

05/20/14

Dear Mr. Merrill,

I feel so blessed and honored that I have been the one chosen to spend a whole academic year at Hampshire College. It has been an amazing opportunity to develop as a student and as a person, it could have not been better. There has not been a single moment that I would regret taking part in the program, there has not been a one bad moment.

I am so thankful that this experience has been part of my life. I will cherish it till the end of my life and I am very thankful to this experience for many major or minor changes in my life that have occurred in the last year.

Hampshire College would never ever be possible for my to study at without your generous help and I feel that this scholarship that you provide students with is such an important thing for the future of the planet and of humankind that it is even difficult for me to vocalize. Providing students with the possibility to study abroad, to try out different ways of education makes a lot of sense to me and encourages international dialogue which I feel is still today not valued enough even though it should be in order for people to gain more empathy towards each other which would then lead to mutual respect and stopping of nonsensical fighting over ideas. According to me, understanding each other's problems is the key to understanding the multiplicity of approaches in the world and honoring them and then living a mindful life and learning from one another.

Hampshire College is an amazing institution that has given me much more than any other institution before and I am still reminded in my mind of the fact that without your support and help it would not have been possible for me to grow as much as I have in the past year.

I have learned to respect people much more, to appreciate international atmosphere very much, to develop my critical thinking and mostly, I have been able to finally open up and find myself as a person. Before this experience away from everyone else I knew, I was a baby, I had my principles but they were vague, now I am writing this letter as a strong woman and as a strong individual who stands by her own principles and will not give up on any of the things that I am aiming for. I am not going to give up on my principles just because of the fact that going against mainstream is difficult. I find going against mainstream exciting and important as mainstream does not equal correct.

Hampshire has taught me to aim high, to be the change I want to see in the world, to create my own world where I can feel comfortable and a world that creates a safe space for everyone. Hampshire has also taught me to spread my ideas in the world and stand by them

I aim to help creating a safe space out of the world so that everyone can feel great and so that everyone can have a great life. I want to create life full of joy, happiness and respect. No matter gender, sexual preferences, race, class, age or any other social constructs and social divides. I want to overcome the gender binary system that has excluded a lot of people, I want everyone to feel comfortable in the world,

I want the fighting all over the world to stop and I feel strong enough to provide people with these ideas. I feel obligated to provide them with this. I feel a strong connection to nature and the Earth. I feel that I need to take action, the message needs to be sent and spread quickly.

Without you this thinking of mine would never have been possible or if then it would have taken years to come to this point. This immersion into a very special educational system of Hampshire College has changed every single bit of my personality and my life now feels so rich and I feel so energized to combat disrespect, anger, fear, sadness and many more.

Thank you for that,

Truly yours,

Alexandra Martina Behalova