

## Four Years of College 34 Months of School



I am not writing this to brag about how quickly I have mastered college. I am writing this to hopefully to give hope to others in my position who want nothing more than to improve themselves. When I was 18 years old I knew for a fact that college was not the right place for me. I was young, impetuous, and the only thing running in my mind was freedom. Freedom to travel and see the world and I knew going to college would delay that. As you know when you are young you feel like you can do anything and you want to do it now. Luckily I had convinced my parents that if I joined the military it would be a win-win situation for everyone; I would learn a trade while also earn college credits in hopes of one day getting a degree. I spent the next nine years in the Air Force and had the time of my life. I did surprisingly take some classes and enjoyed them but I found with work I never really had the time to truly dedicate to getting even an Associate degree.

I met my future husband after I ended my career in the military and he was the force in my life that kept emphasizing that I should get my degree especially with my work history. In the

beginning I did not take him seriously, I mean I was an alright student in high school and I could not imagine having to take math again. Our move finally took us to Valdosta, GA where for the first time my work history worked against me. Apparently, I was over qualified with twelve years' experience and a high school diploma and I would find myself without a job for the first time since I was 18 years old. What was I going to do? I seriously give kudos to housewives because I found out that after a month of being one I thought I would explode from lack of human interaction. After discussing it with my husband I decided to try going to school. I went to Moody AFB education office and discussed with Mr. Ed Rains my options for colleges. Mr. Rains suggested Georgia Military College (GMC) to get my Associate degree. This I would find out was one of the best decisions of my life. I was so nervous my first day, here I was walking around lost at this small campus wondering what am I doing here at 31 years old? I took to college like a duck to water, it seemed so natural and almost too easy. I decided to try sociology as a major, since I loved to people watch this seemed like the obvious solution for me. My teacher, Mrs. Donna Brzezienski, made me fall in love with Sociology; I was fascinated by it and decided to join the Student Service League ( a community service organization) and soon became the Vice President. We organized food drives, blood drives, and school supply drives for elementary schools. I felt as if I was saving the world one drive at a time. With all my extracurricular activities I still stayed on the Dean's list the entire time I was at GMC and graduated with an A.S. in Sociology with a 3.79 GPA. I started Georgia Military College in October of 2010 and graduated in May 2012 (I skipped the summer). I did exactly 18 months of schooling and was a member of the honor society Phi Theta Kappa and a member on the Honor Council (a group of students who upheld the honor code of GMC).

My husband's tour was extended in Valdosta which allowed me more time to get my Bachelor's degree at Valdosta State University (VSU). Immediately after graduation I transferred to Valdosta State, I would recommend getting your Associates first if at all possible at a two year college because the campus is smaller and the group of students around you can give you great advice on the professors at the school. Being at VSU was a little overwhelming; I felt like I did not know anyone and the campus was much bigger than what I was used to. Not only was I starting this new school but I also had my military spouse duties as well. All of a sudden I had all these military functions I needed to attend with my husband. I was running out of hours in the day but somehow I kept on top of my schooling as well as spending quality time with my husband, and participating in these functions. We do not have children like many of our military counterparts so I could just imagine how difficult this could be for them while they are attending classes.

One of the first things I learned at VSU was all my professors' loved Microsoft PowerPoint and reading assignments. I do not see anything wrong with this but I did have to adjust since my previous professors were just into lecturing and it was up to you to make sure you took proper notes. I worked really hard my first semester and made the Dean's List. I was so excited and no longer feeling overwhelmed. My husband, who is my cheerleader, often commented he was not surprised since when I put my mind to something I attack it with a single-minded focus. I guess I still had some doubts in my ability to succeed even though my past actions have shown my dedication to my education. I continued to stay on the Dean's List at VSU and became a member of The National Society of Leadership and Success, Alpha Kappa Delta, and have been offered many invitations to join the National Honor Society. I have won awards of outstanding achievement in the Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice

Department. I have a 3.91 GPA as of the end of summer semester of 2013 and expecting to receive my B.A. in Sociology and Anthropology in December 2013 (I skipped July 2013) giving me exactly 16 months of schooling at VSU.

I would personally like to thank the following people who helped support me:

- My husband, who has never been shocked at my accomplishments even if I was. Who was there to help me study, up with me bouncing ideas back and forth on papers, and who had a bubble bath and a glass of wine waiting for me when I was stressed and freaking out.
- Mr. Ed Rains, who without his guidance while at GMC I would have possibly been lost. He was never too busy for my questions and was always quick to tell me when I did a good job or to give me a different point a view that he thought would be beneficial when I was making decisions.
- Mrs. Donna Brzezienski, who inspired me to think outside the box and got me involved in community service in my local area. Without her I probably would not love Sociology the way that I do.
- My mom, who is tough as nails and never took it easy on me in regards to my education. She taught me that the only person who could prevent me from being defeated is myself; dreams may change but I am the only one who can choose to be defeated.
- My dad, who taught me that nothing in life is easy and if I wanted something I better fight for it because only then is it worth having and I would appreciate it more.
- The Ucan! man John Isom, whose energy and love of life has motivated me to work even harder for things in the future. I will always know that you are in my corner no matter what so thank you.

I have exceeded my own expectations, meaning I knew eventually I might get my degree but with the speed I have accomplished this feat and my high GPA...well it was a pleasant surprise. As I stated in the beginning I am not writing this to brag but to inform others that it is never too late to get an education and as intimidating as it is to take classes you have not taken in years possibly decades, you might just surprise yourself. Take it slowly, figure out a game plan and try to stick with it. Make a list of all the classes you need and project which semester you want to take your classes. Lastly, do not forget the people who support you and helped you achieve your goals. To the other military spouses around the world, I hope this was helpful. I know it is not easy to take care of a home, spend time with your family, attend military functions, and try to go to school but it is not impossible. We move around so much I believe when we have opportunities to get more education we should grab them. Good Luck!