

Celebration Essay

My second year experience was like a pot of rice, it seemed to get harder as you got closer to the end. As a freshman, there is the initial transition of coming to college, meeting new friends, and becoming acquainted with the fact that college equals an increase in freedom. However, the second year was a reality shock as it was not all fun and games. I saw a dramatic increase in the course load and life started to get real. During these past two semesters I have been tried more mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally then I have in the course of my whole life combined.

Mentally, I have struggled with the fact that I have always wanted to become a doctor, but more and more I see that the road to getting there is numerous and difficult. I stopped asking questions like is organic chemistry or differential equations even necessary for what I want to do in life and started just accepting my fate. Physically, I have been in and out of the hospital for an unknown sickness that at times was so bad that I lose my appetite all together as well as my drive for learning. I never realized how an unhealthy body could do so much damage to every aspect of life. Emotionally, it has been a rollercoaster ride with friends. It's a shock to finally find out what friends will be there for you when you are at your lowest point and which friends will be there to bring you back up. Spiritually, I have been enlightened to other religions as I listen to my own religion being challenged and I have to go research again for myself the real reasons why I believe in what I believe. I love the random talks that I have with my suitemates and other close friends of how certain religions seem to have stemmed from one another and share common ground. There is also the other side of the coin that the religions seem to have elements to them that seem to make them differ all together. All in all, however, I wouldn't trade my second year experience for the world. I have grown so much and these two semesters at Case Western Reserve University that I now know what it takes to become a real man. The diversity of people is so wide ranged here, that I know people from every race, religion, and major. Their experiences and hardships have taught me independence, gratefulness, and above all sincerity.

An example of this was when I had the opportunity to go to the Adolescence Conference in Chicago through the Shubert Center. This was a rare opportunity to finally put into practice what I had been reading in textbooks. While I was at the conference it was definitely a life changing experience, as I got to see firsthand the cutting research that psychologists are doing in their field. Before this conference, I was set on becoming a doctor for internal medicine, but at this point I am not sure anymore. I really liked what these psychologists had to say about my age group, whether I agreed with their statements or not. One of my favorite topics was male body image. This was because it's widely accepted that girls struggle with this ideal of being thin and it has been accepted as a problem, however the male drive for muscularity has not been addressed to this extent. From the research we now know that both is equally as dangerous. While there I became good friends with people I would have never previously talked to at Case under any other given circumstance. This got me to thinking, what can I do next year and previous years to connect with

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people that I normally would not encounter? What can I do to challenge the ideas I have preset in my mind and solidify my stand on issues? And most importantly, what can I do to make myself a better person in life so that I can make a difference?

The answer to most of those things is to take it one day at a time. Knowing that my experiences are like the nationwide commercial, life comes at you fast, but knowing at the same time how to slow it down to a comfortable pace for me. So the first course of action is how will my experiences from this year help me in my decisions next year. Next year I plan to take even harder classes, which I now know I need to take a lighter load to excel in the classes I need to get into medical school. I know that I need to start preparing for the MCAT, which will be hours of added turmoil and stress added to an already hectic schedule. Most importantly I hope of the course of next year to strengthen my weaknesses and continue to excel in my strengths. Through my final years at Case, I would like to give back to the community by doing more service projects such as donating to various shelters, participating in Habitat for Humanity, and getting involved in more eco-friendly activities. Again, since the Adolescence Conference had such an impact on me, I hope to do research at Case for the male drive for muscularity. Finally, I hope to build on the friendships and values that already exist and build bridges to interconnect all areas of life. In the end this is what it is all about, how we can apply what we learn, learn from our mistakes, and from our mistakes apply a critical eye to whatever we do in life.