

I faced an uphill battle going from a rural small town in Minnesota to Reed College in Portland Oregon. Reed is a private college where the education level favors people who came from well funded school districts with resources I did not have.

I had to work nearly full-time to stay financially afloat while maintaining a complete line of coursework. Financial aid only covered so much, and within the first month of studies I joined the Alumni Association as a student caller (and continued that job throughout my studies). I took as many shifts as I could, in addition to finding off-campus jobs gardening and landscaping for extra cash.

I could have panicked with the obstacles in front of me, but I stayed focused, used what resources I knew were available, and applied myself. I knew I could do it and was in the right place. My undergraduate GPA was 2.96 GPA (3.10 in my area of study). This reflects my struggles with balancing work, classes, and extracurriculars. I took it a step further and whenever possible I opted for the more difficult version of a course. This involved taking advanced versions of Econometrics and Macroeconomics. I also opted for difficult electives to prepare myself for future graduate studies, which is why I took Real Analysis and Probability.

Even after I finished college, I went back and audited more upper level classes in my area of interest that are not included in my transcript. I am dedicated to my education and advancement in statistics. I have no regrets in what I chose to do. I am glad I went to a challenging, rigorous undergraduate school where I learned to balance my life and focus my academic studies.