

Aidan Thurber

Mr. Greco

English

21 May 2021

College 101

As a huge fan of Astronomy, Kevin was extremely excited to learn about the existence of a college course on Haley's Comet that not only covered astronomy but also covered 3 tabs for his college graduation requirements. Realizing how effective this class would be in condensing his college experience to only 3 years, he took the class in a heartbeat. Other people had the same idea, and the professor ended up having over 3 times the amount of kids he thought he would have in the class. The Professor was excited to see so many students interested in astronomy, and Kevin was excited to learn more about astronomy. As the class continued on however, it became abundantly clear that almost all of the kids didn't know the first thing about astronomy, and just took the class to fill in the requirements. There ended up being questions about how earth revolves around the sun and Kevin was not having it. Instead of dropping the class, he ended up instead not appearing at any more lectures and only showed up for the final. Because of how rudimentary and basic the courses the professor had to teach many of the kids, Kevin passed the final without ever again stepping foot in that class.

Getting through college for many kids is a must, especially in a competitive environment like America. However, despite how enforced it is to go to College, the debt taken on by many students and the money challenges faced by parents trying to help their children is no small

problem. My dad, Kevin, decided that in order to get through College using as little money as possible and end up with a good degree, that he would cram as many classes and credits into his college years as possible. He not only became a Junior in his second year of College, but also graduated from UC Santa Cruz in 3 years when originally it would've taken him 4. Using the financial aid he received by fulfilling these insane goals, my dad was able to bend the college system to his will and get out of it on the other side with little to no debt which he hopes is inspiration and advice for other people to do the same

“At UC Santa Cruz, each class was 5 units and a normal workload for 4 years was 15 units-3 classes. So I thought, I would just take an extra class per year and end up graduating early.” Kevin had confronted his Admin Supervisor on this matter during his first semester of College. His Admin looked at him inquisitively for a second, and then laughed as she thought it was a joke. She was not used to students actively seeking out to go out of their way to bend the system. After insisting, my dad eventually got her to talk to him after class when a few problems arose. “I would be coming into college as a sophomore when applying for financial aid that second year, but that summer upcoming, I would take classes and end up being a Junior in my second year. I asked what I should put down and the guy said I don't know, so I put down Junior...” Very early into that second year, Kevin received a letter from the College saying that he wasn't meeting the satisfactory requirements required for financial aid. It turns out, he should've applied as a sophomore. The Admin did some research on what he could do to receive the financial aid, and it became clear that by the end of the second year he'd have to be the equivalent of a 5th year Senior in order to receive the financial aid. He doubled down and ended

taking 6 classes that year. Passing with flying colors and ending with satisfactory requirements for Financial aid, my dad got through that year on 30 units.

Applying for Financial aid during college is a very common thing among many students, as due to the way college works and handles pricing things, it's sometimes not even affordable to the people who make lots of money. My dad came from almost no money and pretty much had no option and backup if the Financial aid failed. For many kids however, they aren't as lucky and brave as my dad to take a ridiculous amount of classes. According to CNBC, the average American has a debt of over 90,000 dollars. A lot of it thanks to colleges boasting wild and outrageous prices for their tuition fees. And due to the nature of how America loves sending kids to college, a lot of kids unknowingly or semi forced go to college and end up with the wild debt having to spend their entire life to get rid of it.

Doubling up on classes for the second year of college as well as just in general for each year taking more classes meant that my dad had to be smart about what classes he took. "I ended up taking Politics of Philosophy and the Philosophy of Politics...each their own legit class, but that's what I had to do to fulfill my requirements...they were also good for my Major in Politics and Philosophy." My dad figured out for this class and for his other classes that you could anticipate what the finals were going to be for the class, and work smartly to focus on fulfilling and doing assignments that would further lead you to finish those. Kevin picked one author at the beginning that was shared for both of those classes, and wrote his 3-5 page thesis for that author in anticipation of this outcome. "And yeah, that's a very conniving way of getting through stuff

but at that point it was a matter of getting through stuff in order to get my aid” My dad would do similar things in his other classes, anticipating what the final would be and working smart enough so that he would do less work overall but come out well off on the final.

My dad managed to do something that many kids would not dream of doing and would not be able to do in the first place in order to get through college. Instead of working harder, my dad worked smarter so that he could finish and get his diploma and degrees fast enough so that economically he would be in a better position in life. It taught him a lot about how you can work through things just a little harder and a little smarter and end up going through less hoops and less barriers overall. It helped him a lot when after College he went to law school and used similar techniques in order to maintain an A which was better than over 95% of all the students at the law school. Not to mention that the National Association of Law says that in California there is a 90% law school dropout rate. My dad using these techniques he found in college was able to get through the nitty gritty stressful competitive environment of Law school and end being one of the greatest lawyers I know, and the smartest and greatest dad I can have.

“Cus I was crunchy grainy and that’s the way things were”

DeMatteo, Megan. “The Average American Has \$90,460 of Debt-but the Average Net Worth Is Actually More than That.” *CNBC*, CNBC, 4 May 2021, www.cnbc.com/select/average-net-worth-by-age/.

Federal Student Aid, studentaid.gov/h/understand-aid/how-aid-works.

NALP Bulletin. "STAY CONNECTED." *NALP Research: Summary Findings from NALP's 2017*

US Law School Career Services Survey, National Association of Law, 2017,

www.nalp.org/1217research.

Thurber, Kevin. Interview. by Aidan Thurber. 5/20/21

