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Undergraduate Program: Honours Life Sciences with Minor in Psychology

Current Program: Master in Business Administration (McMaster)

Undergrad

While I was in the Life Sciences program at McMaster, most of my courses were in psychology since I really enjoyed learning about what makes people tick. However, I noticed that, compared to my friends, I wasn't as passionate about my studies. My friends constantly talked about what they were learning in class, whereas I was certainly not as enthusiastic. I came to Mac thinking I would most likely pursue medical school, but after first year, ***I realized this was not where I was meant to be.*** Unlike many science students, I didn't feel a strong desire to pursue any research or thesis projects; I was more interested in directing more of my time and efforts into extracurriculars.

My parents wanted me to pursue a career in medicine. I took all of the required courses for several professional degrees just to keep my options open. At the same time, ***I knew that I needed to find a career path that was more aligned with my strengths.*** I think my greatest challenge during my undergraduate years was the cognitive dissonance I experienced with who I expected myself to be and who I was meant to be. I kept trying to convince myself I was equally passionate about my course content as my friends who wanted to pursue their PhD. However, once I accepted the fact that my interests lay elsewhere, I decided not to write the MCAT. I felt as if a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders.

Master's Program

I am currently in my second year of the MBA program at the DeGroote School of Business here at McMaster. The decision to pursue an MBA had a lot to do with the experiences I had in the extracurricular activities I enjoyed during my undergraduate degree. These include being the VP Communications of the McMaster Science Society, working as a Community Advisor in residence, and being the President of a volunteer organization. My involvement in these positions made me realize that ***my strengths don't necessarily lie in pure science***, but rather in leadership and marketing. This ultimately led to a "Eureka!" moment that I could still contribute to the world of science (which truly did have a place in my heart), but from a business perspective. While I can't remember many things from my undergraduate courses (even though we must have reviewed mitosis a thousand times), I can certainly tell you all about an initiative I led for the MSS or about a big event I planned for students in residence.

Now, in my MBA, I'm definitely more involved during lecture and excited to do the readings when I go home, which is a stark contrast to my undergraduate lectures. I'm finally experiencing what my friends felt in undergrad when they constantly talked about what they learned in class. My MBA has also allowed me the opportunity to work as a Marketing Manager at a fertility clinic, so I'm thrilled I get to do exactly what I set out to do; contribute to the world of science from a

business perspective. Since I have a science background, it was definitely easier to understand some of the procedures and ideas that I had to promote.

Words of Advice

One thing I notice is that students often try to stack up their resumé with extracurriculars, and it breaks my heart to see students apply for something just so they can say they've done it. It's important that you research a club or a position thoroughly before applying and make sure that it is something that genuinely interests you. When applying to roles, ***instead of telling them why you want to be in their club, tell them what you bring to the table.*** Students have to change their mentality when it comes to extracurriculars; instead of the organization helping you, you have to help the organization. This type of thinking will help you as you move on in your professional life.

My advice would be to seek out any and all experiential and student involvement opportunities you can. These experiences will tell you a lot more about yourself than any lecture, lab report, or exam. ***You only undergrad once (YOUO)***, so be sure to make the most out of the short time you have at McMaster; time will fly by and before you know it, you'll be walking across the stage and wishing you could have done more things! You'll meet many people with diverse perspectives – there are so many friendships I would have missed out on had I not gotten involved in opportunities outside of my comfort zone. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there and get involved in anything and everything! You won't regret it.