

Opinion

Students Should Attend CSA Day

By Shae-Lynn Henderson, Staff Writer

Celebrating Student Achievement (CSA) Day at Meredith College is a day full of presentations, performances and ceremonies to celebrate the wonderful student body and their accomplishments. However, many students see CSA Day as just a day off of classes. CSA Day is incredibly important to our peers and showing up for them is imperative.

CSA Day at Meredith College will be hosted on April 7 in a hybrid format. After being online for the past two years, there will be somewhat of a return to normalcy with a vast array of events to attend.

With CSA Day being such a long-standing tradition at Meredith and it being somewhat rare in comparison to other schools, I found it surprising how few students, particularly freshmen, knew about the event and how even fewer planned on attending.

I remember being a prospective student last April and being able to celebrate the day virtu-

ally while living in South Africa. It was absolutely fascinating finding departments that interested me and learning something new about different topics. It seems only fitting to now attend in person and enjoy celebrating fellow students' achievements.

In many ways, it's understandable why so few would be in attendance—no one seems to know what or when it is and students have the opportunity to take advantage of a day off from classes and campus activities.

I am sure I can attest for many when I say it has been a whirlwind of a semester. Time seems to simultaneously be going fast and slow as well as being stressful, which has left many spinning heads. Who can keep track of days and time and not use the day to catch up on some much needed sleep or work?

With that said, in many ways that makes me want to attend even more. Students partaking in CSA Day have spent so much

energy and time in their research, performances and work. Feeling the same academic pressure as everyone else, it would be a shame for their achievements not to be appreciated to their fullest extent.

I find the thought of cheering my friends and classmates on as they explore something they are passionate about to be a truly rewarding experience. It is a great opportunity for growth. I think of the opportunities to not only grow as a student in the pursuit of knowledge, but also to grow my circle of people with similar interests. CSA Day is a great time to meet people in the same field as you who can help navigate your field of interest.

There is no reason why a balance cannot be found between rest, work and supporting your peers. The whole day does not need to be spent at CSA Day. One can review the schedule, attend whatever appeals to them and thereafter spend the day however they choose. For many students, this will be their first mostly in-person

CSA Day, so I think it would be beneficial to experience the normal version at least once. Don't make an assumption about the event until you have experienced it. If it's enjoyable, there are many to come in the future to enjoy as well, but if not, you do not have to go again.

The benefit goes far beyond that of participants and is useful to attendees. By the time Meredith students graduate, 51% conduct undergraduate research in partnership with faculty mentors. While it may seem daunting, attending CSA Day can give invaluable insight into how one could become involved in research or deeper learning in a content area.

CSA Day is filled with the excitement and exhilaration of celebrating student achievement. Find balance and carve out at least a fraction of time to spend growing as a student, individual and community in attending the day's event. In a day filled with appreciation, let's choose to appreciate this wonderful opportunity together.

CSA Day's Hybrid Presentation Format Doesn't Benefit Students

By Ally Cefalu, A&E Editor

As a senior, I have seen one in-person and two virtual CSA Days. Presenting an oral presentation my freshman year was a challenging yet rewarding experience, and I'm glad I had the chance to share the research I was and still am so passionate about.

When I presented in person, I worked closely with my faculty advisor to rehearse within the time limit, add slides at the end of my presentation for potential questions and project my voice to an audience. Each of these skills has helped me gain confidence both inside and outside the classroom as I've worked on many more presentations throughout my undergraduate career.

Now that CSA Day is occurring in a hybrid format, I feel that students do not have the opportunity to catch up on these skills that

have been so difficult to practice over the last few years. This year, oral presentations are pre-recorded, posted on Meredith's CSA Day YouTube page and then presentations are watched during sessions throughout the day on April 7 with a live question and answer session.

If groups of students, faculty and guests will be gathering in classrooms to watch the presentations, why can't students present in person? I consider myself very conscious of the hazards presented by COVID-19 and suspect this might be why the presenters are not speaking live. Yes, it is a potential risk to remain in a classroom with a large number of people for an entire presentation session. But it makes no difference whether or not you are in the room presenting, or in the room sitting and watching a recorded presentation.

I think it would have been possible for Meredith to require masks only for CSA Day, and then return to the current Community Standards the day after. This would have given students an opportunity to practice their oral presentation skills which I believe are so valuable.

During the pandemic, Meredith did a great job of making sure that students were still able to present their information through a YouTube channel. I almost felt that my research would reach more people on the internet than it would in a presentation room in Ledford. But what was obviously missing from the virtual CSA experience was the development of live presentation skills.

The virtual submission of presentation videos also adds additional work to students who are already feeling the pressure of the

spring semester. While learning how to fluently use Zoom recording technology is important in this new age, taking the time to create a presentation and record it (sometimes with multiple takes) is often more tedious than presenting to a live audience.

It is important that as we safely ease back into in-person events, students are encouraged to practice public speaking and presentation skills that are necessary beyond college. CSA Day is a safe and encouraging place for this to begin for students who have been getting by with virtual presentations for the past two years. By having students record their oral presentations, the College is doing them a disservice and not pushing students to develop important skills.

Too Many Traditions, Too Little Time

By Elinor Shelp-Peck, Co-Editor in Chief

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many Meredith College traditions have been canceled, modified or postponed. This has greatly impacted many Meredith students' experiences, especially at a school that values traditions so highly. Given the recent alterations to Meredith's on-campus COVID-19 policies, the College now has a chance to make up for the missed traditions. However, this does not necessarily mean they need to.

As a senior, I have missed out on quite a few monumental Meredith traditions, such as an in-

person Ring Dinner, Tea For Two and multiple Stunts and Formals. Granted, I did have a full year and a semester on campus and was able to fully participate in our freshman year traditions, like Fire and Water.

When I heard Meredith was planning on trying to make-up the seniors' Ring Dinner I had mixed emotions. If you told me a year and a half ago that I could make-up Ring Dinner I probably would have been elated, but at this point, I have mostly accepted our Ring Dinner from the diluted version

of the event that it was. Despite these alterations, I still got to spend time with my friends, dress up, take fun pictures and wear my onyx.

Additionally, another quailm that I have with shoving all of the missed traditions into the second half of the semester is burnout. At this point of the semester, I am feeling relatively burnt out and overextended, as I am sure many others are too. However, as a senior I feel almost obligated to participate in all of these last minute events prior to

graduation. Inevitably, this will just exacerbate the problem, especially with the seniors' 22nd Night happening immediately after Ring Dinner.

On March 29, the Class of 2022 received an email from Casey Corpening, senior class president, on behalf of the Office for Student Leadership and Service. This email included a list of 14 traditions or events that will take place between March 29 and May 14, 2022. Not only is this overwhelming, but I feel they are unnecessary.

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