

Hi, everyone. My name is Jonathan Pappalardo and I'm a communications studies graduate from the class of 2010.

It's hard for even me to believe, but ten years have passed since I finished my first year as a student at Colby-Sawyer. As an only child, I had no perspective on college life, so I took for granted how freely the president walked around and greeted students by name. I took for granted how easily I could host a radio show and write for the newspaper during my first semester. I took for granted how incredible it was to have these opportunities available to me so early on. I took for granted that this practice isn't customary, much less encouraged, at most colleges.

What I've never taken for granted is just what Colby-Sawyer means to me. When I sum up my experience, I think back to those early days, when the program director was naive enough to let a kid with a passion for country music, and zero on-air experience host a weekly two-hour radio show. I think about the editor who let me write for the newspaper even though I had no idea how to properly write a news story. But more importantly, I look upon those early days and see just how far I came in four short years. I never would've risen through the ranks to become Station Manager of WSCS and News Editor of *The Courier* if it weren't for the extraordinary guidance I received from my professors, peers and friends.

I still rely on that guidance today, albeit indirectly. My career choices have been influenced by Hester Fuller, who guided me through internships with WGBH and WBZ NewsRadio 1030 and sparked my love of audio editing. It continues with Donna Berghorn, who fostered my love of the written word and taught me how to be curious about the world around me. And I'll always be indebted to MB, who did more to influence my love of the arts than anyone else at Colby-Sawyer. Ann Page Stecker did the same, with regards to the natural world and the writers who make it come alive with their thoughts and observations.

As I say these things, I'm sitting in a production studio at 95.9 WATD-FM, where I've been assisting with their morning show going on seven years now. I create and edit podcasts of show content and most recently have produced commercials that have gone to air. I'm also writing for my local newspaper, *The Duxbury Clipper* and thinking critically about country music as a blogger for My Kind of Country. These career choices are a direct result of my education at Colby-Sawyer, and have placed me on a path that aligns directly with what I learned in college.

What I never anticipated in my post collegiate life was the invitation to join the Board of Trustees, which happened in 2014. As a Winton-Black Trustee, I've had a front row seat as Colby-Sawyer embarks on this

profound period of transition with the change in leadership. To bear witness to the difficult decisions Sue Stuebner has had to make while simultaneously learning the context behind those decisions has been fascinating. I've learned how to set aside personal feelings to critically evaluate job performance, a skill that has proven difficult to master.

From my vantage point, Colby-Sawyer has the right leadership in President Stuebner to guide the college through these rough waters into a promising and bright future. Change is never an easy pill to swallow, but as a Winton-Black trustee, I've learned it's not just necessary but critical. These are difficult times for not just Colby-Sawyer but small liberal arts colleges in general. No one knows what the future holds, but I am more than confident that Colby-Sawyer will continue to thrive in the years and decades to come.

My time on the board, which concluded in May, was an invaluable learning experience I'll take with me into my future endeavors. While I won't be present to see the implementation of Sue's strategic plan or witness her newly appointed senior leadership team in action, I'll still be involved through my new role in the President's Alumni Advisory Committee. To continue my relationship with Colby-Sawyer during this critical juncture is very important to me. My time on the board might be

over, but I'm as committed as ever to continuing my small role in helping Colby-Sawyer succeed.