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My Freshman Year

Since the day I stepped foot in highschool I dreamed of going to college and getting out of my small hometown. Little did I know, college would not be all I hoped it would. A transformative moment in my life was when I left home to go to the University of Oregon because this caused me to have an identity crisis. Leaving my stable, happy home life last year was the most difficult thing I have gone through in my life for many reasons. My college experience was definitely not a normal one and throughout my past freshman year multiple life changing events have taken place which have led me to where I am now.

When I first arrived at the University of Oregon, life was great. My parents and I road tripped up there with all of my things and they helped me move into my huge dorm room that I decorated beautifully. I felt like a new person and as if nothing could faze me. Once I got there I met so many super friendly people and I loved it. The second night in my dorm, my roommate Sarah's boyfriend of three years dumps her over text. This girl that I barely knew was hysterical, falling on the ground crying, throwing up and screaming. While this freaked me out, I was supportive and there for her the best way I could. Looking back at it I should've had her talk to me more instead of leaving the room whenever possible to give her space. She became extremely depressed and was crying all the time. Fast forward to spring term she came back from break and she seemed much happier. That next weekend my suitemate, that I was really good friends with,

Candace, had a really bad anxiety attack. Her mom came up to school and she abruptly dropped out of UO. While this was sudden it wasn't surprising as we all didn't enjoy ourselves as much as we wanted to. Sarah took Candace's leaving especially hard, which was strange because that weren't very good friends. A few days later Sarah never came home, I texted her and she told me she was in the emergency room. I told my other suitemate Zoey where she was and we left to go pick her up. Turns out Sarah is suicidal.

While living with a depressed and suicidal roommate was difficult I was still determined to have a great first year. Winter term is when I could no longer go to the University of Oregon full time because I couldn't afford it. I started to do a program called dual enrollment, where I went to the local community college for three of my classes and UO for one. It was a pain to be apart of because no one from either school would help me and I had to figure it all out on my own. I had a friend from home, Lily, who did the program with me and we became really close. I didn't mind going to school there as I was able to bring my car. The main consequence of going to school at Lane Community College is that I didn't meet any new people or make any new friends. Meeting new people was very difficult going to the University of Oregon because of how big of a school it is. I tried to find other ways to meet people but, I dropped out of rushing for a sorority because it just wasn't the right fit and because my dorm was so nice, everyone living there was extremely antisocial and don't even get me started on the seasonal depression. Coming from having the most amazing friend group at home to having very few people at school who were actually my friend was really hard. When it came to looking for apartments next year, the girls I was supposed to live with dropped out at the last minute and now it is just Lily and I

living with three random people next year. I felt so alone and didn't really know who I was anymore.

Towards the end of my freshman year I just wanted it to be over and would fly home when I could. I went home for Mothers Day weekend and my whole life was turned upside down. My mom told me that my she and my dad are separating and we have to sell my childhood home. This is when I really lost it. After everything I had gone through this past year and now to have a broken family and no longer have my house to come home to is heartbreaking.

I feel a connection with the text "Terra Firma- A Journey from Migrant Farm Labor to Neurosurgery" written by Alfredo Quiñones- Hinojosa. This text is about the life story of how a man overcame all odds and achieved his dreams. I chose this text because of what I have gone through and the hope it has given me for the future. A quote from the text that I relate to the most is, "reality, however, posted a stark contrast to the dream" (Quiñones- Hinojosa). This quote was written when he was in a hard time in his life while in poverty and dreamed of making a better life for himself.

The reality of my college experience has been anything but the dream. Despite all that I have been through I wouldn't take it back. I have learned so much in this past year and have grown so much because of it. Since I have come home I feel much happier being around my friends and out of Oregon. I am still not out of this transformative moment in my life as my parents are in the process of getting divorced and me no longer wanting to go to school in Oregon is extremely stressful. I don't want to stay home because all of my friends will leave to go to their colleges and my parents no longer together, but I also don't want to go back to Oregon, which is a confusing time in my life. While going through all of this has been anything

but easy, it has helped me figure out who I am and who I want to be. I am not the same person who showed up to the University of Oregon last September, but I am optimistic of the future in have ahead of me.