

Getting Lost

BY LINDSAY RUSH




Brothers Logan and Bailey Roehr saw through the challenges of the pandemic and took their studies on the road trip of a lifetime.

Bailey and Logan Roehr, both students in the Maryville Online bachelor's in business administration program, decided to hit the trails while they hit the books. The brothers embarked on a socially distant road trip through 13 national parks across 15 states on a journey spanning roughly 9,000 miles. And they did it all while logging on to learn in America's most scenic places like Yellowstone, Redwood, Glacier and Zion National Parks.

"I think a lot of people always have a dream of going on a crazy trip like this — and people kind of just wait for the perfect opportunity to fall into their lap," Logan said. "With the pandemic going on, I realized there's never going to be a perfect time."

The Roehr brothers both credit Maryville's flexible online learning environment for helping to make their travels possible and enabling them to balance schoolwork with exploration. Having the ability to learn from anywhere gave them the freedom to take a trip of a lifetime.

The brothers quickly garnered national attention for their unique remote learning style, mixing adventure with coursework. They shared their journey across social media

 GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

and YouTube, and eventually inspired a Forbes article and an interview with a local St. Louis NBC news affiliate.

Logan and Bailey planned how to make their education disruption-proof by downloading their assignments ahead of time so they could continue working even when Wi-Fi wasn't available. They also took turns studying in the car as they drove from one park to another.

"Traveling and studying together on the road was an extraordinary opportunity for us, which would not have been impossible without the flexibility of Maryville's online programs," Bailey said.

Indeed, the ability to grow their skills and build industry knowledge while enjoying breathtaking views is an experience they'll never forget. The brothers surfed down sand dunes, rode all-terrain vehicles through densely wooded forests and cliff jumped into crystal clear lake water.

They hiked hundreds of miles including reaching Yosemite's Half Dome summit.

The most memorable part of their road trip was watching the sun rise over the Grand Canyon. "We hiked to our campsite and set up our tents in the pitch-black, so we didn't realize how close we were to the rim until we woke up," Bailey said. "We couldn't believe the incredible view all around us!"

What started as a wild idea transformed into a reality — but not without planning, saving, working and budgeting. The brothers both worked to earn money for their trip, as well as strategized a strict budget for their adventure. Logan and Bailey said they ate simple meals like eggs, granola bars and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to help accommodate.



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The Roehr brothers have redefined the possibilities of remote learning and are hoping to inspire other students to do the same.

"Despite the curveballs COVID threw us, we were able to explore 13 national parks in 15 states and never really missed a beat with our classes," Bailey said. "We're sharing our story about what we refer to as our 'untethered education' so other students are inspired to rethink where their college experience can take them."

Traditional and remote classrooms offer different benefits to different kinds of learners. For those open to remote learning, an online option provides the most flexibility to determine your schedule and create your own path. Maryville's online format allowed Logan and Bailey to stretch their schedule and coordinate their coursework with their travel plans. Most importantly, they were able to stay on track with their goals and graduation.

"It's something to look at as another opportunity. It's a pretty disruptive world out there once you graduate," Logan said. "There are going to be things thrown at you that you did not expect, and this trip is just another opportunity to get used to that and really embrace it and run with it." 