While I finish the last few pages of my first draft, I wanted to share something else about my academic experience: I am all about that Five College life. I’ve taken one course at Hampshire, Amherst, Mount Holyoke, and two at Smith. I didn’t set out for this accomplishment – it worked in my favor that there were classes that I was actually interested in and was able to fit in my schedule. I also lucked out in that BDIC encourages students to take courses at the other schools as part of your curriculum, but I know that a lot of departments will accept Five College courses towards your major requirements. I think everyone should at least try to take advantage of the amazing opportunity that is the Five College Consortium.

• Academic Opportunities: At Amherst, I explored the digital cultures in Africa; at Hampshire, I studied eighteenth-century print culture; at Mount Holyoke I mapped industrialization’s effects on the cholera epidemic; and currently at Smith I’m delving into archival materials and material culture. You have a wide range of
specialties and niche studies to explore with over 5,000 courses being offered each semester in the consortium. You can even arrange independent studies with Five College professors if there’s someone who has similar research interests as you.

- **Exploring a new campus**: Sometimes, you just need to get away from UMass for a change of scenery. And attending classes at the other campuses is a great way to take part in the activities and **events of the other schools**. For example, I attended Hampshire Halloween my sophomore year, frequented the [Mead Art Museum](https://www.umass.edu/artmuseum) at Amherst last semester, and scored tickets for Viola Davis at Smith this semester.

- **A New Perspective**: Each school has a different atmosphere and approach to learning, which is daunting but really exciting. Students who choose to attend Smith or Mount Holyoke come in with a very different mindset than a student who goes to Hampshire or Amherst. Meeting new people, having in-depth conversations, or trying out new learning styles has been an important part of my time at UMass, and I’ve felt like taking advantage of the [Five College Interchange](https://www.umass.edu/five-college) has only emphasized that part of my experience.

The biggest issue for most people is the travel time from campus to campus. MHC and Smith are about forty minutes away via PVTA, which can really eat up your afternoon. Even Amherst College, which is 10-15 minutes by bus, means spending a lot of time waiting for buses. But I found that **making the most of my commute** – whether I was reading or studying – helped the time pass, and it was less of a hassle than I expected. It shouldn't be the one thing stopping you from trying something new.

It’s still early for course registration, but definitely keep in mind the [Five College Course Catalog](https://www.umass.edu/five-college) when it comes time. It’s been one of the best decisions I’ve made here at UMass, not only for exploring my academic opportunities but in getting to new people and places in the community.

**Blog Column:**

* [A Moral Voyage](https://www.honors.umass.edu/blog/eesten/moral-voyage-five-college-life)*

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