

Amazing UD

When people ask me how I heard of the University of Delaware only one story comes to mind. I was a senior at Saint Mary's High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I was one of the ten international students in my school, so the pressure was quite high. Most of the students were not as stressed about applications to colleges and universities, but I was. I do not deal with uncertainty very well, therefore, not knowing where I was going to go was stressing me out a little. One day, I was talking to my host father, and he told me about the University of Delaware, and how great their political science program is, which was my chosen area of study. My host father is an incredible intellectual human being, therefore, I decided to listen to him. I researched UD and found out that it had amazing opportunities for international students and world scholars. I learned that it has a good political science program with many different internship opportunities. I was so excited when I applied, and I cannot explain how happy I was when I found out that I was accepted to UD.

Although I was not able to visit the University of Delaware before I officially became a Blue Hen, I did visit it after my high school graduation. My parents and I came to tour UD in May, and I was amazed by its beauty. I could not believe that this was going to be the place where I was going to spend the next four years of my life. I was so excited that I could picture myself walking around the Green, going to classes in the historically looking red-brick buildings. When I went back home to Azerbaijan, I told everyone about UD. I was waiting for the summer to be over, just so that I could start a new chapter of my life.

I was looking forward to UD so much that I did not even think about the challenges that I was going to face. The first night at UD was one of the hardest things I have ever done in my entire life. I did not expect to feel as homesick as I felt. Everything was different, the people, the culture, even the air, and the sky. I did not expect to experience the cultural shock that I did, because I have already lived in the U.S. for two years. Going to a university was a lot more different than attending a small private Catholic high school. Well, first of all, I was living by myself. I had to be my own person. I had to find ways of living outside of my comfort zone.

After a while, the feelings of homesickness started to fade away, and I began to feel like UD was my home. I made new friends, I joined some clubs, and I started to go to the gym on a regular basis. Shortly, I had a very nice system that was working, and not letting me miss home that much. But most importantly, the things that I enjoyed the most were my classes and professors. One of the main things that I enjoyed a lot was the talks that I had with my professors. I guess that was one of the major differences between Azerbaijan and the U.S... American teachers and professors are so much more approachable; they try to be friends with their students, and they try to help as much as they possibly can. In Azerbaijan there is a force field between the teachers and students, there is always a line, and students could never cross it. In Azerbaijan, we are taught to figure out answers on our own, while here professors work with students to figure out the answers. That is my favorite thing about attending an American university.

Today, I am sitting at Trabant Student Center writing a paper. If my younger self could see me now, she would be so proud. I have worked for my dream of studying in the U.S. ever since I was very young. And now that I am here, I honestly cannot believe it. It has already been three years since I came to the U.S., but I am still as excited as I was on the first day. I will

forever be grateful for the lessons that I have learned from UD. The experiences that I have gained here, and the relationships that I have built with students and professors, have made me a stronger, more confident, more compassionate, and empathetic person. I could have never become who I am today without the University of Delaware, and I am incredibly proud to be a Blue Hen!