some congregations do in fact make an effort to correct social injustices. This reverses the cynicism about religion I learned in high school.

[...] a local farmer who taught me a lot about Grinnell as a wider place than the college. [A townperson] I babysat her daughter and she was a really inspiring figure for me to interact with, even in our brief interactions.

[A townperson] has taught me a lot about life, business and cooking.

[An alumna/us] leader, mentor, [...], encourages people in leadership, social justice, and generally serving others.

I have appreciated the town of Grinnell very much. This year I'm living downtown and enjoy going to the businesses downtown [identifying several].

Alumns who I met through a Grinnell Externship program.

[Religious organization] They keep me going.

Alumni have broadened my horizons, and also given great advice.

My co-workers from my previous internships have influenced me to love myself and know the power that I have in me to change the world and my community. [...] My church has taught me strength in God and in his will.

My boss [at a business in town]—I am constantly inspired by the way she does her work to help the local citizens get their [products] the most affordable and simplest way possible.

[...] is a resident of the town and an alumna. She welcomes [students] into her home and is unbelievably friendly and understanding.