**Year In Review**

This past year has been one of the most eye opening experiences of my life. They say college is where you discover yourself and it’s true. Here at the University of Cincinnati I have truly come to know myself and develop myself as a person.

**What? So What?**

If I had to describe what experiences at UC were the most significant event of my time here I would have to say it would be Welcome Week where we were introduced to UC with fun activities the first week being here as a freshmen, having a roommate from a completely different country, getting involved in the National Kidney Foundation, and putting together a service event to help the homeless.

Welcome Week was one of the most fun times of my life! There were so many activities that the University had put on to make incoming freshman feel, well welcome. They had everything from a night at Catskeller where they gave us five dollars to play pool and other games, to a movie that was on a giant inflatable TV right outside Sigma Sigma. I would definitely have to say my favorite event was the fireworks and foam party. Although my eyes burned for the next few days, I had a great time with new experiences. I felt at home here at UC. I knew this would be a great college. I actually had school pride. In high school I enjoyed my school, but it was never something I got excited about or wanted to tell people “Hey, I go to Anna!” But now I am actually excited to be going here, it is such a great campus with so much to do and so many friends to make. The academics are pretty good to I suppose. Just kidding, they’re one of the best, everyone I meet, I tell them to go to the University of Cincinnati.

One of my best friends I made happened to be from Queretaro, Mexico. I learned a lot from him. I always thought that people from a different country would be completely different than us here, but he wasn’t. He had his differences, but in general Beto was a college student just like me. To have fun he would do things like go out with friends, watch movies, go to the club and dance, or just walk around. His taste in music was very similar to mine, he knew a lot of American songs, even better than me. I thought that was surprising. He had a different taste in food; basically he liked a lot of dairy products, he always complained about how here in America there wasn’t barely any cheeses compared to Mexico. Beto was a great friend and I enjoyed learning about him and his culture the first semester. Unfortunately he went back home the second semester. I still keep in touch with him through social media though.

The biggest experience in my first year would definitely have to be becoming part of the National Kidney Foundation. When they had come for the pre-professional field I took the opportunity to try to get involved as much as I could. They let me into their Kidney Walk Committee. I’m the youngest person in the group. Never did I think that I could be involved in an organization like NKF this early in my career. I’ve been given the opportunity to make a difference nationally and to help a great cause. A cause that hits very close to home. I hope to make the biggest difference that I can.

Since college I have changed and learned more than I thought I could have. I’ve had good experiences and I’ve had bad experiences, all of which have made me to who I am today. With college I have developed a strong work ethic, become more mature, and have gotten a better understanding of life and how it works. College is nothing like high school was. In high school I barely had to study and I would get the A, but it’s completely different here in college. I learned that I have to put the time in, or I won’t get the grade I want. I’ve learned time management so much better, especially being as involved that I am. I am involved in so much! I’ve also found that I have to be busy or I get bored. I love making a difference and all these organizations that I’m in give me that opportunity. I’ve become a strong leader. Not many people are able to become a Vice President of their fraternity as a freshman, but I was able to accomplish that goal. I have learned a lot from my relationships that I’ve had here at UC. I have had great relationships and then I’ve had relationships that have went sour. It was a hard experience for me to lose close friends, but I’ve been able to get a better outlook on different types of people and learn how to handle situations in a better fashion.

**Now What?**

The big question is, where do I go from here? The first thing that on my list is Madrid. I am so excited for this experience. This summer I am going on a study abroad faculty-led trip where I will be there for six weeks! Six weeks is a long time, especially since I have never even been out of the country or flown on a plane before. It’s an intensive study program where we will be in class about 4-5 hours, learning Spanish throughout the week. We will have a host family where we will stay and be able to talk to them in Spanish and experience new types of food that I have never tried before. We are going to go on weekly field trips and go places to see world class historical sites. I hope to become fully fluent in Spanish. This experience will give me the opportunity to learn more about the Spanish culture. I’m so enthusiastic for this experience.

This summer I also plan to become a State Tested Nurses Aid at a hospital. I worked as an STNA last summer at Genesis Healthcare and it was an eye opening experience. I developed a greater passion for helping people. I love helping people and making a difference in their lives. The residents fully appreciated my help and it was just a really fufilling experience. I cannot wait to begin working again and being able to have that relationship with my residents again.

Next year as a sophomore is going to be a new and completely different experience from this year. I will have a lot harder of classes, I will be a leader in several organizations, gain new friends, and hopefully get involved in research. This summer in order to help accomplish going into sophomore year prepared, I plan to study organic chemistry a little so I have an understanding of what I am getting myself into. I will also contact a researcher before school starts so that I can start the year off with being able to work in a research lab. Research is a passion of mine. With the help of my honor advisor I will be able to make that experience an experiential learning project. If my work gets published I will potentially be able to get a grant to display my work in different conferences across the U.S.

I am looking forward to this upcoming year. There is a lot on my plate and I’m ready to dig right in.