

Optional Supplemental
Michigan State University Application (MAED Program)
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“Another major switch?! Urban Studies & Planning? Honey – do you have any idea what you are doing at all?” My parents worriedly questioned me while I embarrassingly searched the ground for the answer. I wanted to quickly retort back that I knew what I was doing – but deep down I knew I was a mess. My grades were reminiscent of alphabet soup, I was too scared to ask my professor my many questions in the large 300-person lecture halls, and the 10-week quarter pace schedule for each of my classes made keeping up nearly impossible. Questioning my every move in school became a daily self-deprecating habit. What was I doing here wasting my parent’s hard earned money on tuition? How did I even get here if I am struggling this much with classes? Where am I going in the future? Do I even have a future? Through my trials and tribulations, I came to understand that the most important question that allowed me to ultimately thrive in college was “Why?” I would soon find out that only when I found my “why” for pursuing education would I finally be able to actually learn.

My relationship with Education was rocky, to say the least. I was in the middle of my 2nd year at UC San Diego and had racked up an impressive 5 major switches from all around the spectrum – Linguistics, Communications, Graphic Art, Human Development – and now Urban Studies. Like many other competitive college-bound students, I had fallen prey to the fallacy of college prestige. Being raised in Irvine, California meant being perpetually surrounded by overwhelming pressure to achieve. I was subconsciously (or consciously) made to believe that “success” looked like working at Google after getting my undergraduate degree from UC institution or Stanford; any less wouldn’t do. In my relentless pursuit to attend a “prestigious” college, I never considered what type of education best fit for me. Furthermore, I had never taken the time to understand the value of my education. By now I had hit my lowest point in my educational story thus far and was willing to explore and try anything.

Between all of my disciplines, I decided to try studying Business (and my 6th major switch to Economics). I joined the Pre-Professional Co-ed Business Fraternity, Delta Sigma Pi where I built up my professionalism toolbox such as creating my first resume and going through multiple mock interview practices. Through networking with the fraternity’s alumni, I was introduced to an amazing scholarship opportunity at the UCSD Extension program for undergraduates that would subsidize a full professional certificate. After applying and receiving the scholarship – I went on to obtain my certification in Human Resource Management while concurrently completing my undergraduate degree. I learned that there was so much more to college than getting a degree. Through exploring and networking within the organizations on campus, I gained access to more resources than I ever did through just my courses alone. College stopped being a location for me to just go to class and transformed into a vessel to living a fulfilling life.

Through my Human Resource Management coursework – I ended up sitting next to the person who gave me my first job. I became a Human Resources Student Assistant for the Vice Chancellor's of Health Sciences office at UCSD where I really developed all of my “real-life” applicable skills. Upon graduation, I was offered a full-time career position in my office where I became an Administrative Coordinator performing a variety of HR functions, including my favorite job of onboarding new hire employees. I loved guiding and informing the new employees, and being their support for success at a new stage of their life and career. My passion became more refined as I became the head of student recruitments in my office where I also provided career opportunities to students at UCSD. I understood that I thoroughly enjoyed creating genuine connections with the undergraduate students. I knew I wanted to find a way to give back to my alma mater.

I had remembered a previous fraternity colleague named Derek at the UCI chapter began a college mentoring program during his undergraduate time. One phone call later led to an amazing conversation full of ideas and opportunity, and I soon after was invited to join the board of Luminated Career Consulting (LCC) on September 2016. The group is a non-profit that provides free, personalized 1-on-1 career coaching for college students to help them land their dream career. I led the creation of the UCSD chapter and conducted outreach efforts and held focus groups with a variety of campus organizations to advertise our group's services. I took on a handful of UCSD undergraduates under my guidance. I was so warmed when my counselees were able to successfully get their first internships as a direct result of my mentorship. As I continued my work with LCC while working at day job in recruitment and onboarding, I started to visualize a future for me: I was going to put myself in a position where I can continue to educate students on opportunities in college.

I want to pursue my graduate degree in Education Studies so I can be the best resource I can be for my students to find their “Why.” As soon as I began asking my “Why” I wanted my education, I found the motivation and resources to branch out and create opportunity for myself. I stopped allowing my previous preconceived notions and expectations of success guide my college experience. In choosing this path, I have found my calling to be guiding the college-bound and the college undergraduates on their path to whatever their ideal future will be. My passion for education is steeped in the notion that one's college experience is a deeply personal choice; a choice that should be well-informed, personalized, and free from judgement. Obtaining an advanced degree in Education Studies not only solidifies my commitment to this notion, but will also allow me to hone in on more theory and tools in the context of postsecondary institutions. I want my students to have the most fulfilling college experience possible – whether that means choosing the less “prestigious” option because it fits better with their personality, exploring different resources not necessarily part of the school curriculum, or not being afraid to switch your major a few times. The way I see it, it is all part of bringing yourself closer to finding what motivates you to live a life worth living. After all, it took me 7 major switches to find out my ultimate calling.