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Now: Reflection on Furman as it is now

Imani-Grace King '19

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United Ministries Executive Director **Tony McDade '79** (top right) shows students the food pantry at the nonprofit, which assists community members with rent, utilities, medication and food. From left, Assistant Director for Employer Engagement Steve Hairston, **Emm Allison '20**, **Samuel Jones '19**, Assistant Director of Career Learning Communities Kristin Irwin, **Lauren Hood '19** and **Childs '20**.



Students walk to their next destination during the nonprofit trek in Greenville, South Carolina.

NOW



IMANI-GRACE KING '19

As a communication studies and politics and international affairs double major, I haven't had a lot of opportunities to take classes outside of my disciplines. But this last semester of college, I was finally able to. While looking through our course catalog, I had a brilliant epiphany. I am a human who is developing — I should take human development.

In my opinion, the most thought-provoking element of the class was its simple definition. Human development is defined as the study of how humans both change and remain the same over time. And if we think about it, that is reflected in our journey here at Furman. There are things about us now that are the same as when we were first-year students, but there are also aspects of us that are profoundly different as graduating seniors. I think our families, friends, coaches and professors can attest to this change. In the course, we discussed domains of development, and to me, those domains reflect my time at Furman.

One domain is physical. We had plans to go to Furman gym, to not eat excessive amounts of processed food, and to drink plenty of water and eat vitamins. But those plans our first year were tough. We then took the mandatory health and wellness class and had an existential crisis over our unhealthy habits.

We then decided to value the idea of exercise, green food and self-care.

Another domain is emotional. We developed a network to support and encourage us during times of sheer joy and endless laughter, as well as times of unforeseen hardship and pain. We developed emotional bonds through our teams, organizations and classes and met groups of people that if we had not met them, our lives would be radically different.

The last domain is cognitive. The past four years our minds have been stretching and expanding through rigor and intensive thinking. We now know the difference between information and knowledge. We discovered that engaged learning outside the classroom is amazing. We developed intellectually and culturally during our time here and are so positively changed because it.

Furman sparked in us a curiosity about the world. Together at Furman we encouraged and challenged each other, and we learned and grew together.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Imani-Grace King '19 delivered the student commencement speech in May. ♦