

## Honors 100: Assignment #1

I was born and raised in Bellingham, Washington. Bellingham is a small college town, home to another university called Western Washington University. Known for its quirky, and maybe slightly hippy atmosphere, Bellingham is quite small for the size of the university that it hosts. Growing up with Western Washington University in my backyard, I had a certain set of college qualifying guidelines when I started the complicated college search. I knew (or thought I knew) that I wanted a small college. I believed that Western Washington University represented a large world full of unknowns. The college campus was so huge that it seemed inevitable that one would get lost. There were so many students that one would be simply a number in a mass of students. Therefore, I suppose it was only natural that I initially gravitated towards smaller schools. However, in an effort to keep my net wide, my parents encouraged me to apply to some bigger universities, including the University of Washington.

However, in those extremely long months between the time one submits their college applications and the time when colleges either rejects or accepts one's application, my preferences changed. I realized that I had failed to account for the multitude of opportunities, like a variety of majors, clubs, and organizations that smaller schools are unable to offer to their students. I had failed to account for the additional support that universities give in order to compensate for their large size. I failed to account for the independence that goes hand-in-hand with a large campus. In short, by the time colleges started handing back their decision letters, the characteristics I was originally looking for in the college had dramatically changed. Fortunately, due to the foresight of my parents, I already applied to a school that fit my new preferences- the University of Washington. I suppose this does prove that despite our best efforts, our parents may indeed know more than we think they do.

Eventually, I was thankful for my parents' foresight and that I had the opportunity to join this university, especially the superb honors program. Ever since A&O, I have been amazed at the exceptional level of critical thinking, opinions, and tolerance that prevails throughout this incredible blend of people. One of my goals for my time here is to understand other people's point of view and to broaden my own opinions and experiences while finding myself. I am a large part a product of my parents influence and the culture of the town I grew up in. Although parents and culture are very important, I wish to create an identity that is based on more than my location's culture and those values instilled in me by my own parents.

During my time here at the University of Washington, I also look forward to studying abroad, whether it be Columbia, Spain, or Russia. I think exploring other cultures is an essential part of one's life and creating one's own identity. I believe it is only when we completely separate ourselves from what we know, that we truly find what distinguishes ourselves from other people and other cultures. In addition, I hope to improve my language and social skills by adventuring to a new place without any close friends to lean on.

What do I want to do with my life? Now that is the question. I could join the Peace Core- exploring the world sounds fascinating. Maybe I will go to graduate school and become a dentist. Maybe I will join the Navy. Ultimately, by discovering myself here, I hope that will give me direction for the future, because right now, the future is a blank slate. But I think that being open to the future is good because my journey from high school to the University of Washington has taught me to keep my net wide open.