

What are your current academic goals and how do you plan to achieve your goals?

Since a very young age, I have wanted to make a difference. I want to be an animal researcher that finds different ways for animals to help humans in agriculture. My plans feel big right now because it is only a plan, but with the right tools I can accomplish anything. In order to get the things in need, I must be able to afford it. When it comes to funds, the rich get richer, the poor get poorer, but what about the people that don't have either; the people that are...*Average*. It's an every day fact for many different situations whether for school, scholarships, housing, and so much more. Financially, there are ongoing battles that students face with the decision to go to college, including mine. When discussing the decision between college, no college, and some college there are a number of other decisions that come to mind. There are scholarships for low-income families. There are well-off families that can afford to send their students off to college. Finally there are families like mine that are middle class and can possibly afford some college but will have to rearrange their priorities to make ends meet. By furthering my education, it will give me the ability to find a financial opportunity much greater than what my parents have to offer me at this time. I know my parents have and will do all they can to help me be successful, but with a higher education, the skills and knowledge attained from college will afford me a better financial future.

First, we will talk about the decision to go to a four year college. I have just graduated high school. My parents can only afford one semester of college and I don't have many scholarships because I don't qualify for having either too much or too little money. This would

mean that the rest of tuition would have to be made up through family contributions. Family contributions could mean that my family will struggle to take care of their home. With all the bills, utilities, food and water, there is little to no room left for saving, especially for college. Not only would my family have to worry about the cost of tuition, but the length of schooling could increase due to un-affordability.

Some students have it all, they have the money to afford college. They may be high academic scholars, have scholarships, and can still afford tuition plus more. They are the type of students that literally have it all. The grades, GPA, the money, the networks/connections, and even the merit scholarships to back it up. Maybe them and/ or their parents have the funds in order to fulfill the financial needs of the student...

Meanwhile, the opposite end of the spectrum is for me not to consider college at all. It would be easier to stop my education completely; stay at home and be complacent with only a high school education. Or I could seek employment growth through continuous promotions (cashier manager). Most who choose this route, usually do so in order to just survive for themselves and maybe even their family. This is completely out of the question in my case.

Next, are the students that are low to no go. These are the students that are left with low income. They hold many opportunities for these students because they provide scholarships, programs and more for these students specifically. At this point the low to no go student has two choices: either go to college using the advantage of the low income or don't go to college at all. Going to college for these students can be easy if they are diligent, persistent, and astute. They'd have to do scholarships, go through programs, and maybe even apply for federal assistance. On the contrary, the student's second decision could be based on their family situation. They could result in a life of employment. It could be their solution to help their family or maybe even to help themselves. All this to say that the low to no go students have a choice.

The last group is what I like to call the movers and shakers. These are the students that battle the opportunity of either going to college with little to no funds, or not going to college and settling for minimal work. By choosing this route of college, they put finances in jeopardy with the act of taking on student loan debt. These students may have the chance to receive partial scholarships for athletics and/or academics, but compared to the overall cost of tuition, these scholarships are deemed as mynute. These students seldomly excel at being a top of the class or star athletes, but being a risk taker means they will be persistent in finding as much financial assistance as possible. They are willing to take these risks in hopes that someone will acknowledge their efforts in trying to progress in life. There are opportunities to progress in the work field using trade skills. Some students seek to obtain skills through trade school as it is a cheaper version of college with guaranteed employment. If I feel that their skills from trade school might not be directly used in the workplace, they can choose to apply their skills in the armed forces. This is why students may seek the military to overcome college debt, by enlisting in the military in hopes that their service exchanges for paid college tuition. However, by taking on the route of not going to college, they are taking on the risk of remaining complacent in the workforce.

I hope that through this essay you are able to see the ongoing battles between independence and dependence, the college, no college or some college, and the idea to consider continuing education. All of these decisions will affect long-term life goals and opportunities 10 years from now. For now, I plan to do all I can to get this word out that differences can be and should be made. I will do this by continuing to apply to scholarships with this message to let people know of the conflicts people face. I will take life step by step to reach my goals and any help I get is very much appreciated as I go in with this battle.