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Autumn Quarter Reflection

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First Taste of UW

With the bulk of Autumn quarter already over, there is certainly much to reflect upon. Although, with three weeks and final exams remaining, I feel that the climax of the quarter is yet to come, and I'll be able to reflect more completely afterwards.

Regarding academics, my initial goal here at the University of Washington was to develop the skills and learn the necessary material to begin my path to becoming an aerospace engineer. I suppose I've started doing this in a very preliminary sense, as I'm taking required math and physics classes that will eventually lead to more specialized classes regarding aerospace. I much prefer how my honors class functions in comparison to my math and physics classes, which are structured a lot like my high school courses. Unfortunately, I think most classes I will take down the line will have this structure. Another unfortunate realization I've had about my academic future at UW that was highlighted by the Honors 100 MyPlan assignment is that it will be difficult to study abroad and explore other areas of academia that pique my interest because of the large number of classes that I'm required to take for my major. However, I look forward to the Honors curriculum courses that will diversify my schedule. My goal, therefore, has changed so that now I aspire to become an aerospace engineer, but also to take as many classes that I can that have nothing to do with aerospace engineering.

One thing I am surprised about is my ability to manage time for leisure, studying, and procrastination. Aside from one semi-tragic midterm, I have been able to succeed consistently even though my work ethic is undoubtedly lax and I have rarely turned down opportunities for fun because I needed to study. I'm not intending to maintain this lifestyle, but it's certainly been entertaining and convenient.

The social environment of UW has consistently surprised me, mostly because the university students I knew intimately before I came here go to significantly different institutions. I find myself continually meeting new people and building a network of friends and acquaintances, and feel that the relationships I've made thus far are still developing. I'm still figuring out the dynamics of student-professor relationships here, and should certainly be more diligent about getting to know my professors.

My extracurricular life may be the aspect of my time at UW that has most satisfied my initial goals. I have been able to go on simply remarkable rock climbing and outdoor excursions that have been equally as enjoyable as informative. The main reason I ventured westward from the boreal northeast for college was for the extraordinary natural environment of the Pacific Northwest, and I'm glad that I could experience a bit of it in my first quarter, all thanks to the absurdly welcoming climbing community at the university. I was just placed on the competitive UW climbing team and I am ecstatic to become stronger at my favorite sport and develop lasting relationships within the community. I am still intent on finding an extracurricular activity that has to do with my major, but for now my schedule is comfortably busy.

I am lucky in that I have two very close friends that I had known before college who coincidentally ended up at UW as well. They have both helped me get involved in great events such as concerts and art exhibits, and they've been shoulders to lean on when I've been down or lonely. They have also helped me diversify my acquaintances, as the three of us all have different interests and majors. I can certainly see us being friends for a long time, and I've been very grateful for them thus far.

By the end of my first year in Honors and at UW, I hope to have a better idea of what the next years will look like. I intend to apply early to my major so as to eliminate the stress of not being accepted as soon as possible. Once that is settled, I will look into planning two if not three international excursions for the next three years, during which I can satisfy my experiential learning requirements. Travelling is frankly my favorite thing to do, and the prospect of travelling productively is too attractive to neglect. Another goal I have is to be able to converse comfortably in German before 2020 and maintain my Spanish, so those are other parameters around which I'll plan my future.

Since the quarter began, I've realized more and more the truth behind the oft-repeated saying "UW is what you make of it." So far I've made a lot of my time here, but I look forward to making even more of it and implementing my plans for the future.