

It has only been two months, but I feel as though so many of my expectations and goals have changed significantly. For the longest time prior to college, I believed I knew exactly what path I was going to take. Within about a month, however, I had changed my planned major(s) from Public Health and Biology to Chemistry. Not only was this due to a reanalysis of my skills and interests, but also a move towards taking better care of myself. A double major would have been challenging, especially on top of the honors requirements, and after a quarter in an incredibly difficult chemistry class, I decided that I'd orient my goals to be more realistic and kinder to my mental and physical health, but still engaging and challenging like I'd wanted. Much of the past quarter has been a process of unlearning some harmful ideas about school and grades that I'd carried through the entirety of high school. I've carried the internalized belief that anything less than the greatest achievement possible is failure, even when I knew that was wrong. I struggled a lot with feeling great after doing something right or getting a good grade, but sinking down to feeling terrible after any mistake, no matter how inconsequential. While I still have highs and lows, my ability to cope with the workload, grades, and balance is at least on the way to being better.

I wouldn't have been able to manage any of the growth and self care mentioned above without the fantastic friends I made in the past two months. One of my biggest concerns had been making friends, but even my greatest hopes for meeting people like me in the first quarter were exceeded. I now have people who are both going through the same things as me, and had similar experiences to mine in high school; but also offered different perspectives and creative solutions to problems I wouldn't have thought of. The most common and the most useful form of self care I've utilized is spending time with my new friends, whether we're all sitting in a dorm room studying, watching a movie, or playing a game. I honestly think I'd be in a much worse state without these people.

Honors 100 has been an extremely useful tool for me this first quarter. Between knowing more about the next four years and the honors requirements, having assignments oriented towards helping me plan and assess my goals, and simply having time to connect with my peers in in-person classes, it has made me feel more in control and prepared, both during this semester and looking forwards. The 4-year plan assignment in particular was incredibly helpful, as it allowed me to understand my major requisites and feel more confident in my change of mind, and to stop stressing out over completing all the requirements that seemed overwhelming without a structured view of them. Another aspect of 100 I really enjoyed is the social element, with the ability to discuss assignments and more with my classmates and to take part in fun activities and unwind after a day of classes.

Overall, as expected for the very beginning of any journey, I've learned a whole lot and I feel much more prepared for the road ahead.

(Word Count: 550)