

SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENT SUCCESS

2007 PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE AWARD WINNER

The winner of the President's Circle Award is Jessica Jacobs, from Palm Beach Community College. Jessica was chosen for her grades, recommendations and a stunning essay.

~ Gail Burkett

When I was a junior in high school, I made the decision to attend Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio as a dual-enrollment student. This meant that in addition to my classes at high school during my junior year, I also attended classes high school during my junior year, I also attended classes at the University, receiving college credit in addition to my high school credits.

I hoped this experience would give me a head start in college, however, I soon discovered that working a full time job, plus attending college and high school at the same time left me feeling extremely overwhelmed. Instead of feeling more prepared to start college full time after high school, I started to think that maybe college was not for me. The amount of work and time required to do well in college far

exceeded anything that was expected of me in high school. The classes were much larger and I longed for the one-on-one attention I had received from my high school teachers. College definitely required far more effort on my part than what I was expecting. I dropped out after my first semester as a full-time college student.

I moved to Florida some time after I dropped out of college. I found that many people my age attended Palm Beach Community College, where classes were much more affordable and smaller in size, compared to the larger universities. Once I established my residency, I decided to give college another try.

Since it had been such a long time since I was in a school setting, I had to take the College Placement Test. I did well in English and Reading, but did horribly in Math. At first I was upset about having to take prep math classes. It seemed like a waste of time to me because while my grade in the class would count, it did not count as credit toward my AA degree. Plus, I still had to pay the same tuition as a regular class.



Jessica Jacobs

Once I was in the prep class, however, I realized why it was so important for me to be there. My professor opened my eyes to a new understanding of math and the concepts I had struggled with in the past. I actually got to *learn* instead of just memorizing the information and then forgetting about it after the test. While the prep classes I took did not count as credit, the information I learned was priceless. That would have been me if I never would have had the opportunity to take the prep classes. These classes gave me an

advantage over other students and now I feel a great sense of security, knowing that not only am I going to pass all of my college math classes with flying colors, I am also actually learning the information being taught to me. This is all due to the fact that I had the chance to develop such a strong foundation through my prep classes.

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