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# College

Olivia Holmes

*Framingham State University*

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Olivia Holmes

Professor Axelrod

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### College

College wasn't much of an option for me, for many people it isn't anymore. If you can afford college, you better go. It has become the equivalent of what a high school degree used to be, but more expensive. Ever since I was a kid I was picking out what college to go to so I can get a good job and have enough money to support myself and my future family and put my future kids through college so they can be educated and take care of their families as well. I didn't choose to go to college. My options were I could go straight to college or I could take a year off from school and work, then go to college. That wasn't even a really solid or encouraged option. So I came to college, and now that I am here a big reason I stay here and try to succeed is money. I come to every class because now I am paying to be here; I am paying to become an educated person and to figure out who I am. If I skip class, I am throwing away money, not even my money, my parent's money.

When I think about after college, the long-term reasons I am here, it scares me. We all know the statistics of trying to get a job when you get out of college and they don't look good. Especially for someone like me, who wants to ultimately become an art teacher. So I usually just ignore that and focus on the short term. This isn't the best idea and I know that, but if I thought about the future all the time I would be a nervous wreck and wouldn't focus on anything short term like homework and going to class, and then I would never reach the long term goals. If I do

find my mind wandering into what could happen after college I often remind myself that things can change, the statistics are not permanent. Even if they were, not everything is about money. Happiness is really important. I would be okay with being poor, homeless, and happy, as long as I am happy. However, there is still that social and family pressure to do well in life.

At this point in my life, the only thing keeping me here is social pressures and pressures from my parents. My parents have sunk so much money into me, even just for this first semester of college, and to come out of this without a degree would be so disappointing to them, and a total waste. Also, the idea of being a college drop-out has always been really scary. You're taught that you won't go anywhere in life if you drop out of school, so that is an ever-looming fear. You're taught that employers will look at the fact that you don't have a degree and disregard you instantly, which can be true, but it depends on the job you're looking for.

So why am I in college? What is keeping me here? In short, I have no idea. I'm staying here because of social pressures and my parents, that much is clear, but in terms of what I am expecting when I leave, it is unclear. We can never really know until we get there. In the meantime, I am just going to chug through my classes and do the best I can to actually learn something before I get chucked into the real world and have to figure out the rest of my life independently.