



Senior Reflection | Goodbye college: I made it through, and so can you!

BY: ELLA BARRY / ON: MAY 9, 2024 / IN: FEATURES, SENIOR REFLECTIONS

Three years ago, I drove 978 miles from Minnesota to Colorado and moved into my dorm room with one goal: to get out of my hometown so I could try new things and meet new people.

I came to UCCS as an out-of-state student knowing no one. It was scary, but it was all part of my goal.

2021 was a strange year to start college. It was no longer the height of the pandemic, but half my classes were online, and campus seemed like a ghost town. I struggled to make friends throughout my first semester.

I didn't know how, but it seemed like everyone already had their friend groups solidified by the first day of classes, and I was left behind. The few people I occasionally hung out with were from Denver suburbs and went home every weekend.

As a freshman living in the dorms without a car, weekends became my nightmare.

But that's the opposite of how things were supposed to be, right? College is all about weekends: parties, sports games, dinner or coffee with friends; all the things you can't do throughout the week because you have class.

By mid-semester freshman year, the days began to blend. I only had class in-person twice a week, I had no way to leave campus, and I had no friends. I was depressed, and every day I thought about transferring to a college closer to home.

I'm not going to sugar-coat it, my freshman year was terrible, and looking back now, I think that statement is unfortunately true for a lot of people. It's easy to come to college with high expectations and a romanticized version of how your life will be, but that version rarely comes true.

Though it's frustrating to admit, the difficulties of freshman year made me grow as a person more than any other period of my life. If you're going through something similar, I hope reading my experience helps you, even a little bit.

Things began to turn around for me when I started my second year at UCCS. I had a car and an apartment close to campus, and I became co-president of the Feminist Club; it was a fresh start.

I was far enough along in my degree that I could take classes I genuinely enjoyed with likeminded classmates. It was in my first journalism class, Writing for the Media, that I met my best friend, Olivia.

We clicked instantly, and my friendship with Olivia began my process of building community at UCCS.

I've realized that community is everything, especially in college. There are so many ways to get involved and meet people that will love and support you as you work toward your degree. The people you meet now can be the people you'll spend the rest of your life with.

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Though I was highly involved with the Feminist Club my freshman year, it wasn't until I became co-president that I began to think of it as a way to socialize and make friends, rather than only a way to channel my activism into a resume-building extracurricular.



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By the end of Fall Semester 2022, I'd grown closer to Olivia, befriended my fellow Feminist Club officers and people in the Creative Writing minor program, strengthened relationships with some of my professors and begun to see why college is all about community.

Also at the end of Fall Semester, I applied to work for

The Scribe. I've wanted to be a journalist since I graduated high school, but I never had the confidence to write professionally until my professor and Scribe advisor, Laura, urged me to.

This is a side note, but an important one: don't be like me. Never sell yourself short. Don't avoid something because you're scared, or you think you're underqualified. If you want it, get it. I promise, you're qualified, you're good enough, you got it!

Writing for the Scribe has been one of the best parts of college. I've had the chance to strengthen my writing in multiple sections and improve my interviewing skills. When I look back at the first article I wrote for the Scribe, I can't believe how much my writing has improved.



Through the Scribe, I discovered more and more of what was happening on campus, and got to tell the stories in my articles. I'm nosy, and I love having the inside scoop, journalism is perfect for me.

In addition to honing my skills and passion for writing at the Scribe, I made friends. Olivia and I started working for the Scribe at the same time, and soon we grew closer to some of our coworkers.



Over the past year there have been plenty of late nights in the Scribe office with friends. Sometimes working on articles or homework, other times just playing hangman and doing puzzles.

I'm so grateful that I got to travel with the Scribe, attending two student journalism conferences this year. I learned a lot, connected with professionals and other student journalists from around the country, and got to do some sightseeing with my friends.

While I had a rocky start to college, the past two years have been the best in my life, and I'm going to miss it.

I'm not sure how it went by so fast. It feels like just yesterday I was staring at the mountains in awe, having just arrived in Colorado, but I've been here three years.

Maybe this is why people go to grad school; not to continue their education or whatever but to hold on to the best years of their lives. Just kidding... kind of.

I'm not entirely sure what's next for me. I'll walk the stage at commencement and figure it out from there. But I know that wherever I go and whatever I do, I'll have a whole community of people I love cheering me on.

Goodbye UCCS community, I love you!

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Scribe@uccs.edu

University Center Room 106
1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway
Colorado Springs, CO 80918

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