

A Day in the Life of a PSEO Student

By Johanna Pugsley

In the fall semester of 2007, eighty-six Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) students walk the halls of Concordia University. Many professors have said that they enjoy having PSEO students in their classes because the PSEO students do so well. Professor Robert Krueger and others have said that for the most part, PSEO students are ambitious, interested in learning, and excited about the opportunity. Krueger does say that he is disappointed when the PSEO students substitute college courses for their high school courses, but he does enjoy those who are prepared to be in class. He said, "I really like having them in class as long as they're prepared to be there."

However, to complete their college academics, PSEO students have said they make certain sacrifices. For example, Claire Watne said that she spends two hours riding the bus to school from her home in Plymouth. Eman Abdullahi, a traditional freshman who had taken PSEO, said that she missed prom because it fell during finals week, and she did not get her picture in the year book because she needed to attend class the day pictures were taken. According to her, PSEO students actually give up their high school years. Abdullahi said, "I feel like I really didn't have a senior year. I stopped at eleventh grade and



Left: Eman Abdullahi
Center: Gretchen Hintze
Right: Clair Watne
Photos provided by Johanna Pugsley

went to college."

Furthermore, most PSEO students have said that they take a full load of college credits while participating in required high school activities. For example, after catching two morning classes at CU, Gretchen Hintze must go to her high school for additional classes. Then on Mondays and Wednesdays she returns for another college class; otherwise, she stays at her high school to help with a musical.

Many PSEO students have said that

they enjoy the freedom that accompanies college life. Watne, who is taking eighteen credits this semester, said she relishes the challenge and relaxation of college academics. Bertram also has said that she enjoys being able to leave class early on exam days if she finishes her exam early. Abdullahi said she enjoyed not needing to ask the professor before doing everything.

Despite the fact that they are still high school students, PSEO students say that most of the time they have no problems

fitting in around campus. Gretchen Hintze said, "I feel included most of the time, except for when students talk about dorm and college life. During classes I feel more included." Hintze, like others, has said CU is one of her top choices for the college she plans to attend.

PSEO students say that in general, people do not try to distinguish them from traditional students. Abdullahi said, "I don't think many people realized there were PSEO students unless you told them."

Many PSEO students say that their college experience does not differ much from traditional college life.

"I didn't really notice the difference," Abdullahi said.

According to Emily Bertram, a second-year PSEO student, the school life of a PSEO student follows much the same pattern as a traditional student living off campus. Bertram drives to school on most days, catches up on homework, rereads any assignments, and catches her classes for the day, doing additional homework between classes. PSEO students have said that the college routine, once set, is easy to fall into.

"It feels kind of normal now that I've been doing it for a year and a half," Bertram said. "I like it here."

A Hands-On History Experience

By Lance Meyer

"No class tonight; we're going on a fieldtrip!" When the 25 students of Dr. David Woodard's "Introduction to History" course hear this comment, they know they will not be going to Valley fair or the Minnesota Zoo. Rather, these students know they will be visiting significant local historical sites as part of the course curriculum, including the James J. Hill House, the Ramsey House, the Sibley House, the State Capitol, and the Minnesota History Center. Woodard's main goals in the "Intro to History" class are to get students to realize what history is, understand how it is done, and know that there are a collection of historical sites in the Twin Cities which can be rich sources of historical knowledge. "These sites are fun to visit, especially as a group," said Woodard, "and they also allow students to see how history is interpreted in yet another form."

The first class trip of the semester was early in September to the Hill House on St. Paul's Historic Summit Avenue. The trip consisted of a walking tour of the Summit Avenue neighborhood, fol-

lowed by a walk-through of Hill's 19th Century mansion.

Summit Avenue consists of one of the longest stretches of preserved Victorian mansions in North America. The several blocks boast nearly every example of American residential architecture, and the countless stories of its once wealthy inhabitants are mined by historians for insight into St. Paul's past.

Once inside the house, the students were able take a first hand look at the beautiful interior design and elaborate woodwork of Hill's million dollar masterpiece. They were also able to get a sense of what life was like for the Hills, their hired hands, and the guests they hosted. The Hills loved to entertain guests whether it for a formal dinner in the dining room, an exhibit in the family's gallery, or a dance in the hundred foot long reception hall. Four of Hill's daughters were even married in the mansion.

Family history isn't the only aspect of the Hill house that the Minnesota Historical Society presents to its visitors, however. A significant aspect of life in



Photo courtesy of The Minnesota Historical Society

the mansion was the role of the family's staff, who cooked, cleaned, and looked over the house when the family was living elsewhere. Their hired hands were treated extremely well by the family; they were paid decent wages, provided with all their food, and given adequate housing in the basement and even on the third floor.

Overall the night on Summit Avenue gave students an opportunity to see history and understand how it is preserved, studied, and presented. "They (the five sites) ultimately do serve to illustrate the connection between the study of history and what we can find in our own backyard that has historical worth," said student and history major Ian Brekke. He noted that the trips are "a wonderful way to inspire some people to explore history more than they normally thought they would like to . . . The Hill House in particular was a great tool for learning about our neighborhood and the history of our town."