

A Class of 2005 Class Reflection “Status”

When asked what would be the defining event of our college experience, many would probably say September 11. Only weeks into the first semester, we watched from our dorm rooms and the College Center the horror and destruction that took place that day. Indeed, it would shape not only our four years at F&M, but the way we (individually and collectively) view and navigate the world. In May of 2005, our own Commencement speaker encouraged us to be the ones “running up the stairs,” a reference to the brave men and women who charged into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon to save others while the structures around them crumbled.

I prefer to view our college experience through the lens of the changing technology over those four years. Most of us arrived to campus without a cell phone, and were thrilled to receive our iMac or iBook (in the jewel tone color of our choice) as our first “personal electronic device.” We captured frat parties and campus events on actual film, and spent our Sundays at CVS or the 24-hour Walmart anxiously waiting for our pictures to be developed. We used IM, not texts, to communicate, and had to rely on the fact that our friends would be where they said they would be once we ventured out for the night. It seems crazy now that most of our college lives went largely undocumented, and were relatively free of constant check-ins from family, live news updates, and other distractions that are now constants in our daily routines. Imagine if it had all been captured to the extent each of our lives is today – I suspect that many of us would have faced the repercussions of our nights in basements, bars, and running around campus before the

academic committees, professional associations and employers that have since reviewed and approved our character, judgment and/or discretion. Even when we acquired cell phones and digital cameras, we were reluctant to take them on most of our adventures for fear that they would end up in a puddle of beer, lost on the streets of Lancaster, or left behind on the bar at Hildy's or Brendee's while we were busy playing Cricket or Photo Hunt.

Of all of the technological advances during our four years at F&M, arguably the most transformative was (The) Facebook. Arriving on the scene just in time for our last semester, it was a game changer. We received access to the official Relationship Status of our classmates (even if they were "Complicated"), a creative outlet through the formation of Groups (*e.g.* I Peed on Ben) and a forum to post Albums of photos taken with those snazzy new digital cameras. Of all the new and exciting devices and platforms released while we were living in that Amish paradise, Facebook is the one that has managed to keep us all connected over these last ten years. It is still our go-to source of information for Relationship Status, and those photos too – although now we don't even need to have enough content for a whole Album. Through this social media phenomenon, we have been able to track, and Like, each other's personal and professional successes.

It is likely that the phrase "I saw that on Facebook..." will be uttered many times over our Reunion Weekend. While the due diligence we conduct on the only "blue book" any of us ever wants to use again will be a great conversation starter, it is important to remember that there is so much more that each of us have experienced and accomplished in the last ten years than can possibly be captured in a Status update or even a full Timeline. So, when you see your fellow classmates on campus this weekend, ask about that baby, house, job,

vacation, or Relationship Status, and also about everything we each have decided not to Share – but don't hesitate to snap and post a few pics using those fancy iPhones, including a selfie or two, with your fellow Dips!

Submitted by Christine M Corkran '05, Alumni Association Board Treasurer, in celebration of the Franklin & Marshall College Class of 2005 Ten Year Reunion