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From the President

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

The last chill of winter blew across Bill Alford Field yesterday as our talented women's lacrosse team opened the season by beating the nation's second-ranked team. Our students won because they worked hard, played smart, and were guided by an incredible coach, Karen Henning, who nurtures and surfaces the deepest talents of our students. I shared the sideline with Colby faculty, students, parents, and alumni, enjoying the thrills of the game and wishing spring a hastened arrival.

The arrival of spring, while cause for celebration, also creates unease on campus. The unease is rooted in the knowledge that commencement is within sight for our seniors. One professor at the game pointed out a student who had invigorated his entire class with her determination to not just learn but master the course material. Another spoke of a student who had grown over the four years to become a highly skilled researcher. We relish their achievements, and we are not ready to have them say goodbye.

Taking leave of Colby is also an unwelcome thought to many of our students, even to those who have appealing jobs and graduate school placements secured. The Colby experience—deeply intellectual but never pretentious, created out of transformative and lasting relationships with faculty and friends, and enriched by a spectacular natural setting—is a singular opportunity. It is tough to let it go.

I have realized recently that our seniors are hardly alone in wanting to hold onto the magic of Colby. Their parents, while welcoming the end of tuition payments, are not ready to have the

Colby experience end either. I feel the emotions of parents as they attend their child's last collegiate performance or competition (or both). These events are the culmination of two decades of remarkable love, sacrifice, and support.

I meet parents who drive 400 miles every Friday to attend a game. Others tune in to every webcast available, watching their children perform from afar. They are fueled by the growth and accomplishments of their children and replenished by the community of parents who organize meals on the road, who share the burdens and costs of travel. One father told me that he has gone through four cars and hundreds of thousands of miles traveling to his son's high school and Colby games. And there was little doubt that he would do it all over again if he could.

These parents give notice that no student makes it to Colby on her or his own, and no student makes it through the rigors of the College without regular support and an occasional push in the right direction. Achievement in the classroom and in life is a team sport at Colby, where every success lifts us all. That is a wonderful attribute of our community that persists across seasons and ties us together long after diplomas are distributed.

David A. Greene