

Throughout this quarter, I've had to work to change my expectations for myself in some areas. For example, I had a 4.0 GPA in high school, and part of me still expects myself to keep that GPA in college. However, I know that having a perfect GPA at UW is virtually impossible, and I have been trying to have more manageable expectations for myself. For now, I'm trying to focus more on just learning the content for my classes and doing the best I can, instead of fixating so much on GPA.

One aspect of UW that I didn't expect was how competitive it is when it comes to academics. I knew that some majors were capacity-constrained, but I don't think I really grasped what that meant until I became a student here. Getting into a major seems like it will be a much bigger problem than I initially thought, which makes me nervous for the future. Similarly, I didn't expect weed-out classes to be quite so brutal. If I'm being honest, the fact that most introductory STEM classes are considered so difficult (and the fact that your grades in those classes matter when applying to majors) has made me start to rethink trying to get into a STEM major. I believe that the math class that I took this quarter, Math 126, is sometimes considered a weed-out as well, but thankfully I am doing decently well in it so far (knock on wood). All of that being said, I know that this is an aspect of UW that I just have to accept and deal with as best as I can. At the end of the day, grades aren't everything, and I hope I can still succeed in a STEM major.

By the end of my first year in Honors, I want to become more comfortable writing essays. Though I've already fulfilled my Composition requirement, I don't feel like I really know how to write a good essay. I am currently in the middle of writing my first and only essay of the quarter, and I feel that my writing is not as clear and my ideas are not as well-developed as they should be. The Honors class I'm taking next quarter seems to have a focus on writing, so I'm hoping that I will be able to develop my skills in that class.

At this point, I feel like I have a little more direction when it comes to my academic plans than I did before. I picked my classes for Autumn quarter randomly, since I had no idea what I wanted to major in, and I hadn't thought to look into what classes I needed to satisfy various degree requirements. My registration for Winter quarter was much more strategic. The work I did planning out my curriculum for HONORS 100 made it easier for me to see what classes I needed to fulfill my Gen Ed. requirements. I also registered for a class that is a prerequisite for the math major and a class that will count towards fulfilling some of my Honors requirements. Overall, I feel much better about where I am academically, and I feel like I am making progress towards graduation.

Word Count: 537