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A Fisher Alumna

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A Fisher Alumna

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Looking back on my formal schooling years, I have realized that my life has taken a series of U-turns. I have always had a Type-A, perfectionist personality. I also thought that I knew exactly where I wanted to go and I was in a huge rush to get there. By shaking up my plans and changing my perspective, God has taught me to trust in His plan for my life, to enjoy the journey and not worry about reaching the next destination because He is already there."



Olga Chernavin (2009)

A Fisher Alumna

I have recently joined the Fisher Alumni Board and am going back to campus much more frequently.

“In his heart a man plans his course,
but the Lord determines his steps.”
(Proverbs 16:9)

Looking back on my formal schooling years, I have realized that my life has taken a series of U-turns. I have always had a Type-A, perfectionist personality. I also thought that I knew exactly where I wanted to go and I was in a huge rush to get there. By shaking up my plans and changing my perspective, God has taught me to trust in His plan for my life, to enjoy the journey and not worry about reaching the next destination because He is already there.

I graduated from a local high school in three years instead of four. I only applied to two colleges because I was convinced that I knew where I wanted to go and what I wanted to study. I decided to go to Roberts Wesleyan College and major in marketing and psychology. However, during my final year of high school, I met my husband. We got engaged and were married three months into my college journey. Meeting my husband caused me to rethink the vision that I had for my life. Living in a big city and traveling for work no longer held the appeal it once did. I changed my major to adolescent education with a focus in social studies and special education.

At the end of my first year of college, we welcomed our beautiful baby girl Angelica. Once again, this major life change caused me to reevaluate other areas of my life. St. John Fisher College was one of two colleges that I had applied to originally. With the change in majors and the need for a shorter commute I decided to look into transferring to Fisher. I was welcomed as a transfer student and started my Fisher journey in the fall of 2007.

Fisher’s reputation as a great college for teaching is a well-deserved one. I can honestly say that all the professors I had were very knowledgeable and approachable. I learned about myself as a student and how the process of acquiring knowledge works. To this day I stay in touch with many of them through social media and they are always willing to lend a hand if needed.

I graduated with my Bachelor’s Degree in the spring of 2009. I became a substitute teacher shortly after graduation. Being in the classroom made me realize that I really enjoy working with younger students as

well. Since I did not expect to find a long term or full time teaching position right away, I applied to Nazareth and was accepted into their changing level Childhood education program that July. That August, I was offered and accepted a long term teaching position in a 12-1-1 classroom.

After being a substitute teacher for several years and many interviews later, I finally landed what I thought was my dream job. I got to go back and teach at the high school from which I had graduated. My former teachers were now my colleagues. I taught 11th and 12th grade social studies. My life was going according to plan. I finished my formal education, welcomed another beautiful daughter and now was looking forward to a thirty plus year career with a great school district. Sadly, this vision quickly burst when I was laid off two years later due to budget cuts.

I was devastated. It felt like I was back to square one. I had not updated my resume or written a cover letter in years. Luckily I had access to two great career centers, one at Fisher and one at Nazareth. By using these tools, I was able to apply for quality jobs outside of the teaching field. I was hired as a financial advisor six months later. The work was grueling but the training classes that this company offered were fantastic. With their help I was able to get my Life, Accident and Health license as well as pass the Series 6 and 63 investment exams. Much of the studying was done independently and I was able to do it with God's help and because of the study skills and critical thinking that I had developed in college.

After a year with this company, I came to realize that the long hours were not conducive to quality family time. Through the networking and relationships that I developed while working for this company, I learned about a position at M&T Bank that I thought would be perfect.

I was offered my current position at the same time that the district that I had worked for recalled me to my teaching position. I was faced with a difficult choice. Do I go back to teaching or do I continue on this new career path that I find equally enjoyable? After much prayer and discussion with my family I decided to accept the position with M&T Bank as a relationship banker.

This is where one fateful morning I met Father Costanzo. Upon learning that I was a Fisher graduate he asked me to write about my experience at Fisher and my life after Fisher. I treasure my memories of being a student at Fisher and am very grateful for the opportunity to have studied there with some fantastic individuals. I have recently joined the Fisher Alumni Board and am going back to campus much more frequently.

The Alumni Board is open to any Fisher graduates who want to give back to Fisher through their ideas, experience and expertise. We meet monthly to talk about new developments at Fisher, plan alumni events and give our insight to help with policy creation. It is a great way to reconnect with the Fisher community and see what great things are in store.

I am very happy with the way my career life has turned out. God knew what He was doing even when I did not. Though my college experience I never pictured myself in a bank setting. However, I truly love my job and get to teach people every day about ways to use the bank, how to be smarter with their finances and how to save money. When families and individuals have a solid financial understanding and plan, it helps them to live happier lives and it leads to a better community.