



**WCCS**

World Congress of Chiropractic Students

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@wccschiro

# Battles of a Chiropractic student

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**Narrative:** Higher education can be a battle, and being a chiropractic student brings many.

Here I share my thoughts on the difficulties of students and new graduates finding their own identity within the chiropractic community due to the ever-growing health politics.

**Indexing terms:** Chiropractic; World Congress of Chiropractic Students, WCCS; Leadership; new graduate; student perspective.

## Exposition

**W**hen starting my journey into chiropractic I was excited, amazed and enthralled. I felt with every cell in my body that I had finally found my true path, and couldn't wait to get started.

It was my first time going to a proper university, as my first degree was from a private art school and did not stand up to the massive scale of a university campus. I was eager to learn and devour as much information as I could get, as this was a tremendous career and life change for myself and I wanted to be the best student and future practitioner I could be.

Little did I know just how many battles I'd have to navigate over the course of my education in order to keep that enthusiasm and joy alive.

As a mature-aged student going back into the educational system, I wasn't naive enough to think that university would give me all the knowledge I required. I knew that, similar to martial arts, once you get your black belt, you've merely begun. Thus, I knew I had to get involved and navigate this new world as best I could through these early years.

Having been in the working class for many years I had a unique and broader scope of 'the real world' than most of my student cohort, and also had a realistic view of Chiropractic and how the

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general public viewed it. I knew that I was going into a profession where I would have to battle to continually rebut old slander, inherited bias and uneducated comments.

*'what I didn't realise was that I would have to battle against my own profession'*

Being a student gives you a unique perspective from what you could call *'ground zero'*, where we haven't yet decided who or how we want to be as this new entity. We're initially just along for the ride and only just start to pull ourselves together (hopefully) within the last year or so of our education. So effectively, we're unbiased towards one way of thinking or practising, and we allow our experiences and our education to help direct and influence us.

But when you start to recognise all the infighting and heavily biased ends of the spectrum that exist within the Chiropractic profession, it becomes confusing and disheartening. Vitalistic or mechanistic, mixers or straights, left, right or in the middle. It makes you feel lost and adrift and at the same time one is ridiculed if one does have a solid opinion either way. It's as though we all missed the memo of whose side we're meant to be on and why we're fighting against each other, rather than banding together to change the rumours and global inaccuracies about chiropractic.

Without fully understanding one perspective versus the other, it's challenging for students to have an opinion. Yet, we find ourselves behaving similarly as we did when we were children, passing off what we've heard from others as gospel. We don't take the time to question the *'truths'* we hear from the people around us. Instead we battle each other over who's right or wrong without knowing much about what we're talking about.

We hear comments from the public, mentors, teachers, tutors, other practitioners, about what chiropractic is and should be, but no one really ever asks us what we think.

*'We're considered non-entities because we don't yet have the experience or exposure that they have and therefore should congregate to their side of thinking because "that's the right way"'*

I really didn't want to come across as a *'negative Nelly'* but the reality is, it's not all cupcakes and roses at the ground level. It's hard, very hard, and the difficulties of what students have to contend with goes way beyond just the curriculum.

- ▶ How are we meant to gain a constructive, unbiased perspective of the profession, and allow ourselves to decide for ourselves what, who and how we wish to be within Chiropractic?
- ▶ How are we supposed to obtain our own individuality when our exposures are limited and our philosophical and theological discussions are diminished?

True, we don't have the experience and we don't have the understanding, yet. So, HELP US! Show us the variety. Give us the view of the vast diversity that we have within this amazing

profession, instead of pointing us to what you believe we should do/be, or at least encourage us to seek that knowledge ourselves.

*'Allow us the room and the freedom to explore our options and develop our own truths. We should be allowed to decide how we want ourselves and the future of the profession to be, not our forebears'*

Being a uni student is in no way 'easy'. Being a *Chiropractic* uni student seems to add even more stress and complexity. The battles that we face are many, both around us and within ourselves, and do not seem to lessen as we get older.

But, one of my mentors thankfully blessed me with the statement '*Chiropractic is family*'. That statement has guided me and kept me mindful through whatever challenges I've encountered along the way, and I'll always be grateful.

That passion to be of service to our patients, that drive to help heal and give people a better way of life is engrained in all of us, regardless of viewpoint or background. That is our foundation as a profession in my opinion. The patient. As long as all of us keep that in our minds and our hearts, it doesn't matter the battles we face, we can always come back to our true purpose, and hopefully find a way to come together and balance the scales.

### Editor's note

This article continues the regular publication of the point-of-view of students learning to become Chiropractors. For reasons that may be discussed at a future date, the author has been granted anonymity. The Editorial Board appreciates and respects the author's request.

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