

**Senior Last Lecture
Miami University
Student Comments
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When I first visited Miami during junior year of high school, my mom had to force me to look out of the car window as we drove up to campus. A family friend had recommended we look at the school, but I stubbornly wanted to make my own decision about where I attended college. I remember driving down High Street and back up Spring, reluctantly observing. Awed by the orange trees, the red brick, and the promise of really being on my own for the first time in my life, I decided ten minutes after being on campus that Miami was where I belonged.

After that first visit, I had to wait another year and a half before even beginning to think about freshman year. When it finally rolled around, I was ready for new towels, new friends, and new experiences, but not quite as ready for new expensive books. That year was marked by long weekends of studying, hanging out in our residence hall basement, adjusting to professors and more difficult classes, joining a sorority, being homesick like everyone else, football games, broomball games, walking 20 minutes uptown for dinner at Bagel and Deli and gradually recognizing more people as I passed them on the way to class. We went to AfterDark, worried about passing our first round of college finals, and spent time at the Rec. We took pictures and cried when we had to leave for the summer, found our friends and found our home.

As sophomores, we weren't the new kids anymore: instead, we chuckled at the groups of first years who wore lanyards and ID cards around their necks, and somehow forgot that we had been in their shoes just a short year ago. We moved off the first-year quads, away from the comforts of air conditioning and onto box fans, separated from our original corridors of friends but that much closer to all our classes. Friendships solidified, we went to lectures and got more involved on campus and ate at Tuffy's after midnight. I played club tennis and started carrying my cell phone with me everywhere. I had lunch with friends instead of just myself and finally declared a major. I found professors who really made me work, but who genuinely helped me over and around the walls I hit. We finished up our Miami plan classes, and started in on the classes that would eventually make up a minor and a major and maybe even a career. I improved my Spanish speaking skills, helped to organize Greek Week, planned a study abroad trip to Europe over the summer, wrote stories for the *Miami Student* and even played in the rain on academic quad.

After realizing that half of my college career was over, I returned to Miami a junior and ready to start focusing. I lived in Stoddard hall, and could type papers while looking out at the HUB, Upham arch, and all the people who passed by between classes. I missed friends who were gone abroad each semester. I finally carried an umbrella to class with me every day, just in case. I slept in on the weekends, sang the Miami fight song at every football game, and spent the fall reading on the quad under a tree. I passed out flyers for philanthropy events, started to realize my leadership potential, and spent hours in the Panhellenic office in the affectionately dubbed "West Wing" of Shriver. I broke my thumb playing broomball. I went to glee club concerts; I wore sweatpants to class and played intramural soccer on Western. We searched for internships instead of the usual summer job and drove around campus instead of walking. We tried not to accept the fact that when finals were over in May we'd officially be seniors.

When my summer internship at the Field Museum concluded, I was certain I was ready for the real world. Senior year would be a jumping-off point, and I would be prepared to say goodbye to Miami after my last year. I lived off campus with best friends and new faces, I memorized the Miami Metro schedule, I finished my terms in office and became a Pittsburgh Steelers fan. I took my capstone class, and worked harder than I had every other semester. I remembered freshman year, when I thought that seniors were so old. I turned 22 and I played Frisbee golf for the first time. We watched Miami transforming: new buildings being built, a big hole being dug in front of Goggin, a new university emerging from the old. We went to the career fair, we interviewed for jobs, and we decided where we would be moving after graduation. I went on a Caribbean cruise for spring break, spent hours at the library doing research and celebrated senior week with my sorority sisters. Friends decided which law schools and med schools to attend. With the loss of classmates Melissa Harmon, Julia Turnbull and Stephen J. Smith, we gained a truer appreciation for the statement “Live life to the fullest.”

After four years at Miami it feels like we’ve done it all, and many of us share these same memories. We’ll become doctors, CEOs, CPAs, lawyers, artists, musicians, teachers, writers, producers, and even professors. But we realize that these aspirations were only possible because of the time we spent at Miami. Even my mom could never have imagined, driving around Oxford 5 years ago, the places I’d go and the people I’d meet here. That being said, we should go on after graduation unafraid to take chances and look out the car window: you never know what you might see and how it might, in 4 years, change your life completely.