

Fall 9-6-2023

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Recommended Citation

ONU Institute for Civics and Public Policy; Hoffman, Andrea. And Trimpey, Hailey. "Reflections of College" (2023). Critical Questions. 27. https://digitalcommons.onu.edu/critical_questions/27

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Reflections of College*

By Andrea Hoffman & Hailey Trimpey

***This is a special entry in the Critical Questions series as recent ONU graduates (and ICAPP Fellows) Andrea Hoffman and Hailey Trimpey reflect on their college experiences.**

What have you learned from your experiences at Ohio Northern?

Ohio Northern University has taught me a variety of things that have helped me to succeed as a student, grow my skills as a leader, and ways to flourish as a future professional. One lesson as a student I have learned is the payoff of working hard, though it may come with hardships. As I am looking back on my academic career at ONU, I am recognizing that it did not come easy, but I am grateful for my hard work and determination as it has led me to where I am today. One skill, in particular, I have learned during my time at ONU is the importance of listening as a leader. During my time at ONU, I served as president of five organizations and in many other executive board positions and in all of those positions, even just being a general member, good listening and communication skills are something I have identified as the most important. As a future alumni and professional, The Institute for Civics and Public Policy is one of the many things I am proud of in my legacy at ONU. Being able to start from scratch on a project and watch it morph into something that will be sustained far after I am gone is incredible. - Andrea

The biggest takeaway from my time at Ohio Northern is that the most useful tools you will gain while in college are not going to be learned in the classroom. While ONU's professors and the education they provide are truly one of a kind, what sets them apart from other universities is the opportunities they provide their students outside of the classroom. This being said, I have learned to capitalize on those opportunities that come from being an ONU student. I learned to say "yes" to things that scare me because those are often the experiences that you are going to get the most out of. - Hailey

How have you used your experiences to take your next steps after graduation?

Throughout college, I did not know what I wanted to do for a career; however, ONU provided me with the opportunities to try things out and meet current professionals in the governmental space. The alumni I have met during my time, particularly alumni in political science, have helped me to identify potential career paths, guided my work throughout my degree to support future career aspirations, and have provided me with the best advice as I am stepping into new ventures. Finding these mentors have not only helped me see the big picture as a college student, but they have become my friends. - Andrea

I think that I am still learning to use my experiences from college to develop my future. My time at Ohio Northern has helped me grow immensely and I honestly don't think I would recognize

the freshman who first stepped foot on campus back in 2020. That being said, I can't pinpoint specific experiences that are helping me take my next steps because I think it was the overall period of my life spent at ONU that provided me with the confidence to take the next leap of faith toward reaching my future goals. - Hailey

What are we looking forward to in the future?

In life, I am a go-with-the-flow type of person when it comes to year/life planning. For the next three years, however, I will be attending ONU Law working on a JD and a potential certificate in public policy and government. I am excited to learn more about the law, as my ultimate goals are to help change policy in order to positively impact people. I am not sure where my career will lead me, but I eventually hope to go back and teach in a college setting. I have received so much from my professors, not only inside the classroom but through their career experiences, and I hope to give that back to future students following my career. - Andrea

I am looking forward to moving to Cleveland for law school and getting a fresh start. While I am not one who tends to be a big fan of change, ironically I love the idea of being able to reset. However, I am most excited to start my life in the legal field. I have wanted to be an attorney since I was 16 years old and I finally feel like I can see the finish line. - Hailey

What advice would you give to incoming or current students?

The advice I would give to incoming or current students is to take advantage of all of the opportunities you can. In general, you may think that you may not be qualified for something, or you may think that you are too young, or that you don't have a huge interest in it, but you honestly don't know till you try! Try everything at least once, and then choose the things that make you excited and the things you are having fun with! - Andrea

I would tell incoming and current students to remember that if something wasn't meant for you, it wouldn't be happening to you. This piece of advice got me through some really tough times throughout my college experience when I found myself asking "Why me?" In reframing less than ideal experiences to fit this mindset, you learn to see how each and every one of them is positively contributing to the person you're becoming. - Hailey