Katie Gwyn

Honors 100

Autumn Quarter Portfolio Statement

Since my junior year of high school, I was ready for college. I was more than ready this September packing up my bright pink bedroom and not looking back. Always when friends, teachers, or family gave a description of me the word independent was included. I’ve always prided myself on being an independent person, which is why I believe the transition from high school to college has been a smooth one. While there have been some struggles—Math 124 particularly—I’d say that I’m still quite the same person today as I was the day I moved into the Tri Delta house.

I came to college with one goal: to find my passion. Some people come to college knowing exactly what they want; this was not me. College is a time of growth and discovery, so I am convinced I will be able to something that created a strong ambition and love for my work. I know that I am capable of being successful in multiple fields, but I hope to find the place where I can combine a career with a passion. With that in mind, this freshman fall quarter has moved me closer to accomplishing this goal.

When I came into UW, I told people I wanted to major in business. I truly had no idea what I wanted to do and business is an easy answer to give as an incoming freshman. When I applied to colleges, I had even applied to business schools at other universities. Once I decided to go to my “back up” school, I was kicking myself that I had not applied to freshman direct entrance to the Foster school. Three months in, I am now glad I have the freedom to explore some more options. After taking Honors 230: Understanding and Combating Human Trafficking, I know that the over-under and a narrow focus on dollar amount cannot sustain me for a happy and successful career. This class covered aspects of work surrounding human trafficking, and I found myself much more engaged by those groups motivated by a human rights approach. Noticing this within myself in this class, I know that in my life I want to work in a field that encompasses human rights values.

Saying I wanted to major in business, allowed me to shun away from really exploring any other opportunities. I have always been interested in politics and current events when the topic comes up, but I have never really dove into the subject. Next quarter, I plan to take introductory courses in Law, Society, and Justice and Political Science. I’m hoping that one or both of these subjects stand out to me as a potential major. By the end of this year, my hope is to have a good idea of what I would like to major in.

Additionally, by the end of this year, I would like to research and have an idea of what types of study abroad and internships I may be interested in throughout my time at UW. Because I stayed very close to home coming to college in Seattle, traveling abroad while I’m in college is a necessity. I also will need to take a language if I don’t go into business, so being able to connect my study abroad to language would be ideal. I’ve been out of the country before, but never able to speak the language of the places I’ve visited. Looking into internships and job opportunities is also extremely important to me. I worked throughout high school, but I wanted to take a break coming into college to assess the workload and other commitments I may have. I have begun a regular volunteer position as an after-school tutor, which I feel is just enough to keep me busy but not overwhelmed at this time. While tutoring is a great experience, it doesn’t necessarily align with my future goals. I may not know what I want to do, but I definitely do not want to be a teacher. After I explore majors, I would like to expand that to volunteer positions, internships, and jobs in a related field.

Three months ago, I had no idea what I wanted to do; I was just happy to be at college. I would have to say that today this remains the same. I still do not know what I want to do, but I am allowing myself to explore a lot more options. By keeping an open mind, I hope this leads me to a sustaining career path. I still am happy to be at college. With all of the friends I have made this quarter, the memories I’ve made so far, and the things I’ve learned from human trafficking discourse to derivatives, I can say that the University of Washington and the honors program was the right place for me to discover all that these years have to offer me.