

My high school's patron saint, St Francis De Sales, has a very simple quote that served as the foundation of my high school community, my family, and my young adult life. "Be who you are and be that well." I have always loved this quote because as young adults we go through so much change and challenges it's so important always to remember to be proud of who you are and continue to share your amazing self with the world. You don't need to put on a mask or pretend to be anyone but yourself because the easiest and best thing to be is you. On my very first day of Manresa when I balanced on my head and met some of my best friends still to this day, I realized that Xavier University was the place that was going to allow me to do exactly that. Through my last 4 years, I can say I have done nothing short of always unapologetically being myself and being that well. I have been a part of amazing programs that have not only allowed me to always be my most authentic self but to grow into it and help others grow into themselves. Programs like Manresa, Ignatian Leaders, Xavier Element, and Delta Sigma Pi have all impacted my life in significant ways, but I think my favorite part has been being a mentor for the younger generation of Xavier students.

Xavier has given me the tools and skills to accomplish so much in my 4 years here but most importantly it has given me the people and the support system. Here at Xavier I found my best friends who made moving 8 and a half hours away from home a breeze. I met professors and mentors who have

always been open and honest with me and advising me both professionally and personally. I met younger generations of Xavier students who have inspired me in so many ways. I reconnected with my faith and met amazing people who have encouraged me. I have laughed, cried, failed, succeeded, created, mentored, learned, and been pushed and I have been able to do all of it because of the people. My family always asks me what makes Xavier so special and finally, as a graduating senior, I am able to answer that question with the simple answer of, the people. Yes, the Jesuit values are amazing, the education is great, the caf cookies slap, the campus is pretty but without the people that make this place home my experience, and as everyone says "the best 4 years of my life" would have not been what they were.

While it's sad to see this door close and think about leaving this place that has become home, those people and connections we have built will never leave us. The memories may fizzle but the people never will, THAT is what makes Xavier so special. Even in the real world, those people will still pick us up when we fall, help us when we need an extra hand, push us when we need a push, and be a shoulder to laugh or cry (or both) when we need them. Before I start crying I'm going to stop talking but I want to circle back to that quote that I started with. Remember to always "Be who you are and be the well" and surround yourself with people who will allow you to do exactly that.