

RETROACTIVELY LOOKING BACK ON MY FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE

THROUGH THE
PERSPECTIVE OF COVID-
COLORED LENSES

As an incoming freshman but junior by credits, I thought I had it all planned out in 2017. I was going to stringently follow the four-year plan that my adviser and preview staffer had graciously provided for me, become the most popular individual in Hume Hall (and therefore of all campus), and gain as much muscle mass as my rather short stature could support by the end of the year. Needless to say, none of those things came true. The “four-year plan” quickly became a “four-year disarrangement.” I ended up switching my major twice over the course of a few months. I realized my fantasy of becoming popular had evaporated when my own Hume Hall suitemate asked for a form of identification when I locked myself out of my room and needed to go through his connecting bathroom to get back in. And while I had envisioned looking as fit as Zac Efron in “Baywatch” by the end of the year, I ended up looking more like a dehydrated string bean. Just as Gator Dining was to Preview students, college would not be

all that it seems.

It could be argued that perhaps these unplanned occurrences were a consequence of chronic introversion and laziness. Perhaps I would have gotten to know more people if I had made the effort to talk to Hume Hall peers after our (un)common reads classes. Maybe if I had put a bit more effort forward in studying for that first general chemistry test, it wouldn't have influenced my four-year plan as drastically. It wasn't until an enormous tree collapsed on top of the soccer net that I had been playing with nearly every day behind Hume when I realized that maybe some things really aren't in my control. It was time to start taking advantage of exciting opportunities because clearly, you never know what life is going to throw at you.

I loaded up on taking more (un)common reads classes, including a comedy class with Dr. Law that discussed “The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy,” this time with the intention of talking to other people after class and making new friends. I took aerial yoga classes once a week throughout the Spring semester with honors advisers, proudly displaying to them how incredibly inflexible I am. I even secured a job at the O'Connell Center in which I was a security guard for Gator Growl and was within touching distance of Snoop Dogg. That day, I felt like Snoop Lion.

Retroactively looking back on these memories as a senior graduating this spring, I am thankful that I partook in them and am regretful that I didn't do more. There are numerous activities on my UF bucket list that I simply did not get around to because of the pandemic. Just like the tree that fell on my soccer net, Coronavirus, quarantine, and most other things in life are unpredictable and completely out of everyone's control. Despite not succeeding in my original major, I'm glad I unmasked the correct one for me. Despite not reaching Tim Tebow popularity, I'm thankful I have friends to socially distance from as opposed to being socially distant from making friends. And despite not reaching my fitness goals, I know things are going to work out.

*Story by Andrew Wengrovitz
Design by Courtney Chalmers*