

Going into college was nothing short of daunting. From a new schedule to a new school to a new method of learning nothing was the same. While I took AP courses in high school, the rigors of those courses paled in comparison. In high school the burden of learning was on my teachers, they took the time to give more specialized instruction and even followed up with me to make sure the course content made sense. However I learned very quickly college was not the same. I was thrust into a new style of learning, one that made me learn the material before coming to class. This deviation from what I was used to was exceptionally challenging in the initial stages. The learning curve was exceptionally steep, as a result I went from a straight A high school student to someone who was unsure whether or not he would actually pass his classes. I seriously debated dropping out of college, at that point who I was then could not fathom a future where I succeeded. Then came time for me to take my first ever college exam, this was for General Chemistry. I remember being desperate to just pass the exam. As a result I studied furiously for this exam and I received an A on that exam. The elation that followed was on another level for the first time I saw light at the end of the tunnel and a future where my dreams still lived. That exam reinforced in me the belief that I could succeed in my classes as long as I was willing to put in the effort. This confidence boosted my performance in my classes and as I continued to improve my grades, I set my sights higher. Before I was focused on just passing now I knew I was capable of more. I ended my freshman semester with a 3.85 GPA and set my sights on the honors college, where college that housed the top 7% of all undergraduates at UC. Going into the second semester my mentality had shifted even though I was taking tougher classes this time I didn't allow myself to feel despair at the difficulties that lay ahead, I knew I was capable and as result this time I reflected within the first week. I looked at what worked last semester and good habits I picked up and used them to lay the groundwork for a successful second semester. And their times in this semester where I was under a lot of stress and pressure especially since this semester involved me participating in multiple clubs. However I continued on and had a successful second semester. Looking back in just 30 short weeks I have grown immensely as both a student and a person. This first year taught me alot about fortitude, perseverance, grit, and getting back up even when you fall. This year has taught me to be defined as the sum of all my failures and use said failures to grow and become better.