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Finding Balance in Her Life

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Finding balance in her life



Miranda Miller '06 with Kiwi, her first Holstein dairy cow.

Miranda Miller's life is like a puzzle she fits together seamlessly each day.

Miller '06 darts around town and campus in her red Ford Focus, pausing only to refuel at a drive-through coffee stand. She wears go-anywhere, no-nonsense slacks and a button-down blouse, her shoulder-length chestnut hair tied

back in a ponytail.

Waiting for a class to begin, she addresses envelopes to her peer advisees, then flips open her laptop to type a note. A reminder is scrawled on her hand in ink; she has run out of room in her planner.

From the time her alarm rings at 6 a.m. until she logs off at midnight, Miller balances a 3.9 GPA in three majors — elementary education, business and mass communication — plus a part-time law office job, student teaching and more. On weekends she gets ahead on assignments between chores on her family's Tillamook dairy farm.

Miller had planned to study agricultural marketing at Oregon State University. Her plans changed in 2000, when she served as Oregon Dairy Princess, promoting milk and the dairy industry throughout the state. Her responsibilities included speaking to school children.

"I loved working with kids, but I had never thought about a teaching degree," Miller said. Interacting with hundreds of children during her reign led her to consider a career in education.

She applied to Linfield after meeting Dave Haugeberg, a McMinnville attorney and a Linfield College trustee, at an agricultural event in McMinnville where she spoke.

"She was very articulate, persuasive and overall a charming young woman," said Haugeberg, who gave Miller a part-time job at his law office. "I thought to myself, 'She has to go to Linfield.'"

Faculty in the Departments of Business, Elementary Education and Mass Communication have been instrumental in helping Miller chart her future.

"Miranda has a great focus and motivation to achieve certain academic goals at Linfield," said Edward Gans, assistant professor of mass communication. "We have been able to work with her to integrate her interests into the curriculum and the classroom, and hopefully, to help her realize her goals."

As secretary of Kappa Delta Phi educational honor society, a former producer of Wildcat Productions, a Linfield Colloquium peer adviser, a 4-H leader and a member of the Linfield Bowling Club, Miller seems to have more energy than a roomful of kindergarteners on a rainy day. But she credits her success to organization and discipline.

"By the fifth grade I had learned about the work ethic, doing things right the first time and multitasking," Miller said.

She's no grind, however: Miller has an annual pass to Disneyland, visiting regularly with her parents and younger sister.

This fall, Miller taught in the third-grade class of Wendy (Levig) Autencio '88 at Memorial Elementary School in McMinnville.

"I see Miranda being so excited about teaching, and it inspires me," Autencio said. "She brings a high energy to the classroom that works well with the kids."

Although she loves teaching, Miller has not ruled out a job promoting the dairy industry when she graduates in May. "The industry has given me so much," she said. "It has shaped where I am and who I am today, and I would just like to give back."

— Laura Graham '07



Miranda Miller reads a story to a third-grade class at Memorial Elementary School, where she student-taught in the fall with Wendy (Levig) Autencio '88.