To you, My Friend,

Ah, University.

Mixed emotions, roller coaster rides (literally and metaphorically), all-nighters, forgotten meals, crowded study groups, surprising lecture attire, astonishing friendships and countless mini fist pumps after every academic victory… where do I even begin.

During my first year at UofT, I entered what I believed to be the best University in Canada, and one of the most prominent Universities in the entire world. Though that statement can be subjective, I guarantee you will agree simply due to the vast quantities of resources and opportunities you will find here. I LOVE the lectures and profs, picking up “The Works of Shakespeare”, for example, rivaled the feeling of falling in love—but my best memories came outside the classroom. You name it, this university has got it. I’ve been involved in stuff I didn’t know existed; pretty sure I joined a pasta-eating club during 2nd year. Anyway, I came from the outskirts of Toronto with a good understanding of what I wanted to do but without the excellent foundation needed to transition smoothly into 1st year—I was a bit lost. In many ways I was already trailing my classmates as soon as I stepped into my first lecture. Fret not my friends, the university understands that and they will repetitively (almost too repetitively) explain what you need to do and what you need not to do in order to succeed and catch up to those who may have had a head start. It isn’t always as easy as that, though. YOU have to make the initiative as well. YOU have to want the desire to succeed right off the bat. Basically what I’m saying is, if you want it, you’ll get it. But… How bad do you want it? And most importantly, how quickly do you want it?

I did not want it that bad initially. 1st year was a completely new, amazing, but isolating experience. I went from an environment where I knew everyone in high-school, to becoming a number in a lecture that yielded 1000+ students; someone who went to class then went straight home. And the commute, oh God the commute made it worse. It made networking and building friendships impossible. But that was because I did not know of the opportunities that lay outside the classroom. I did not read letters like this one *wink wink* I realized that commuting was ruining my university experience. So guess what, one day (2 years later, lol) I found out every college has a commuter lounge where I can go and hang out with other commuters. Bam, friendships piled on! Study groups piled on! Laughs piled on! Then in my final year, I actually BECAME a commuter Don and made events EXCLUSIVELY (almost) for commuters! Bam! The amount of people I’ve met, and friendships I’ve created… are numerous. The experiences I’ve created and job opportunities that have opened up? Can’t even count em.

This university has the ability to allow you to make actual change, and turn what could have been your largest negative experience, into your best. That’s what I think of when someone mentions UofT. Whether it’s commuting or overcoming difficult strategies of learning, there are resources that will not only allow you to conquer your obstacles, but rule over them.

With loads of good wishes,

Luai Dalal