

To whom it may concern,

Have you ever met someone who struck a cord of inspiration so deep that you felt like you just *had* to talk to them? Just *had* to engage with them and learn what it is about that person that made them who they were, so you could have a bit of that magic in your own life?

I had my first class with Sara Woolley when I was a sophomore at City Tech. Everything from her energy to the way that she spoke made it clear that she was extremely knowledgeable about her work and her industry. She engaged with students as if they were already professionals in the field, not children who needed to be babied, but as adults who simply needed a guide and a test of our limits. And test us she did. While I could not appreciate it fully at the time, one of my favorite characteristics about Professor Woolley is how she is not afraid to challenge students. Challenge their preconceptions, challenge their comfort zones, and challenge their skills in a manner that forces the individual to learn in some way, shape, or form, even if it's not the one you'd expect. I thought I wanted to be an illustrator, but Professor Woolley's teaching of her craft was so in-depth that it made me question what I really wanted. Those questions can be scary for a 19-year-old who was so sure just 3 months prior about her whole career path and now just felt lost. One thing I loved about Professor Woolley as a teacher is her sensitivity to the emotions and lives of her students. She was the first teacher that spoke to us about industry standards not just from the context of money, but from the context of being a person with a life and history and emotions; from the context of being human. I was never put down for not knowing what I wanted and questioning certain things about my relation to the industry. Having that encouragement from an inspiration like her allowed me to move forward in my journey with a greater sense of ease and bravery.

Fast forward almost 4 years, and I had the honor and the pleasure of having Sara as my professor again, this time for the Senior Project. This time, I was more knowledgeable of what career path I wanted to follow, had experiences that my peers and teachers at City Tech did not have, and had a desire to educate and challenge the people around me because of what I had learned. I could not think of a better mentor for me at that time. One of Professor Woolley's best traits is that she continuously stays curious and ambitious, and it's all for the sake of giving her students the best opportunities possible. The professional world is constantly changing and she understands that. When I told her about what I had learned at the Nickelodeon internship, she was the one who encouraged me to not only do a project about my newfound experience, but also have a talk with City Tech staff to see how we could better suit the program to the needs of students that want to be in that field. Professor Woolley is always thinking of her students beyond the classroom. She is an advocate for all of us that inspires us to think bigger than we could

possibly imagine. Even if you don't believe in you, she does, and everyone knows that if she doesn't mean it, she won't say it. Her honesty and support is bold and refreshing. I found myself limiting myself countless times during my final semester, and it was Sara who continuously pushed me forward, kept me flexible, and reminded me of the bigger picture so that I could bring everything I could be to the stage. At every step of the way, I knew I was working with someone who wanted me to succeed just as much, if not more than I did.

One of the most special things about Professor Woolley is *who* she is an inspiration for. As a young, queer daughter of Latinx immigrants, representation and inclusion is of the utmost importance to me, whether that's the people I'm working with or the characters I see in the media. To have someone who advocates, fights for, and inspires various demographics who have been historically overlooked and deprioritized is *vital* for the future of this industry and the future of this school. I have had conversations with countless students who have felt seen, heard, and supported by Sara Woolley countless times in a plethora of different ways. Some of us have been reached out to because she saw a job and thought we'd be a great fit or that it could be a growth opportunity. Some of us have had conversations about real-life issues such as trauma, mental health, or coming-of-age discussions with her that have made it easier to find our way in our work and in this world. Some just felt touched to have someone who remembered a small, seemingly insignificant detail, and brought up its relevance as we looked for what direction to take our next project in. Some of us, like me, found a lifelong mentor, not just as a fellow professional in the arts, but as a friend who continuously chooses to grow, relate, and inspire because of who she is as a person.

In 5 years of education at City Tech, Sara Woolley is one of only three teachers who I feel pushed my art, my mind, and my limits in such a way that has turned me into the person I am today. If I could do the senior project all over again (which no one in their right mind would ever do), I would gladly do it with Sara Woolley. Many students would agree that her expertise, honesty, and heart make her an irreplaceable part of the COMD staff, and one that has yet to guide a whole new group of young artists to be the best they can possibly be.

My highest of regards,
Garnet Rosario Garcia
Graduating Class of 2022

Senior Project FINAL:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CWY892v6X1AhXFjYVjRSgtmmGS25nYxT/view?usp=share_link

Senior Project Folder:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bqiJ9aw5J4jf3rfPrZmP5xbHPbhY5ZdA?usp=share_link

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/garnetdraws/>