

Who am I? I am a 21 year old female. I am a junior here at Holy Cross. I am a sociology/ Pre-med major. I am from Revere, MA. I am Chinese, Irish, and Italian. My name is Wincie Lau. How come my identity is so important to others? When I meet a person for the first time they are so curious. They want to know how to spell my name and to know what it means. They assume my name is related to some ethnicity, but it's not. My parents made it up. My dad was jockey and they wanted W-I-N in my name for good luck. My last name raises a lot of questions as well. Lau is a Chinese last name, but because I do not look Chinese, people think it's Hawaiian. Why does my name have to be justified?

When I use to waitress, my customers would often pull me aside to inquire about my nationality. Because I am mixed people think I look unique and cannot identify my ethnicity. Due to the fact that my nationality cannot be easily identified by my physical appearance, it raises the curiosity of many. I find it quite amusing that my nationality is the topic of their conversation. It just goes to show how important identity is to society. I am proud of who I am and do not mind sharing my mixed heritage.

I think the first time I noticed my ethnic background was when I was applying to college. I had to check off a box on each application regarding my race. I would always check the box that says "other" and write in Chinese American, however, I wondered if people reading my application understood what I meant by that. When I was accepted to Holy Cross, I received a lot of information about being an ALANA student and the Odyssey program. I did decide to participate in Odyssey and the experience was great. Odyssey, for those of you who don't know, is a program that allows ALANA students to arrive a week early to college going into freshman year. The group becomes acquainted

with the college, takes classes, completes assignments, and bonds with one another. This program raises a lot of controversy because many other students feel that it is unfair for minority students to have the opportunity to come to HC early when that same option is not offered to them. They do not realize that once the semester begins and the rest of campus arrives, many of the ALANA students will need support from the others in Odyssey to survive. It will be a culture shock for many ALANA students. 90% of the students at Holy Cross are white. Many of these white students have not come from diverse communities and will have trouble interacting with the few ALANA students who attend Holy Cross.

I felt guilty for attending Odyssey. I did not feel enough like a minority. I grew up as an only child with my single white mother. Even though I am 50% Chinese by blood, I am 100% white by culture. I would like to explore my Chinese culture and learn about my family's heritage some day. As I see it, I have the best of both worlds.