

*NOTE: Emily Barranco graduated in May 2008, and sent us this kind letter in August 2010.*

Dear members of the TCNJ philosophy faculty,

You may or may not remember me. I was a student in the philosophy department who graduated two years ago. I am currently at the University of California, Davis, working on my Ph.D. in philosophy. I was sitting at my desk, preparing for my lecture tomorrow (I am teaching my own class now!) and my mind wandered back to Bliss Hall and my time at TCNJ. I wanted to email you all to say thank you.

Philosophy has been such a joy in my life and it was really all of you that inspired me. From the moment I started, as the only incoming freshman in the philosophy department, I had a feeling it was the place for me, but seeing so much passion for the subject from my professors really helped me to fall even more in love with it. The classes that I took were incredibly good, and I only realized how good when I stepped out into the world of philosophy and saw the standard at other schools. In the UC system undergrads get lost and classes can be confusing and impersonal. The students are asked to write papers almost exclusively from prompts and they graduate without ever having written an original piece of philosophy. When I talked to my colleagues I found that most have had a similar experience in undergrad. But I have had the privilege of being taught how to come up with my own arguments and work on my own projects. From class structure, to enthusiasm, to readings and assignments, my experience at TCNJ was truly excellent. I was inspired and incredibly well prepared for graduate school.

Now that I am teaching for the first time, I think back more and more to my undergrad classes and how they were taught. I realize that I learned so much, not just about philosophy, but about teaching philosophy as well. You have been incredible models of how to teach.

If I can inspire my students half as much as all of you have inspired me, I will be ecstatic.

I think that people don't stop to point out the good things in life nearly enough so I wanted to stop and write this message. And now I will get back to figuring out the best way to teach my students about Kant tomorrow! Wish me luck :)

I hope you all are well!

Best,

Emily Barranco