

GECC 1130

Reflective Journal

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## Aspirations

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University used to seem like the final frontier of one's studies, but it is not until one starts studying in one, that they realise it is merely the first step towards true scholarship.

I had been planning for my university studies since the beginning of my senior secondary school years. However, despite having planned my next steps based on realistic and conservative predictions of my results, my DSE score had turned out to be worse than my worst prediction. I had to veer from my plan of studying Medicine last-minute. It was rather unexpected and traumatic, especially since I felt like my performance in the examinations and in my own practice prior to the exams were really well. The only exception was Biology, where I was seriously sick and almost fell unconscious in the hallway of my home at 4 am on the day of the exam. I even had the chance to be reconsidered and re-admitted into a higher-ranking program due to my remarking request being justified. But at the end, the reconsideration didn't serve me any practical purpose.

I ended up studying Biomedical Engineering, which isn't at all a bad place to land on since it is practically the perfect fusion of all my favourite fields of study. Despite this, I was borderline depressed for quite some time, constantly reconsidering my performance, looking for non-constructive solutions, and doubting myself. It wasn't the path I was intending to tread, not even the backup option. It wasn't really until a month of university life that I had dismissed the negative thoughts. Seeing that I have an unsettled score, I decided to utilise the internal transfer protocol of CUHK. I have promised myself that I would succeed eventually, and I wouldn't be satisfied until the day I managed, perhaps just to give myself the nod of approval that I am indeed capable.

Another one of my goals, is that I wished to be more proactive. I tended to be quite passive in my secondary school years. I didn't seek out or join too much events and activities, which made me miss out on a lot of opportunities. I would say I was even struggling at this at the beginning of September, seeing that I had missed some orientation activities.

## Reflection

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Any destination matters not if one were not to take even the very first step. Looking back at this past semester, I would say that I have been working towards the aforementioned goals.

To start with, although my academics weren't as good as I would have hoped, and certainly not good enough to earn me a seat in Medicine, I can't say it's unsatisfactory. The results of my *Mathematics*, *Physics*, and *Human Anatomy and Physiology* midterms had been released, and I would say I have performed relatively well, except for the *Mathematics* midterm where it was only mediocre. However, considering they are all supposed to be my strong suit, it shouldn't have been any other way. Asking myself, I couldn't say I had been slacking too much before the exams.

I also managed to get to know a lot more people. I had always prioritised more on the quality of friends over the quantity, hence I tend not to be very motivated to broaden my social bubble. To add on, relatively few of my schoolmates from my secondary school went to CUHK, hence I was practically in CUHK by myself. I remember being quite bummed and disappointed that none of my close friends are in CUHK, and also worried that it would be difficult for me to start completely fresh in a new environment. However, this proved to be a blessing in disguise. Partly due to this, I had been more open and willing to get to know more people. I had become very close with some friends, almost comparable to that of my old friends.

Although doubtful at first about how a couple hours could allow friendships to be made, the orientation day I joined had proved to be monumental to my transformation. It was a major contributor to me being more open to making friends. Moreover, seeing how much work was put into the event by my seniors, I decided I'd like to pass this deed onto the next year's freshmen. I had thus joined the committee of the BME society and become the person-in-charge of such event.

However, not everything had been a smooth sailing. An internal conflict was sparked among the committee, which led to the disintegration of it. Although the conflict didn't concern me directly, I was still heartbroken and disheartened by this. To witness first-hand how relationships were broken, and how all our work so far had been futile, I can't say I had been doing too well emotionally.

## Future plans

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Any talk would be for nothing if no actual work is to be done.

Despite my academics being satisfactory so far, that was only considering midterm examinations, that of my best subjects too. I couldn't just focus on my strong suit. I had been procrastinating some assignments or projects, and I hereby vow that I should be more self-aware and try to eliminate such instances. Even considering the subjects I used to excel in, I can feel my abilities waning. I must put more effort into them to further consolidate and uphold my competence, starting from the upcoming final exams. Even though my goal is to transfer to medicine, I still have to consider what my plan would be if I were to not succeed. I would say I would keep on applying for it every single year, and might even look into post-graduation admission if possible. But if all fails, I cannot be too mad about it, since at least I know that I have tried.

As for the aforementioned committee of the BME society, we are currently trying to make a fresh start despite such hurdles. I have committed to joining it and I will not quit until the dust had settled. If the committee were to be re-established, I would definitely put much effort into it to prove that such trauma cannot be the end of the line. The pity of seeing everything disintegrate would be a reason, but more significantly, this society would surely be no more if otherwise, seeing that our predecessors have understandably decided that being committee members for the third year wouldn't be an option for them.

## Achievability

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I am well-aware that the goal I have set for myself is rather hard to achieve, and I would be lying if I said that there isn't a high chance of failing. However, I have high confidence that I would have the motivation to work towards it since it was a goal ultimately set by myself, for myself. I possess internal push factors, which should allow me to always remind myself why I'm fighting this tough battle. However, it isn't to say that I could always manage a positive outlook. I *will* suffer and have suffered from low points. From past experiences, such

low points would usually translates into decreased productivity for a week. While I understand that emotions are not something you could or should suppress, nor are they intrinsically bad to be, I would try to be self-aware for when I fall into vicious loops of self-doubt. As shown in the mental assessment done in one of the GECC lectures, I do suspect that I have mild anxiety and depression. I guess it wasn't too surprising considering my preferred method of coping would be to just leave it, instead of letting it out by talking to or consulting friends and family since I dislike talking too much in general. I have devised a method of coping, however. I have started writing a series of journal entries to document my thoughts and feelings. I believe that it would serve as a channel of expression via which I could let out my deepest, and potentially darkest, ideas.

## Conclusion

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The three things I would like to address throughout my university years are, my academics, sociality, and proactivity to explore. I believe that I have laid out plans specific enough to aid myself while not making them too rigid so as to allow for unforeseen challenges I may face in the future.