Trisha Teig

To accurately describe Trisha's essence not only to me but also to the Colorado Women's College and the University of Denver, would still fall short of doing justice to her impact. The few words I can mustard would include inspirational, honest, diligent, compassionate, and more that escape me at this very moment.

To add validity to this statement, let me start at the beginning. A bright-eyed, 18-year-old queer woman of color enters a Colorado Women's College class, confronted by new peers and taught by a white woman. "I chose this college for a reason, and this was to be expected for any class," I thought looking at the title of "inclusive leadership" on the PowerPoint. Yet, Trisha defied all expectations. The sincerity of her discussion regarding her power dynamics vis-à-vis us as students (even if not all comprehended the implications) was truly refreshing. This approach mirrors Paulo Freire's educational ideals (as referenced in the later-assigned Pedagogy of the Oppressed) and resonated throughout my interactions within and beyond her classroom. Her perception of her role at the university, both within and beyond the classroom, transcended the traditional role of imparting knowledge to young minds. She acted as a bridge, connecting students to anything that would bring a richer college experience, even when every so often it was tainted by others. She understood that when a student approached her about a late assignment, her responsibility wasn't merely to reprimand or dismiss, but to delve deeper. She probed and sought understanding with empathy and compassion. Rarely do I encounter professors who consistently extend their accessibility for aid both within and beyond the walls of learning.

The start of COVID-19 posed challenges, transitioning from online to masked classes, and back to a semblance of "normalcy." Trisha facilitated my pursuit of a Leadership minor, navigating the bureaucratic complexity involved. When I ended up with a concussion early in the pandemic, Trisha not only accommodated my circumstances but also reminded me that resilience alone wouldn't earn my degree; rest and self-care were just as important. While others might have viewed my accident as "just another hurdle for Imani," Trisha recognized my struggle as a genuine impediment to my education. She celebrated my progress and encouraged my endeavors, but never at the expense of my overall well-being – both physical and emotional. She even demonstrated her own advice by taking the time required when her personal life demanded attention over a class. To have a mentor who doesn't speak hollow words was inspiring.

This might appear unusual but consider this: witnessing a woman in a prominent position prioritize rest and care, while concurrently urging her students to do the same, reinforces the lessons taught in our classes. She embodies leadership not solely through theoretical discussions and readings, but also through her own conduct. She acknowledges her fallibility, rectifying missteps with grace when acknowledged. Drawing from her own experiences, she passes on wisdom and forges new quests for each new student entering her class. She leads through example and learns alongside us.

Trisha has nurtured my intellectual curiosity across diverse domains and fervently supports my educational pursuits in any direction I choose, underpinned by profound love and concern for my future.

Trisha encapsulates the University's cherished values: "In all that we do, we strive for excellence, innovation, engagement, integrity, and inclusiveness." Among the plethora of professors, I've encountered during my four years, none have embraced these values as genuinely and unselfishly as Trisha, not merely for her institutional occupation, but for her students and the broader communities they themselves serve.

No singular word showcases my sentiments toward Trisha except "love." Love for the intellectual camaraderie we've shared, exploring theories and paradigms. Love for the unguarded self-expression I've found in her company. Love for her contributions to me, the Colorado Women's College, and beyond. It's akin to an intellectual crush – one might read their works, attend their lectures, and become captivated by their intellectual prowess, the workings of their mind, and even glimpses of their humanity beyond their public persona. When you see them, when you listen to them, when they embody their teachings, it all becomes apparent. They exemplify "Speaking Truth to Power," undertaking the endeavors many advocates but struggle to execute consistently. While it might sound wild, it's genuinely how I feel. I doubt I've ever met a professor, or an individual for that matter, who could intellectually challenge me to transcend my limitations and foster such profound thoughts. Compassionate, modest, devoted, and more – in search of a person who strives for justice beyond the confines of their role as an educator, that person is Trisha.