

I no longer believe that service and grandeur are mutually exclusive. The intention behind building houses and sowing gardens with bare hands is an admirable way to give back. However, I refuse to let generosity sit on the back burner until the next organized service project rolls around. Service is a mindset that beautifully manifests itself in intimate, ordinary ways. Daily service looks like holding the door for the student behind me in the CHSS building, lending my umbrella to my coworker in the unpredictable Huntsville weather, or being extra gracious with an overwhelmed Chick-fil-A worker. Tiny fires of service are contagious, so that is where I will continue to channel the outpouring of my heart for servanthood. Sam Houston is only as healthy as its outlying students are visible, and I hope I have inspired an attitude of fruitful microservice through subtle (yet bold) acts of neighborly love.

When I refused to welcome collaboration into my education, my stubbornness weakened my growth. My experiences are infinitely richer when I humble myself to learn from the flourishing minds around me. My grades get boosted, and I am more connected to my classmates. I actively collaborate with my peers by participating in class discussions, continuing academic dialogue outside class, and forming study groups. These actions require me to view my peers as more than a face in the hallway. It humanizes the college experiences and creates human connection, which bleeds into microservice. The common fear of judgment found in academic bubbles vanishes when students feel recognized and valued. And isn't that the very heart of service? A collective sense of belonging on our campus is achievable by viewing academia through an outreach lens. The common pursuit of a goal (like graduating) is rare and powerful. While we individually race toward our diplomas, I will continue to serve my fellow Bearkats in unexpected places. We are single fragments in a giant, mismatched mosaic; the image is only visible when we zoom out and see the beauty of our interconnectedness. If the measure of my

life is service, then it must be identifying the needs of others and meeting them in a way that stokes connection and community. I would not be here if it were not for the Bearkats who served me in my moments of need, and I can only hope to do the same for others.