

While it's difficult to imagine our class has a history with this only being our five-year reunion, in retrospect the last decade has been filled with changes, and while many of them are in the spirit of tradition, those changes are what make our class's story unique. This weekend we leave behind the "real world" and return to college to reunite with old friends in a familiar setting. Though we will find "houses" and unrecognizable buildings on an ever-expanding campus, because of our history, we come prepared; for we recognize when tradition should take precedence and understand that with change can come great outcomes.

As seniors in high school we all made the same decision to leave home and attend college at Franklin and Marshall, whose namesakes were dedicated to intellectual freedom and critical learning, but also represent pride and tradition. Arriving the first day of orientation, we participated in the same team building activities, with our soon to be closest friends, that the classes before also endured. While some of the activities were cheesy, such as the pajama parade, we were sad to see it become the kite parade our senior year. Three weeks later, while preparing for Tuesday morning classes, we stood shocked and saddened in front of the televisions watching the events of 9/11. When we started at F&M we expected that we would change, but what we never expected was the world around us to change so quickly. And this was just the beginning.

Over the next year, as we settled into our routines by participating in an array of core courses. From the Foundations to 100-level mathematics, we anticipated they would lead to the perfect major. We joined clubs that allowed us to escape the rigors of class. From cultural societies to community service opportunities, there was no a shortage of clubs to meet our less academic interests. In addition, on any given day of the week, there was a play, musical performance, or art show for us to enjoy. Not only did clubs showcase our classes many talents, they also hosted entertainers, such as bands Live, Guster, and The Roots. Another group activity, F&M athletics, drew many participants and supporters to football, baseball, soccer, lacrosse, swimming, and tennis competitions. F&M students were named to Athletic Honor Rolls and secured accolades within the Centennial Conference on a weekly basis. In a highly competitive academic environment, the rigors of athletic competition allowed student athletes to strike a balance. These classes, clubs, and sports were a constant throughout our tenure at F&M.

Sophomore year began with a highly anticipated change, the addition of President Fry, our college's new leader. With the addition of President Fry came new vision for Franklin and Marshall and its future. Aesthetic changes accompanied the change in leadership such as yearly Dining Hall renovations that delivered new food choices. For those of us who elected to move off-campus during junior year, this proved to be a definite incentive to eat on campus and sample the variety of options at our disposal. The Common Ground also transitioned into a new array of options, including supposed healthy alternatives, such as a Caesar salad that turned out

to be less healthy than the standard grill fare. Before our very eyes, the bookstore moved across Harrisburg Pike to a centrally-located spot on campus and alongside of it came Jazzmans, which managed to serve as a draw for college students looking for a quick caffeine fix or a place to catch up with friends (while pretending to study). Further down campus, the Rochelle Performing Arts Center opened and the development of Writers House across the street allowed students to enjoy the arts and literature alike. Sophomore year also saw a rare day of canceled classes as two feet of snow was dumped on campus overnight. Students across campus rejoiced as they were given an opportunity to catch up on schoolwork or just enjoy a few drinks and a snowball fight.

Amidst the development of new buildings came another change within the college community. The Greek system was officially rerecognized after a 16-month review process initiated by President Fry. The transition was not always easy or smooth as Greek leadership, at times, clashed with new regulations imposed by the administration; but with open communication and compromise came détente. Recognition ultimately saved the Greek system from itself as safety issues and housing conditions mounted, threatening chapters across campus. Today, the Greek system is stronger than ever. While many of their traditions and celebrations we all enjoyed were maintained, new ones were initiated such as the First Frost concert.

When senior year arrived we were ready for whatever came our way; we were preparing for change. Many of us were applying for graduate school and to jobs, all while enjoying our last year in college. With the assistance of our amazing class leaders, monthly class activities from senior nights at local watering holes, Fall Fest (complete with a giant bonfire), and Senior surprise, brought us even closer together. It all culminated after finals and the annual Franklin and Marshall pilgrimage to Myrtle Beach, with graduation weekend. The theme of that weekend rings true now, we are part of an F&M legacy, whose liberal education and ever-changing experiences made us adaptive to any situation. Commencement Speaker, Dr. David T. Ellwood, empowered us to continue on this journey, while also asking us to be socially conscious.

This weekend also represents a change for many reasons. Our first few years of college, Homecoming Weekend was called Alumni Weekend. The change was meant to focus more on the current students by resurrecting old traditions, and initiating new ones. So here we are now, alumni, ready to claim our weekend, excited to catch up with friends and professors, observe the many changes on campus and bask in the glow of a traditional college experience.

“When you're finished changing, you're finished.” – Ben Franklin