



COMMUNITY EDITORIAL

HIGH(SCHOOL)ER EDUCATION

I am a high school student who goes to university. Despite the fact that I don't yet have a high school diploma, I am a UW student and all my classes are here.

I am in a program called University Co-operative Education Program (UCEP). UCEP is the only program of its kind in Ontario and only has 26 Students. Basically, UCEP students take two high school courses that are taught on campus: a first-year class and a co-op located at UW, WLU, or the Perimeter Institute. This small, intimate education experience has been quite the learning opportunity.

UCEP does come with its own unique challenges. I am rarely ever at my home school, Resurrection Catholic Secondary School, which has created many obstacles. I am on student council and I have rarely been able to attend meetings, yet I still need to stay on top of my duties and what is happening. I have been trying to visit as often as possible, although it has been hard to find time in between classes and homework.

When I first came to UW, I felt very out of it. University was very different, and I didn't feel like I was actually a student here. It was strange going from my 300-student Psych 101 class, directly to my 15-student high school class — both taught in the same building. Slowly but surely, I began to feel like a student. Everyone at UW has been very welcoming.

A big part of my time at UW has been spent at the *Imprint* office, where I am interning. I have learned the ins and outs of the news publishing industry. I have obtained vast experience, and I now have many published articles. I have grown as a writer, as well as a person. I used to barely be able to talk to strangers, but I have become much better at talking with people whom I don't know thanks to the many interviews I have had to complete for my news pieces. I have been able to write in every section and have been able to meet many new people.

Speaking of new people, I have met many new people through my high school classes. I came into UCEP knowing few people in it, and I am happy to say that I have bonded with everyone there at some point over the semester. I have met people from different high schools who share a passion for education. These people have proven to be some of the most interesting and driven

people I have ever met. Each person has taught me something, big or small, about pursuing what I am passionate about, making the most out of what life has to offer, and working hard.

I recently completed my first university exam and that was quite the experience. My exam was at 7:30 on a Saturday night. Needless to say, it came with the stress and confusion of any exam. After hours of studying and much coffee, I can say I have completed a university exam. It was challenging, but now I know what to expect in the future. I am now a credit further than I would have been and much more wise thanks to it.

My newest challenge will be returning to high school in February. It will take much patience to once again tolerate the bells, attendance, and little freedom. It is bittersweet as I am excited to return to seeing my friends every day and being active in my school, but there are still many aspects that I do not look forward to and will take much getting used to.

Overall, this has been a great opportunity. I've learned many lessons that go much farther than the classroom. First, I've learned the true meaning of self-initiative and responsibility — I did not have any teachers watching over my shoulder to make sure that I was doing my homework. Second, I've learned how to properly study and prepare myself. Third, I learned gratitude; I realized that I could have not done this by myself and that not many people get this kind of opportunity. I am very thankful. I have also learned how to speak up for myself when I am having problems and how to better communicate with others.

Lastly and arguably most importantly, I learned the best times to go to Tim Horton's in order to dodge the rush. These are lessons that I will use for the rest of my life.

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