

Why College Is Important to Me

by

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On a rainy quarantine afternoon last May, I was cleaning my room a la Marie Kondo, traversing my bookshelf, searching for books to donate, when I happened to find my journal from the sixth grade. Curious, I opened the journal to see what my elementary school self had to say. In the journal, I found a list of my goals. Specifically, I had written, “I want to attend Columbia or Cornell University, and I want to play a sport there.” At the time, this was an unattainable, pie-in-the-sky goal that I had written and promptly put into the back of my mind.

As I re-read that statement from what seemed like ages ago, a huge smile grew across my face. I had just committed to Cornell University to play volleyball and study Government a week prior. I did not remember ever writing in the journal during my childhood, yet it served as a prophecy for my future: I worked hard in each of my honors-level and AP courses to remain at the top of my graduating class while focusing my free time toward advancing my volleyball skills and overall athleticism, through countless hours of practice, workouts, and tournaments. In this sense, being accepted into an elite academic institution gave me pride in my accomplishments and hard work.

My work ethic must continue once I step onto the Cornell campus. College is an opportunity to surround myself with the brightest in my generation, to learn from world-renowned professors, and to set myself up for success in my career. Although I am not receiving any athletic or academic scholarships, meaning it will be a financial setback for me, I believe it is well worth the cost. My mother, a first-generation college graduate and my biggest inspiration, has told me that college is an investment in my future since childhood. I know that I

will be challenged in new ways, whether competing for playing time or being exposed to new ideas, and this will prepare me for success in future endeavors.

My next goal is to become a lawyer and to use my knowledge to help others. To do this, I must excel in my courses to allow me to attend a good law school, while also continuing to serve my community. Attending Cornell for my undergraduate will provide me with the best opportunity to meet my next goal. It will also provide me with many additional opportunities, such as making new friends, competing in a sport I love, and developing my leadership skills.

So, while acceptance to college feels like a culmination of prior achievements, it is also a blank slate. I want to soak it up, learn as much as possible and use it to become the best version of myself. Although I am moving hundreds of miles from my hometown and support system, I do not think of college as just the end of my past. Instead, it is the beginning of a whole new chapter in my life.