An opportunity to be normal
Dreamer Giselle Sancen Valero shares her story

BY EMILY BLOBAUM
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SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFICATIONS
The Grand View Immigrant Iowan Scholarship is a full tuition and room scholarship to a non-native Iowan. Qualifications include:

- Born of immigrant parents or being an immigrant themselves
- Graduating from an Iowa high school with a GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Not in the U.S. or on a student visa
- Demonstrating financial need

The scholarship is renewable for up to four years as long as the individual maintains a 2.5 cumulative GPA, serves as a Grand View Multicultural Ambassador and participates as a member of Grand View's Multicultural Leadership Team.

March 3, 2013 would go down as the best day of Giselle Sancen Valero's life.

It was 35 degrees and rainy, she remembered. It was her senior year of high school.

She was on her way back to Lincoln High School in Des Moines from lunch to finish her final two classes of the day. As she stepped into her car, her phone rang. She saw that it was a 515 number — the area code serving north-central Iowa — so she immediately answered.

She had been expecting a call from Grand View University to confirm whether she had received the Grand View Immigrant Iowan Scholarship.

"Hello?"

"Hi Giselle, this is Amy from Grand View..." Giselle remembers her not sounding particularly happy.

"Yes, hello."

"I'm sorry, I just wanted to let you know..."

"Great, Giselle thought."

"...that you got the scholarship and I'm so sorry it's taken me so long to reach you!"

Giselle immediately began crying. "You almost made me have a panic attack, thank you so much!" She could hear other admissions counselors in the background cheering. "OK, I gotta go because I'm going to be late for my next period."

At this point, Giselle was soaked — from tears and from the rain. She could barely see the road. Surely I'm going to crash my car, she thought.

By the time Giselle pulled into the parking lot, she didn't have time to try to find an open space. She needed to tell her counselor, Laurie Butz, as soon as possible. She didn't think twice about parking in the vice principal's spot.

She sprinted inside, still bawling. She ran past the security officer and the vice principal. "I parked in your spot, I'll move in a second," she yelled between her sobs. Of course, no one could understand her.

After weaving her way through the crowds, dismissing the "are you OK" comments, she eventually reached Laurie's office, out of breath with mascara streaking down her face.

"Oh no, honey, what's wrong?" Laurie asked. She began consoling Giselle, thinking she didn't get the scholarship. "It's going to be fine."

"No, I got it, I got it!" Giselle said, eventually.

At this point, the vice principal, principal and security officer had caught up to her and found Laurie and Giselle in a tearful embrace. They joined in.

Everyone knew how much was on the line for Giselle. If she hadn't received the scholarship, she wouldn't have been able to go to college for a long time.

I will never be sad again, she thought.

GROWING UP
Giselle was born in Mexico City, Mexico, in 1996. At age 2, her parents made the decision to pack up and head for the United States for a reason that most other immigrants share: to have a better life.

Giselle's family had heard that Iowa had opportunities for good jobs and was safe.

Her dad applied for a visa and left for the States, purposely leaving Giselle and her wife behind. He wanted to get a stable job, have a car and apartment ready before his family would arrive.

A year-and-a-half later when Giselle's dad was ready, Giselle's mom, strapped her into her back and made the trek from Mexico City to Iowa, wading across the Rio Grande, walking across the border and hopping into a caravan full of other immigrants heading for the Midwest.

While Giselle doesn't remember a lot from her early childhood, she remembers the difficulties of learning to speak Spanish at home and English at school. She occasionally would mix her words together, sounding like a "Spanglish slut."

"I'd come home crying every single day because kids would tell me I spoke like an alien or I wasn't from here," she said. "That was really the first time I realized I was different."

The teasing and taunting continued through middle school, but one particular incident stuck with her.
It was in seventh grade. Giselle and another boy were arguing over a math problem. The boy insisted he was right, but everyone else at the table agreed that Giselle’s solution and explanation seemed most correct.

“You guys are supposed to agree with me,” the boy said. “Giselle doesn’t even know what she’s talking about; she barely speaks English.”

However, Giselle had lost her accent and spoke English proficiently by this point.

“But it doesn’t even matter, because even if you are right, when we grow up, you’re just going to be cleaning my house and you’re not going to need to know how to solve this problem anyways,” the boy said.

Giselle stood up and flipped the table.

“You’re just mad that I can speak two languages and you can barely speak one,” she responded.

“It was the first time that I was awakened to the fact that the color of my skin and my background was a thing that was going to label me for the rest of my life,” Giselle said.

‘ANGRY LATINA’

At age 12, Giselle witnessed her father being deported to Mexico after failing to appear in court to pay the fine for running a red light.

Giselle’s mom, Laura, was left with the responsibilities of raising Giselle and her brother by herself and paying for everything for five years. She then turned to private schools out of frustration and found Grand View to be the perfect fit.

She wrote 1,034 words and submitted 13 letters.

“Working part-time [jobs], it was not easy to get that kind of money and pay for gas to get to my [jobs], but I did it,” Giselle said.

Giselle took out a $1,000 loan from her credit union. As a DACA recipient, she’s not able to take out student loans.

“I think the thing that frustrated me the most is that I was so financially unstable. Everybody’s like, ‘I’m a broke college student,’ but I was broke,” Giselle said.

Giselle never went hungry, per se — she was paying for a 5-Day All Access meal plan, which provided unlimited, all-you-can-eat meals Monday through Friday. But when the dining room closed at 8 p.m., she didn’t have any foods to snack on. So if she was hungry, she would go to bed hungry. On weekends, Giselle had the luxury of going home, where she knew there would always be food, even if it was just rice or eggs.

But Giselle never lost sight of the opportunities that the scholarship gave her, citing it as the biggest blessing of her life.

“I really don’t know what I would do if I had to pay out of pocket for actual classes or credits, the biggest blessing of her life.

“I really don’t know what I would do if I had...”
and I try to not overlook that. I'm getting a degree that costs hundreds of thousands of dollars, so I try to just stay positive as I can and I take advantage of all the resources I have.

MENTAL HEALTH

By her sophomore year of college, Giselle's mental health was, as she described, a roller coaster. But she didn't recognize that she was suffering.

Her parents raised her with the idea that mental illness isn't real.

"It's not a mental thing, you're just sad. It's not a mental thing, you're just lazy. It's not a mental thing, you just want to give up.

"I kept repeating that to myself when I was in fact severely depressed ... because that's how I was raised — to internalize everything," Giselle said.

Giselle hadn't had time to process her stepfather's death. She took it upon herself to plan the funeral, fly her step-grandmother into the United States, and figure out the finances — all so her father's death. She took it upon herself to plan the funeral, fly her step-grandmother into the United States, and figure out the finances — all so her father's death.

"She wasn't able to properly feed herself and sustain herself. And if that wasn't enough, she was swept up in typical underclassmen concerns — finding a good group of friends, activities to get involved in and adjusting to college.

"I feel like every college student already is on the verge of a mental breakdown," Giselle said. "Add being a person of color, add (coming from) a single parent [household], add not being financially stable, add just the injustices of our communities, it becomes a lot and it's a lot to carry.

"She began to miss classes and fall behind on her schoolwork, all while working 30 hours a week. She didn't want to get out of bed in the morning anymore.

"There were days when I was like, what am I doing, what if I just dropped out, what if I just went back to Mexico," Giselle said. "I felt like what I was doing wasn't worth the amount of effort that I had to put in.

"Her roommate began to notice. One morning, Giselle woke up to a wardrobe full of positive sticky notes with phrases like "you are allowed to be both a masterpiece and a work in progress simultaneously," "you are enough" and "you have been assigned this mountain to show others it can be moved."

Giselle started havling. She knew her roommate wasn't an emotional person.

"The fact that she went out of her way, I must really be sick. I must really be sad, she thought. She reached out to the counselor and was later put on an antidepressant, but didn't like the feeling of the medication numbing her.

"I was no longer sad, but I was no longer happy," she said. "I no longer found joy in the things I used to; it was just a gray wave of everything."

After four months, she dropped the antidepressant and turned to counseling only, sometimes going three times a week. Now, she just stops in whenever she feels overwhelmed.

LEAVING A LEGACY

In her scholarship essay, Giselle wrote about how Grand View would give her — for the first time ever — the opportunity to be normal.

"Growing up I always knew I was different, I just never knew how much. My mom has always worked two jobs to get us by, so I never see her much. My younger brother has been staying home alone since he was 6, and I've had a part time job since I was 14. Not your typical American family. We never ate dinner together, never talked about our day and definitely never did family activities.

"Being at Grand View would free her from the worry of her legal status, her home life and being discriminated against. She would be able to focus on getting a degree, be involved in student leadership and do "fun college things.

"I guess to me normal is being able to wake up, go to classes, do my homework, go to work, come back and just be at peace when I go to sleep," Giselle said.

Giselle also talked about her involvement in extracurriculars in high school and how she planned on furthering her involvement at Grand View.

"While working an average of 15-25 hours a week, I have managed to maintain a 3.5 GPA while also participating in soccer, student council and the drama department. I volunteer as much as I am because I know how lucky I am to be granted DACA. I am very appreciative for all of the opportunities I have received to date, so I try my best to give back what I can and that is usually time. I'd like to be involved fully as well as be committed in my education at Grand View but it isn't financially possible for me to stop working and enjoy my experience. Receiving this scholarship would change my future and make it possible for me to impact my university while bettering myself and my community."

"Now, as a tour guide, Giselle often asks incoming students to picture themselves walking to their classes, to the gym and to their dorm."

"Grand View is my home. I've made it my home over the last three years, and now my goal is to make it a home for everyone who walks in," she said. "I don't ever want anyone to feel like they don't belong here or there's no place for them."

"Above all, Giselle just wants to make Grand View a safer place for everyone.

"I definitely want our campus to be more inclusive and acknowledge the diversity that we don't have or that we do have but just don't appreciate," Giselle said.

"As a multicultural ambassador, our goal is to invite everyone to learn about each other's cultures or differences because diversity isn't just race or ethnicity. It's about different sexualities and backgrounds and religions, all of that stuff."

As a Dreamer, Giselle feels as though it's her duty to fight for a better life.

"As a Dreamer, Giselle feels as though it's her duty to fight for a better life."

"A Dreamer is somebody who is constantly fighting and advocating for their rights and the rights of the undocumented community as well as pursuing a better life for themselves," Giselle said.

"I feel like none of our parents brought us here so that we could live a simple, mediocre life and settle for anything. My mom always says I didn't risk it all for you to not do the best that you could do, and I didn't leave everything behind so that you could give up when things got tough."

Giselle Sancen Valero, student at Grand View University

NEWS 03

Wednesday, April 18, 2018 Iowa State Daily

EMILY BLOBAUM / IOWA STATE DAILY

FAR LEFT: Giselle Sancen Valero and her counselor, Laurie Butz, reminisce about the day Giselle found out she received the immigrant Iowa Scholarship. Laurie was integral in helping Giselle apply for it. "Laurie helped me do everything, I always thought she was like my second mom, and I wouldn't be here without her help. It's a scholarship that helped me the most."

LEFT: Giselle Sancen Valero holds a photo that was taken of her when she found out she received the immigrant Iowa Scholarship. Much to Giselle's embarrassment, her high school counselor, Laurie Butz, made her take the photo — even though she had been crying and was soaked from the rain. Laurie still keeps this photo to this day.

Is Sustainable Intensification of Agriculture Possible?

Sieg Snapp

Siegfried Snapp is a professor of soils and cropping systems ecology at Michigan State University.

Wednesday, April 18, 2018 - 7 pm
Sun Room, Memorial Union

Sponsored by Graduate Program in Sustainable Agriculture and Committee on Lectures (funded by Student Government)

Siegfried Snapp is a professor of soils and cropping systems ecology at Michigan State University.

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POLICE BLOTTER

4.16.18

An individual reported being harassed at Ross Hall (reported at 4:57 p.m.).

An individual reported damage to a vehicle at Lot 61C (reported at 8:15 p.m.).

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IOWA STATE DAILY

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

CORRECTIONS

In yesterday's front page article about the decline in boys gymnastics programs, the beginning of the story contained an inaccuract depiction of the scoring system in collegiate gymnastics. The article stated that there was no way to get a perfect score, when in fact there is an opportunity when combining the execution and difficulty scores. The Daily regrets the error. The Iowa State Daily welcomes comments and suggestions or complaints about errors that warrant correction. To submit a correction, please contact our editor at 515-294-5688 or via email at editor@iowastatedaily.com.
Diversity is not an option

By Nada Aly

I love going to airports – especially international ones.

This is not only because I am about to ride a plane and head off somewhere, but being able to see people from other places around the world, listening to other languages being spoken around me, seeing heartwarming reunions or heartbreaking goodbyes, it all confirms the understanding that we really are not that different.

No matter where we are headed, we all are human and on this Earth together.

It is not a matter of if there should be diversity – that is already a reality in the world as a whole. It is informing and educating people to understand diversity. To have them realize it is not a negative thing, and that it is the best for communities, big or small, and nations as a whole. It is to have them accept diversity and embrace it with open arms, hearts and minds.

The problem is people still fear the unknown. They fear what they do not understand, or rather what they completely misunderstand – viewing people in categories, looking at the people who are different as the “other.” It’s time to realize that inclusion is what is needed.


This will not change overnight. It will take time because some people still don’t see the beauty in these so called differences, but together we can show those people that beauty.

I say we because I myself can be put in that “other” category.

I am the child of immigrants, but I was born and raised here my entire life. People ask where I am from because of the way I look, and the answer will always be Iowa.

If you can relate in the same way, or are considering another aspect of your life, change that! Change the assumptions. Be open to questions, whether it’s by sharing foods, words, cultural practices, beliefs or anything.

Show people that there is so much more to life than just what they experience and practice.

I myself am proud to share my story. I am proud to share that part of me, and I know, like everyone else, has something to offer. And you should be excited to share your story too.

Everyone has their own beliefs and experiences, whether by the color of their skin, by the way they dress, by where they’re from or by the way they choose to live their life. People experience life in completely different ways.

The best part of people having different views, understandings and expectations is being able to share them with one another. So share them, whether it’s in the workplace, classroom, community or even on that plane.

It is not always easy to do this. There will be people who judge and misguide you; it has sadly happened to me.

Respond with positivity. Show those people that you are different in a way that they do not expect. You just have to keep going on your journey. A little turbulence will always pass.

Remember and realize that diversity is more important today than it ever was.

In the end, diversity is the only option.

It is our reality.

Community engagement is important

For the last couple of years, Ames and Iowa State Police Departments have been working hand in hand to set a stage where they can cordially interact with the student community of ISU over a variety of topics. Every year, both departments come up with a different theme such as donut disrespect and free coffee to vigorously engage with the Iowa State community.

Community engagement is essential, and we acknowledge both police departments for their initiative to engage with ISU student community for expanding the scope of topics. Every year, both departments come up with a different theme such as donut disrespect and free coffee to vigorously engage with the Iowa State community.

Community engagement provides a chance for Ames Police to build a stronger relationship with the campus while interacting with several new international students to help to break the widespread stigma about the U.S. police.

Community engagement exercise can provide authorities with a broader outlook and balanced understanding of students’ views on different campus-related issues that can help law enforcement agencies in making wise decisions to address immediate concerns of the community.

Moreover, active participation of students in such engagements can build trust and develop a sense of community ownership among students. Participation of students from diverse backgrounds can provide an insight into the fears and concerns that underrepresented groups can have on the campus so the authorities can solve those proactively.

On the other hand, non-involvement in community engagement can develop a sense of powerlessness that can pose damaging effects on the well-being of our community.

In short, community engagement is vital, and students must become involved in such participation so that there can be improved outcomes for our community.

Active involvement of ISU students in Ames police-led community engagement programs can make everyone in the community feel like they are working for and with one another, not against each other.
FROM 1938 TO 2018: The numbers keep dropping in college men's gymnastics

Editor's Note: This is part two of a four-part series on the disappearance of men's gymnastics in the United States. Part one can be found online.

BY BRIAN MOZEY
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Twenty one.

That's the number of Division I colleges that currently have a men's gymnastics program in their college athletics department, according to the NCAA website. Compared to 130 Division I football schools and 351 Division I men's basketball schools, that's a small number that men's gymnastics is facing in today's world.

Oklahoma has been the face of men's gymnastics for a number of years with three straight championships heading into this weekend's championship in Chicago, Illinois. The Sooners have also been runner-up for the four years before those three years.

Oklahoma has been a dominant program that's sent quite a few gymnasts to the U.S. National Team to compete in the Olympics. Former Cedar Rapids Washington High School boys gymnastics coach Russ Telecky said he saw the the number of men's gymnastics programs in 1983 was 111 Division I programs and, now in 2018, only 21 colleges remain. In 1994, Iowa State dropped its men's gymnastics program after winning three NCAA titles and two runner-up titles between the years of 1970 to 1974.

The drop of these men's gymnastics programs in college are based around Title IX and also budgeting in the athletics department. Penn State head coach Randy Jepson, Iowa head coach JD Reive and Nebraska head coach Chuck Chmelka all agree that Title IX was one of the main factors that cut many college programs across the country.

On the other hand, these men's gymnastics programs could be added again if athletics departments had the money in its budgets to add more sports to keep the percentages within requirements.

The only problem, is that athletic departments don't have the money yet.

"[Title IX] is an easy out. It's a 'we have to do this because the law says we have to do this,'" said Calli Sanders, Title IX coordinator with Iowa State athletics department. "It may have kept people from having to be the bad guy. It's not that I'm making this financial decision to drop gymnastics; it's because the law says we have to. So I think that's sort of become the narrative."

Even though men's gymnastics and women's gymnastics are similar sports regarding their titles, the equipment they use is very different.

The only thing that's similar between the two is the floor routines and the vault. The men use rings, a single high bar, pummel horse and parallel bars. The women have uneven bars and balance beam.

The equipment needed for men's gymnastics is expensive because there are more events and each piece is specific. For example, a pummel horse costs around $3,500 and rings will run a team another $3,500. It all adds up in the end and it's an expensive sport to operate, especially with only a select few men being a part of the team.

Due to Title IX, the majority of schools that still have a men's team have very few scholarships and it's rare to have a male gymnast joining a team on a full ride because the coaches need to split it up evenly.

Chris Stephenson, a member of the Nebraska men's gymnastics team, is part of one of the few men's collegiate gymnastics teams.

Jepson said it's hard to see one of his gymnasts that does all-around working hard to improve his skills and knowing he's only receiving a small part of one scholarship. While on the other end, a gymnast on the women's team is receiving a full ride scholarship and competing in one or two events every competition. For him, it's just hard to take in fully.

During Sanders' time at Iowa State (she just celebrated 15 years on April 1), she's never had to cut or add a program to Iowa State athletics. She said she always receives letters or emails from people regarding adding sports like men's gymnastics, baseball and hockey; but none have become serious talks during her tenure.

The ability to add a sport, like men's gymnastics, takes many steps besides coinciding with Title IX rules. If the sport were in serious discussions, Sanders said the athletic department would need to see if there's any interest from the public about the sport.

She would also need to check the surrounding states to make sure recruiting can be easy around the Iowa area. Finally, the needs to check to make sure the athletics department budget says it can add a sport and not be in the negatives at the end of the fiscal year.

There have been many disputes in the sport of men's gymnastics to keep certain programs in, with the latest being Temple. It wasn't looking good for Temple to keep a Division I team because of budget reasons and overall interest in numbers.

Luckily, the other 20 schools found fundraisers and ways to gain enough attraction and money to allow Temple to stay in the Division I level for this current school year.

Temple is technically a Division I school for men's gymnastics, but aren't under the athletics department. Temple men's gymnastics is self-sufficient and raise all the money on their own.

"We are always trying to gain more teams and more college gymnasts," said Iowa gymnast Jake Bzdardzak. "If we continue to encourage more schools to add a men's gymnastics program, then the competition will increase."

The benefit of having only 21 colleges in the Division I level is that the community within men's gymnastics is closer. Many of these gymnasts have competed with each other or against each other in their private clubs prior to college.

Leading into each meet, the gymnasts are excited to compete in the Olympics. Leading into each meet, the gymnasts are excited to compete in the Olympics.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NJU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

WHAT IS TITLE IX?

Title IX was enacted on June 23, 1972, by Congress and the signature of former president Richard Nixon. Title IX was meant to stop discrimination against students and employees based sex in federally-funded educational institutions. Iowa State Athletics Title IX coordinator Calli Sanders said it wasn't originally meant for athletics, but was integrated into athletics.

The Title IX program went into the universities' athletic departments across the country and is used to represent the student population at each of the colleges and universities. The most popular way that athletic departments keep in line with Title IX is by taking the percentages of males and females at its particular institution and replicating it in the athletics it provides.

The best examples to show is comparing and contrasting Iowa State athletics department and Iowa's athletic department.

At Iowa State, the university had 20,790 male students, or 57 percent of the student body, while females had 15,531 students, equaling 43 percent. This essentially means that 57 percent of Iowa State's athletes are male.

At Iowa, the numbers are reversed. There are slightly more females attending Iowa than males. There are 16,497 women and 15,047 men, equaling 52.3 percent of women and 47.7 percent of men.

These two universities, along with the rest of the colleges, need to follow the same gender percentages as its respective university.

* The numbers from the two universities came from their enrollment statistics on each of their websites. Iowa State's numbers came from the fall of 2017 while Iowa's numbers came from the spring of 2018.

Gymnastics
This past weekend, multiple teams comprised of Iowa State students participated in the 48 Hour Film Festival. At 9 p.m. on Friday, the participating teams were given the sentence and the object to incorporate into their short film, and 48 hours to complete their entry, with the final product due at 9 p.m. Sunday night.

This year, the object was a pair of rubber gloves and the sentence was, “Don’t be scared, I just need you to come with me for a minute.” Outside of these guidelines, teams were free to go whatever direction they want to with their film.

This year’s film festival was a first for Ben Buettner and Connor Eckdahl, junior and sophomore in electrical engineering respectively, but they had worked together on other projects like YouTube sketches before. That experience prepared them for producing a film within a very short time limit.

“The experience of learning from those things, knowing that it helps tremendously to have multiple cameras … It’s almost a necessity to have people who actually want to be a part of it,” Eckdahl said.

Due to the nature of the competition, all actual film production had to strictly take place within the 48 hours allotted to the teams. Any sort of preparation was limited to thinking about locations to film, and finding the best people to work with.

“We just wanted to make sure for the [contest] that we wanted people who were actually interested, and fully engaged in this,” said Eckdahl. “In a 48 hour film contest, it’s go go go. You need to have people that are for sure going to be committed.”

Outside of basic necessities like eating and sleeping, Buettner and Eckdahl’s team used every second available to work on their film.

“We got the prompt at 9 p.m. and then I was up until 6 a.m. writing. I was very very tired, and borderline delirious,” said Buettner.

The team had no difficulty working the prompts into the story they wanted to tell. “It was almost like a second thought, we were like ‘this would be a good place to do it’,” said Buettner. “I’m sure some people didn’t think about the phrase in such a dark way. I’m sure people did something opposite, which will be cool to see. Like something light-hearted.”

The next day, they started working again as soon as they could.

“I woke up at 9 [a.m.], and did a bunch of prep stuff,” continued Eckdahl. “We filmed from noon to 5 [p.m.], we took a break, and then we filmed another bit from 8:30 to 2 a.m.”

After all filming had been completed, Eckdahl took the rest of the time on Sunday to bring the film together.

“I spent pretty much the whole day, like 13 hours straight, editing.”

Of course the time crunch was a big hurdle for Buettner and Eckdahl to overcome.

“I’m all about trying to produce something interesting in a very short period of time. It’s hard to really analyze the story structure,” said Buettner. “Because I do really like writing. And I like to take the time to look over things, but I didn’t really have that time.”

They found it difficult to perfect their film in the 48 hours they were given, but that doesn’t mean they were dissatisfied with the final product.

“There’s always a few things you wish you could have done. When it comes to editing, you always wish you had more time to do that,” said Eckdahl. “Regardless, we were quite happy with how it turned out.”

Buettner and Eckdahl’s film, “The Men Beneath the Surface,” and more will be shown at the screening and awards for the 48 Hour Film Festival on Wednesday, April 18 in Carver 101. The event starts at 7 p.m. and admission is free.
to see old teammates and friends that they’ve known for over five or 10 years. “It’s fun to see everyone during meets and especially at the NCAA National Championship because you’re able to look back on memories,” said Iowa gymnast Mark Springett. “It’s hard not to know everyone because the sport of men’s gymnastics is so small in teams.”

That small community also makes it a challenge for coaches in these college programs because recruiting can be difficult. The recruiting process for men’s gymnastics is nothing like football or basketball or any other type of sport. In most sports, recruits begin to be scouted in the early part of their high school years, but men’s gymnastics know recruits during their middle school and, sometimes, their elementary school years.

Rieve said that coaches hope a gymnast comes into their own private clubs with the potential of competing in college because the coach has a higher chance of having the gymnast on their team when they graduate high school. If the gymnast isn’t in their private club, then they need to fight and show reasons why their program is stronger or competitive and has the opportunity to win a national championship.

The other big part to their recruiting process is summer camps hosted by the university. Each college men’s gymnastics program typically hosts a summer camp for a week or two to help build potential college gymnasts into an actual college gymnast.

The summer camp was a big part of Ames native Ben Eyles’ recruiting process. Eyles has been to many summer camps across the country and has seen his fair share of coaches before deciding on the University of Minnesota, but it’s always the same gymnasts at each of the camps.

Eyles said summer camps are a great opportunity to have coaches critique your routines and stay in contact for future meets. It was an integral part of Eyles’ recruiting, but summer camps aren’t the only way for coaches to recruit.

“You need to be the best gymnast you can be at these summer camps,” Eyles said. “It’s an opportunity to learn and grow as a gymnast, but you also need to showcase your talents before the end of it.”

Ultimately, the dream for most male gymnasts is to make it onto a college team. That’s their equivalent of making it to the NFL or MLB because there’s really no future after college for gymnastics.

The only thing past college for men’s gymnastics is the U.S. National Team and that consists of 12 men, so the odds of making the team are slim, but not impossible. Chmelka and Telecky agree that it starts with high schools and private clubs to gain more numbers in men’s gymnastics, so the number of gymnasts can increase as well.

It’s not just private club instructors and high school coaches’ jobs to find more male gymnasts, it’s everyone’s job. The ability for college coaches to interact with middle school and high school gymnasts is a benefit in their recruiting process later on.

Overall, it will take the help of coaches, instructors and the actual gymnasts to bring this number up and keep the honor of representing the United States in the Olympics as the highest honor it can be.

“Ultimately, the dream is to make it on the national team for the United States and represent your country at the Olympic Games or World Championships,” said Nebraska gymnast Chris Stephenson. “It’s a hard spot to earn, but it’s what makes the sport such a fun sport to participate in.”

ALL 21 DIVISION I COLLEGE MEN’S GYMNASTICS PROGRAMS

1. Oklahoma
2. Minnesota
3. Ohio State
4. Stanford
5. Michigan
6. Nebraska
7. Penn State
8. Illinois
9. Iowa
10. Navy
11. Air Force
12. California
13. Army
14. Arizona State
15. William & Mary
16. Springfield College
17. Washington
18. Illinois-Chicago
19. Southern California United
20. Temple
21. Northern California United

Source: College Gymnastics Association Rankings on NCAA.com.