Madison Smith 11-23-14

Assignment 4- Portfolio and Portfolio Statement

Looking back on this quarter, I have not made any dramatic new decisions or changes in my expectations. Rather, I feel as though I have made minor modifications to the expectations and decisions I already had and have opened up my expectations for the future. A week or two into college classes, I realized that my standards in college were not entirely different than the standards I had set for myself in high school. Sure, I realized that it is quite harder to get the same grades I got in high school, but the spirit and the attitudes that got me through high school will be the same spirit and attitudes that will get me through college. I know that while sometimes exams or assignments may seem daunting and unmanageable, giving a strong effort will oftentimes get you further than you anticipated. I knew that in high school and I am confident this mindset will help me throughout college. Essentially, the largest change I experienced during my first quarter in college was a transition from an emphasis on grades to an emphasis on my attitude and the effort I give to my school work.

Upon entering college, I was surprised at how much I struggled with time management. When I was high school I found it easy to manage my time because I had so many activities filling my time that in my free time, I had to complete my homework. In high school, the daily homework and weekly quizzes helped keep me motivated to study. However, in college, where homework is 'recommended' and tests only come two or three times a quarter, finding the motivation to read the chapters and complete the practice problems was much more difficult. During my quarter here, I had to develop methods in which to motivate myself and manage my time in a more efficient manner. I know that I have improved my time management skills during the quarter yet I know it will be a process to perfect my motivational skills. However, I think as I find more activities to get involved in and my schedule fills up, that I will find it easier and easier to motivate myself to do the work I need to do in order to succeed.

One aspect of college that continually surprised me was the size of UW. I knew coming into UW that I was entering a large school. However, in the end it was not UW's large size that surprised me, rather the intimate community I found myself in. Before moving to UW, I expected to be lost in a faceless crowd of people. I thought I would find a couple friends that I would have to make an effort to meet up with. Instead, I found myself constantly running into people I knew from my hometown and the people I had gotten to know in my classes. I even saw myself recognizing people I had never talked to before. I never expected myself to be able to recognize people in a school of forty-five thousand students, or have the ability to make friends in a two hundred person lecture. But, somehow I did just that. In the end, UW ended up seeming much smaller than it appeared from the outside.

During my time in Honors 100, we spent a class period on potential experiential learning projects. One of the categories of experiential learning that I found myself drawn to was international engagement. Differences between cultures have always held an interest for me, yet traveling had always seemed like a opportunity for my distant future. The older students that we met in our Honors 100 class made study abroad seem less daunting and distant. Additionally, I discovered the study abroad office which is clearly a great office to explore study abroad opportunities. In my near future, I hope to explore possible study abroad opportunities offered by the study abroad office in a more in-depth manner.

At one point in the quarter, in my What We Know and How We Know It class, we met Ann Baker. Ann Baker is a lecturer of philosophy at the UW. During her brief philosophy lecture in our class and during our question and answer period, I found that I enjoy the ideas that motivate philosophy and freedom that philosophy allows. I like the what in which philosphy does not assume anything. It all has to be proved in manner that leaves no room for doubt. I also respect Ann Baker and her idea on philosophy. I hope that one day I have the chance to take a class from her if my schedule allows.

By the end of freshman year here at UW, I hope to have discovered one or two potential majors and have direction in my life. Right now, I feel as though I am jumping from quarter to quarter until I find something I am passionate enough about to dedicate my life to. By the end of this year, I hope to find some prospective subjects to center my academic life around. I hope to have learned to be a slightly more outspoken and made some improvements in my public speaking abilities. I want to work on these skills because I know that the ability to express oneself efficiently relates to all parts of one's life and can often be the dividing factor between success and failure. I suppose that these year-long goals also bear some resemblance to my long-term goals for my time at UW. I hope that my public speaking skills continually improve throughout my time here. I hope that my goals for my future become more concrete as time goes on. Essentially, when I finish my time here at UW, I hope to have a stronger sense of what my future holds and have improved my ability to express those goals to a variety of people.