
College Life: A Journey Of Self-Discovery And Learning

The daily activities of the college based lifestyle can be challenging for many students to balance. A typical college student, like myself, can be putting up to eighty hours into work and school a week if not more. When one puts so much time into these things they can be stressed because of school work and also the hours they may be putting in at a part or full time job. The college lifestyle can be difficult to balance because of hours at work, studying for classes, familial relationships, and one's social life.

A student can have a variety of different jobs, just like anyone else, but working at a grocery store can sometimes be easier since they can work around the days and times the students are available more easily. They can do this because they have so many people working for their company. However, a worker can easily work forty hours a week. However, working at a grocery store can be a very physical job, causing one to be more tired and less likely to be well rested. This can make it difficult for one to execute school work in a timely manner. While struggling to get school work done they may have a hard time fitting family and social time into their schedule.

While working a full time job a student can be involved in many different activities. The typical student has to work approximately thirty hours a week if not more. While working these hours a student may have encounters with many different people and things. For example, while working in a common grocery store, the typical customer service worker deals with about seventy shoppers in one four hour shift. These encounters may include many different things. Sometimes a customer may ask if we carry a certain product or if we have any in the back of the store. In many instances these items may be in the freezing cold cooler that takes your breath away, on the non-air conditioned, muggy back dock, or even outside in the sweltering heat. For example, while working a shift in the grocery department I had to stock eggs. This is a very common part of the job in grocery, but is a pain no less. Stocking eggs starts with going into the cooler and lifting the crate of eggs from the back stock cart to the floor or shelf. One may not think a crate of featherweight eggs would be heavy, but once the weight of the Styrofoam is added in along with the eggs it begins to make your muscles tense in the cool air and struggle until you reach the desired destination: the shelf. After moving the carton you often have to pull each carton of eggs out carefully to avoid a slimy, oozing mess should they be damaged from the journey to the store. This is only one of the many messes they typical under paid grocery worker may encounter. While in the cooler one may have to avoid the numerous spilled or damaged items that still need to be accounted for. Sometimes, if a worker has a very good sense of smell, like myself, they can smell the eggs that have been mashed, cracked or even dropped. Needless to say the dried, raw egg smell is not pleasant. However, this is only one of

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the many things a grocery clerk can encounter. While being asked to get the eggs the mother might even notice a single mother yelling for her kids to “get their asses” over to where she is as quickly as they can possibly handle. This aggressive command is actually very common in the grocery store surprisingly enough. Then after hearing the mother yell, one sees her children, as many of them as there may be, run and trip over themselves to get to there before the mother’s face turns any other shade of red. Normally most children are fairly well behaved, but there are always a few who do not want to listen their red faced mother who refuses to stop screaming at her children. This causes a mass of shoppers, customers and specifically workers, to gaze at her and wonder why the hell she brought them all to the store.

Although work is a very aggravating, annoying, time-consuming part of a student’s life, college can sometimes be a very comfortable, smooth oasis. Going to school can give an overworked student a period of down time that they would otherwise not get to enjoy. Classes are the main part of college. A student can be involved in a number of different classes, although four is usually a very common minimum. These tortuous classes typically consist of a mathematics, English, science, and computer course. Although some classes are more enjoyable than others, sitting in computer class can be monotonous. One does not usually get much mental or physical stimulation. Majority of the time the student sits there and suffers through a lecture about how to use the most basic programs known to man: Microsoft Office. However, sometimes on a fantastically irritating day the professor takes over the computer screens causing many students to turn fifty shades of pissed off. This forces the irritated, sleep deprived student to listen to what the professor is saying even if they have already been over the material a million uncomfortable, irritating times. That, however, is only one of the possibilities. In a science course, one could be talking about electrons and neurons one day and the next be trying to understand what the slimy insides of organs are made out of. In English, it could be about why a student should not procrastinate writing the inevitable paper about what you feel, see and hear in numerous different situations. Who would not love to talk about the wonders of the world of math with the lovely Mrs. Harding? This could all be happening while students are sitting in the horridly uncomfortable seats, but also in the aggravating stare of the teacher who speaks like her math filled life depends on it. The students are then forced to go into depth about things that are completely unrelated, like how the professor is going to school to be even more irritating. These are all great examples of the different parts of classes, but the best part of classes is being able to enjoy the campus. One can enjoy the cool water as it rushes over their hand if they dip it in the mossy, green pond water with the slight current pulling the water to the waterfall mechanism. They can also enjoy the warm colors of the leaves changing color in the fall while sitting outside smoking a much needed cigarette. After all of the ruckus of the day the drive home can be by far the most relaxing part of college. Students can enjoy a music filled drive home to relax from the preceding day. These drives, if you are like me, can include beautiful reservoirs, vibrantly colored trees, and many, many upsetting drivers who insist of driving like a turtle in a snow storm with no legs.

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While working and going to school it can be difficult for a student to spend time with family when they barely have time to get a decent amount of sleep. When one does get to spend an extended amount of time with their family it can be filled with heated political debates, mindless television watching and delightful, mouthwatering, aromatic meals. If a family oriented person is lucky they will get to spend a holiday or two with their family. For example, Thanksgiving can be one of these holidays. A family Thanksgiving can be filled with warmly colored decorations, delicious food, and even an uneventful football game that is just in the background of a riveting conversation about how the most current presidential candidate should not even be allowed to speak. However, before the holiday the house prepping chores must be executed. The worst is always the bathroom. It is always a small space and you are constantly interrupted by the family members who insist that doing their make up is more important. They say it is even more important than the grime building on the sink from the concealer they dropped and mysteriously forgot to clean up. Eventually one can get it done and begin to enjoy the holiday with their family.

Finding a balance in college can be extremely difficult. Between work, school, and family it leaves little time for anything else. One of the hardest challenges a student faces is when and if they should go to that huge party being thrown at a friend's house or if they should sit at home studying until their eyes start to cross from reading so much. Usually it is the latter and most social events get pushed to the side. The most difficult part of fitting a social life into the ridiculously busy life of a part time worker and full time student is finding time to simply enjoy an entertaining experience that may or may not include a pizza and season of Netflix. The worst part is finding time to go to that loud, marijuana smoke filled concert that one has been dying to go to since the beginning of time. Students make many sacrifices while in school and their social life may take the hardest hit of them all.

Although college life can be difficult, hectic and stressful students can strive to find a balance between work, school, and play. It may include a lot of late nights, bags under their eyes and a very large, energizing dose of caffeine, but once the balance between all of these things is reached it can allow a student to step back and enjoy the little things. Sometimes it is just lying in a nice cozy bed for an extra few minutes or trying a new taco place on a lunch break. Regardless, of what balance the student finds, once they do find it, it makes college a much more enjoyable experience.

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