

Leadership and Community

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I grew up in San Jose and had never been to Fresno before enrolling at Fresno Pacific. It was scary being away from home and my first year I was not sure what to expect. I planned to do a double major in psychology and pre-health hoping to become a psychiatrist. Like most first-year college students living away from home for the first time, I was homesick and lost for the first couple of months.

I am a member of the Greek Orthodox Church and have Ethiopian and north-western European ethnic roots. This made me unique at Fresno Pacific but the student body itself is quite diverse both culturally and terms of Christian affiliations and the university quickly provided an additional “family” for me due to its strong commitment to community.

On arrival I was placed in a dormitory module with twenty girls and as crazy as this might sound, over the course of the year we did become our own unique community. I decided to get more involved in the FPU world by running for the position of Freshman Class Senator. I was lucky enough to be supported and I discovered a passion for politics while serving in this role. I also decided to change my major and immediately felt what might be called “love” and an even stronger commitment to this unique place.

In the years that followed I continued to serve in student government positions, pushing forward personal dreams of involvement in international politics while supporting the student community. As a Sophomore I again served as a Senate representative and became even more aware not only of FPU student concerns (which I pushed) but also the positions taken by faculty and staff.

During my junior year I ran for an executive position: Vice-President of the student body. This was scary at first, but I learned much about working with other people, decision-making practices, what it takes to lead and the politics behind every decision. Finally, during my senior year, I served as President of the Student Body. This was an even more daunting responsibility since students viewed me as their “voice” on many important committees. I became someone everyone seemed to want to talk to in order to share their concerns.

During the period 2015-2019, Fresno Pacific went through several leadership changes at the highest levels. I had to learn to deal with these transitions,

with different leadership and decision-making styles as well as ideological positions. All of this prepared me well for future career paths, learning how to serve a large and diverse university community.

What especially makes students have a good experience at Fresno Pacific is the people they interact with at so many levels --- from the people who make sure that the environment is clean and green to the faculty members who assign grades and shape students viewpoints and character in so many different ways. Every student of course has their own experiences, and I cannot say that every day at FPU was a good one for me, but I am carrying forward many important lessons that will hopefully guide me in the next chapter of my life.