

Find A Way- It's Possible

"These are the keys to your room; welcome to the Harrington dorm," my RA said to me. A moment that I've dreamt about ever since my junior year of high school still, for some reason, felt highly overwhelming to me. I thought playing out different scenarios in my mind about moving in would help ease my mind but to the contrary. Once it finally dawned on me that this was all real, it became harder to fight my nerves. Fast forward, and I was celebrating the fact I made it past a week on campus. After my experience of getting lost looking for my classes, having no one to talk to, trying to figure out the UD bus shuttle app, and the struggle of navigating canvas, it was most certainly a challenging week.

As an international student, I feared being seen as different. Since I came from a country with totally different customs, cultures, traditions, and languages, I knew I was likely to stand out. I was hesitant to go out of my comfort zone, and despite the doubts and fear that plagued my thoughts, I had to learn to adjust. As much as I wanted to escape and take a flight back home, I knew I couldn't. I had to embrace change in a way I never had before.

Throughout my lifetime, I have listened to people reflect on their college experiences and explain how college is supposed to be "the best four years of your life." Personally, it has taken so many hours of self-talks and mirror playouts to convince myself to let loose as I actively make it through college day by day. Eventually, I auditioned to be on a dance team. It was here that I met one of my best friends. She was wearing the same shirt as me, and I just took a leap of faith and introduced myself. It's fair to say that hour-long self-talks and mirror playouts paid off.

My academic journey began as a biochemistry major; knowing how difficult this major was, I was very determined to succeed. However, it became clear that even though I was such an

excellent student back in high school with the best grades, there were disparities within the education system. High school's 8 am alarm and morning rises weren't as challenging as waking up for an 8 am Chemistry class lecture. Navigating deadlines by myself felt like a nightmare because, unlike high school, the professors don't remind you. Despite these facts, it felt like I could manage, or so I thought. I became acquainted with campus life, found my way around quite well, met many new people, and had my weekly visits to UDairy creamery and various Perkins Live events on Fridays. I remember the first event I attended on campus called 'Silent Disco.' This event was probably one of the highlights of my year. As I went through the entranceway, located on the central green, I could see neon lights flashing around, a DJ on the stage waving his hands, and there were so many people jumping and dancing on the ground. The atmosphere was full of excitement, but I could not hear any music playing till I got closer, and someone handed me a headphone set. It was a great time. One thing these fun experiences forgot to teach me was a fundamental skill I needed to have my freshman year, balance. Being a freshman came with experiencing all the fun and painful experiences in this unique context. Needless to say, I finished my first semester with a GPA I was left questioning, plus I gained the fifteen pounds that everyone talked about. Along with all these struggles, I also faced the nerve-racking competition of transferring into the nursing program. With the passion I had to help people and the unfortunate crisis due to covid, I knew that this was the best fit for me though it was arduous.

Today, I am proud to be a student nurse at the University of Delaware as well as a resident assistant for Resident Life and Housing. These positions have given me an excellent opportunity to help those around me deliberately. I find myself advising and telling my freshman residents

about my experiences and having them laugh at my funny stories, but the only lesson in it all was overcoming.

My story is more of a testimony, leaving me incredibly grateful. All my struggles, setbacks, accomplishments, decisions, and fun experiences have created a solid and determined individual willing to learn, grow, succeed, and positively impact others. Although I am currently a junior, I can testify to the saying, "College is one of the best experiences of your life," but with a twist. "College is one of the best developing experiences of your life." My best decision thus far was to not only move to the United States but to pursue an education and career at the University of Delaware. This decision was the start of my journey. The resources at the University are countless and beyond beneficial. For example, as a current Nursing student at this prestigious college, I have been exposed to unending academic resources, simulation experiences, and hands-on, life-changing clinical contact. The adventure continues to teach me but has already unraveled much about myself, my purpose, and life in general. My advice to all international students starting their journey in what may seem like a maze and foreign place is to push. Push yourself out of your comfort zone. You have got so much potential to show the world buried under that uncertainty. As internationals, we have traveled here from so far away, so do not forget your 'why,' and the benefit of living your life not only for oneself but also for other people. Don't give up. Even if things may seem challenging or you feel alone, continue to press on, and I know you will find a way, one step at a time.