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Editor's Note

Christopher DaSilva's essay, "David Deering, Custodian," examines the often under-appreciated custodial profession in order to highlight an integral part of Cal Poly. Although a profile essay, DaSilva's sustained and supported focus on the importance of Deering is similar to principles of argumentation. Describing Deering as "trustworthy," "intelligent," and "understanding," DaSilva builds a strong case for Deering's role as "the backbone of the school." Along with the use of precise language to express his thesis, DaSilva also manipulates the traditional form of an essay to give his profile a unique and effective style. Initially organizing his ideas around time, DaSilva illustrates Deering's rigorous, yet predictable schedule; as a result, the reader is able to follow Deering through his daily routine. While reading DaSilva's essay, consider the effect of the form as well as other ways to depict Deering's schedule. In the end, does DaSilva convince you of Deering's contributions?

David Deering, Custodian**Christopher DaSilva**

7am: Deering, a custodian in charge of maintaining the architecture building at Cal Poly, arrives at work. He quickly signs-in and hurries to the main office of the architecture building to get everything in order for the staff before they start their day. He vacuums the carpet, empties the trashcans, and gets the offices in order, which are usually unseen tasks but prove to be crucial to the proper functioning of the office. Every day of the week, Deering makes his rounds: cleaning floors, washing windows, emptying trash, cleaning bathrooms, restocking supplies, and keeping the building in order. Although his work gets very repetitive and monotonous, Deering does not complain. He is there "to support the staff and faculty which are supporting the students." Students. That is what it comes down to for Deering. In his eyes, everything that he does has one grand purpose: "to support the students—to support the future." Deering swears by this belief.

9am: Time for a 15 minute break. Deering quickly eats a bagel and drinks a cup of coffee before getting back to work. Deering begins cleaning the bathrooms. This is the most difficult and time consuming part of his day. Two to four hours are spent reviving the bathrooms back into suitable shape for the students. Deering re-stocks the toilet paper and the paper towels. He scrubs the urinals and disinfects the toilets. He washes the mirrors and sanitizes the sinks. Then, he picks up all the disgusting trash that students have so thoughtfully left on the ground for him to pick up. This is definitely not the most gratifying job. But, nevertheless, Deering remains surprisingly cheerful and positive towards the students who create the mess because he sees their more important qualities.

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12pm: Time for lunch. After a quick breather, Deering gets back to work. He cleans the hallways and public spaces while checking for problems that could affect the safety of the students and faculty. He works his way up to the third floor where he sees a girl who has spilled a thick liquid across the floor. "Clean this up. It's your job to clean," the girl says to Deering. Surely that makes Deering angry? Nope. Deering is too intelligent and too understanding to react negatively. He acknowledges that "Some people feel this way . . . that they can just throw anything on the ground and someone else, like me, will clean up after them." But instead of taking this as a personal attack, he simply believes that "These people need to grow up. They are living in their own childish worlds where they expect other people to take care of them. When they grow up into the real world . . . the job world, they are gonna be in trouble." Instead of disciplining the girl, Deering takes her into his office and, with his father-like desire to change the student's attitude, explains to her that when she gets into the job world, she will not be successful if she leaves all her trash and messes around for others to deal with. The girl's immaturity and remorse turn into a realization. Not only does he teach her an important lesson, but they also form a friendship that will last for the rest of the girl's stay at Cal Poly. When confronted with similar examples of disrespect, Deering has one approach: "I try to help them rather than hurt them."

3:30pm: Time to go home. Deering cleans his tools and stores them back in the supply closet. Then, he makes his final check of the building to make sure everything is in order. Before he can head home, Deering must sign out. Signing-in and signing-out every day is the one thing that Deering hates about his job. He absolutely loathes the act because it is demeaning. He is an adult, a smart, trustworthy adult, and he feels insulted that he has to sign in and out of his job everyday like an elementary school student taking roll. He wants the university to treat him like the responsible adult staff member that he really is. He wants trust. Deering is not the kind of person who would skip work or take an extraordinarily long lunch break to take advantage of the system. He has been working for Cal Poly for over ten years with an incredible work ethic. Every day he completes his required tasks thoroughly and properly. To Deering, that is all that matters. Teachers arrive, do their work, and leave when they please without signing in like little children. So why can't he be treated like the faculty members? The problem is that he is not trusted because he is a *custodian*. The stigma attached to the term *custodian* is one of the things that greatly bothers Deering. He hates to be treated differently than the rest of the faculty and staff at Cal Poly. He thinks it is awful to "micromanage anyone like a slave." Deering is constantly reminded of how disrespected custodians are.

Why is Deering so understanding of the school and the students who disrespect him? I, frankly, could not get past the animosity that I would have towards the ignorant students who disrespected me or made my job harder.

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But Deering can. He can because he sees past their little immaturities and to the bigger picture. He sees students that are dedicated to their work. He sees students that are following their passions. Deering sees these qualities that he, deep down inside, wished he had as a child. Deering has always been amazed at how the students, particularly the architecture students, have come to be interested in their fields. He thinks: "It's magical how the students have found some sort of passion in their early life, such as a love for building models, and have turned that passion into a career." Deering, too, had interests as a child that he wishes, more than anything, he would have followed. "Why didn't I focus on what I liked to do?" Deering wishes he hadn't grown out of that dreamy childhood state that aspires to do the things one loves forever. He wishes he hadn't cashed out his retirement fund too early like he did, forcing him to work two jobs now just to support himself. He wishes he could retire right now.

But despite his aging body, his deep regrets, and the challenges posed by his job, Deering remains positive. He may work a disrespected position, but he is never bitter about his job because he knows that he is the backbone of the school: he supports the teachers who impart their knowledge on the future, and he supports the students, who are the future. Deering loves working in a public environment, around people, around students. He feeds off the energy and passion that emanates from the educational atmosphere. He loves talking to students and seeing their amazing work on display. He loves directing parents and visiting students around his building. He loves telling prospective students why Cal Poly is so great. And more than anything, he loves to watch students grow as they follow their passions with such commitment. This is why Deering can stand to clean bathrooms every day. This is why Deering can empty trashcans for hours on end and still remain happy. He sees students that will grow up to be successful because of the amazing education they are given—the education that he helps to give them. This, according to Deering, is the most important part about being a custodian.

Christopher DaSilva is an architecture major at Cal Poly.