

## Walk of Faith on campus

### Sara Stigen

The answer to problems in college is the same as the answer when you're out of college—put your faith in God.

Many children are brought up in loving Christian families with positive influences in their lives every day. But what happens when the water wings are taken away and that child is sent off to float alone at a public college? As a Christian in a public college setting, you not only have to worry about the academic challenges but also have to steer clear of many potentially threatening situations such as new relationships, parties, and secular worldviews.

**As a WELS college student, I have been faced with many of those challenges.** I was brought up in a strong Christian household and attended a small WELS K-8 school. I did go to the public high school in town and therefore have had more time to adjust to the lifestyle of a secular setting. I fervently looked for a small private Christian college. Unfortunately, I could not afford to attend a private school and chose to attend a public university.

I was given all the essentials to lead a strong Christian life. I was not worried when it came down to the decisions I would make in college. Of course, one of the first roadblocks was partying. I was raised to use discernment when making decisions—if it felt wrong, it most likely was. I cannot say that I completely avoided potentially harmful situations because going out to parties is obviously a part of social life on public or Christian campuses. As part of the party scene, I have found that drinking to excess is often done to forget stress or solve life problems. Unfortunately, neither of these are the outcomes of getting drunk. Instead of putting in the effort to help themselves, many college students turn to hazardous situations. But the answer to problems in college is the same as the answer when you're out of college—put your faith in God instead of making questionable choices.

The academic aspect of college life did not come as much of a shock to me. As a high school student, I strove to do my best with the thought that if I have been blessed with the talent and opportunity to do well, I shouldn't take that for granted. The only major change in college for me is possibly a personality glitch. I am a vocal and sociable person, so going into classes where everyone seems ashamed to talk is uncomfortable for me. When that happens, I just talk more. I like that because the professor usually remembers me.

**One important part of campus life is campus ministry.** We have been blessed with a talented staff member from the local congregation who brings Bible study to us, on campus, every Thursday night. At this gathering, we have a brief worship service and then conclude with pizza and a Bible study or game. The family of faith we have formed through this weekly gathering is irreplaceable to me because it gives the sense of what any congregation is supposed to feel—unity through Christ.

College life is undeniably a big transition for every student, but as a Christian living among unbelievers, it all comes down to how people perceive you and how you perceive others. It is just another step on your individual walk with Christ. The opportunities are there for Christians on a public campus. It may just have to be a personal priority to seek out the resources to help you continue your walk of faith.

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Volume 96. Number 5.

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