



Keishanna Pitts – Valdosta State University Class of 2014

Hello Future Blazer! My name is Keishanna and I am currently a senior at Valdosta State University. I am originally from Monroe, Ga which is literally 15 minutes away from UGA (Go Dawgs!). A lot of people always ask me, “Why did you choose to go to Valdosta when you’re so close to one of the best schools in the world?” and my response has always been, “Well, I wanted to get as close to Florida and still keep my in-state tuition.” Even though that isn’t the BEST reason to attend any school, attending Valdosta State University has had to have been one of the smartest decisions I’ve ever made.

I come from a family who no one ever graduated or better yet, even attended college and I have seen how this has caused my family to never strive for better things or to get out in to the world and see what it has to offer aside from what our hometown provided and I made a promise to myself during my sophomore year in high school that I would not be that person. I promised myself that I would graduate high school and go on to college because at that time, college was the only option I had that would give me the chance to see a new “world”.

Despite the difficulties of trying to get the finances that I needed for classes and the everyday necessities that I needed to survive, like food and clothing, I also had to mentally prepare myself to be an independent adult living four hours away from family and all that I knew. College alone is a life-altering experience, but I can say that these past three years here have challenged me, matured me and opened my eyes to so much more than what I thought would be available to me.

Attending VSU has brought a lot of people in my path and these people have coached me through everyday life challenges that we as college students face such as peer pressure and just being able to adapt to the change of childhood to adult hood. Every day hasn't always been easy, there have been days when I didn't know if I would be returning the next semester because of the demand of going to class, working two jobs just to make ends meet and still trying to maintain a social life would sometimes overwhelm me, but I'm still here and by the time you read this I will be a graduate of Valdosta State University with a Bachelor's of Arts in Sociology.

My advice to you reading this is: If you want to attend college, attend because it's something that YOU want to do. Don't allow the pressures from family or peers to get the best of you. Surround yourself around people who are striving towards similar goals and stay connected to those people during your time here. Never be afraid to try something new, that's what college, is for; it prepares you for that "real world" your parents have been telling you about since you were 13. Not every day will be sunshine and rainbows, but always look for the positives in every negative situation. Remember, you are doing something that a lot of people are not able to do or don't even have the desire to do. Take advantage of the opportunities you have been given. Lastly, ENJOY IT !!! College does come with a lot of self-discipline, hard work and endurance but this will also be one of the most enjoyable experiences in your life. If I CAN, then UCAN!