

Jennifer Colindres Miranda

My journey as a community college student has been a unique experience that, although it hasn't been the smoothest transition, I am extremely grateful for. I graduated from Phillip O. Berry Academy of Technology in the spring of 2020, completely certain that I would not be going to college. Although I wanted to further my education, I knew I wasn't able to afford it. My parents were unable to help cover the costs, and I wasn't sure if my savings were enough to help me avoid taking out student loans. A week or so after graduating high school, I applied to three different universities; I was hopeful that maybe I'd be able to go to college after all. After speaking with advisers in each school, my only option was to take out thousands of dollars in loans for two schools, and the third was out of the question (originally my dream school). After speaking with my family about this issue, my sister, who was a recent graduate of Central Piedmont, suggested that I earn my associate's degree at Central Piedmont as it is much more affordable. I decided to apply, (and I am extremely glad that I made the right decision). My first semester was quite a challenge as I was starting off the year with a 1.4 GPA (I took two dual enrollment classes in high school). Being fully online and trying to maintain straight A's was not the easiest task. I felt disconnected from everyone, and burnout was difficult to avoid. I decided that the best way to solve this issue was to get involved. I applied as a fellow for the Charlotte Racial Justice Consortium, and I was accepted. At the beginning of my Spring semester, I interviewed for the Cato senator position for the Student Government Association; which I was given the opportunity to be a part of. Being a part of the organizations I am partaking in, such as the Charlotte Racial Justice Consortium, SGA, and the Positive Community for Women, I have been able to connect with other students and faculty members. Although the socialization isn't quite the same as in-person classes, it's been great to have that connection with other people who are going through similar experiences. Every single student and faculty member was affected in some way by the recent cyberattack, and I'm grateful to be a part of these organizations that have made it a priority to build each other up. My most memorable moment this year was the day I told my dad I was considering taking some time off from school. I'm an auditory and kinesthetic learner, and learning online while trying to maintain straight A's was mentally draining. I felt as if I wasn't progressing, and hearing "the work will be worth it in the long run" didn't feel real. About five minutes after that conversation ended, I got an email from PTK, the honor society. At that moment I realized all the work I've been putting into my courses was worth it. I didn't feel so invisible anymore. I'm extremely grateful for the opportunities Central Piedmont Community College has presented me with, as I was able to further my education, get involved with student organizations, and become a better student.

Link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vK7ZwpD-SK0COL-t_nOMQHhR3h8uTVUboWSveTR8ZiY/edit?usp=sharing