

Your College Career Forecasted

Ahhh, the dawning of a new school year. New faces, new personalities, new food in the dining hall. For some it's the last chance to petition the College Board to allow "Beer Castles" as an art perspective, for others it's the first chance to meet the boys your parents warned about and the girls your older brother told you about. Clark veterans have mastered the art of milk-crate décor and calling home for cash; rookies will learn that you can have Ramen nearly every day for a year without throwing up (often). But for both first-years and old-years, we are in the midst of our first mid-life crises.

As a first-year, you will soon feel the sudden tidal-wave of freedom, the knowledge that your parents will not know that you will go to bed at the crack of dawn for the first two weeks at college. You'll test the "instant best-friend with roommate" when you have your first sleep over "guest." And you can wait as long as you want to wash your clothes. Heck, you can go for a semester without washing your sheets if you are lucky. But suddenly, just as soon as you realize that mom isn't knocking at your door to "see what you're doing in there," you'll miss your parents and find a new appreciation for home. You will never eat as much food in the next four years as you will when you go home for the holidays and you'll feel a warm glow when you find that the 50 lb. bag of clothing you toted home is cleaned and folded on the sofa-bed you are sleeping on in the den that used to be your room.

The best thing about being away from all things familiar is REINVENTION. Your new friends will never know if you had big hair and listened to Slaughter and White Lion if you don't want them to. And, they'll never know that you were the weakling of your high school, unless a vengeful sibling shows them a picture up-on visiting you during Parent's Weekend.

As a Sophomore, you will feel a sense of accomplishment for surviving your first-year without damaging any major body part. (Author's note: I wasn't fortunate to feel this, I broke my knee my second week as a freshman.) You've realized you

couldn't live with the same person that made your life next to impossible last year, and you now find yourself co-habiting with a friend that survived the first-year cut. You've gained anywhere from five to ten pounds, so you've managed to convince your parents that you need new clothing yet again so you won't look like a complete dork. Summer at home has never felt so long and you've often found yourself wondering what life would have been like had you run away with the freak-show at the age of eight.

Kraft Macaroni & Cheese will be your new staple food of choice as well as whatever you can afford to buy in the General Store. You'll take longer showers in the dorm now that you don't have to worry about the fungus that grew in the stalls of Bullock and Wright, but you chose not to bunk your beds this year; you'd rather not wake up in the middle of the night when you feel your bed shaking and wonder if Worcester is anywhere near a fault line. Your grades are sure to improve now that you've vowed only to smoke pot on Friday and Saturday and drink only when Mulder comes on to Scully by explaining how a whole state can be Red Sox fans because of the water they drink.

Junior year, the smoking and drinking rule you made last year is null and void. In fact, now that you live in a suite with seven of your friends (and at least one of them is 21), your drinking weekend starts Thursday afternoon and ends Sunday after The X-Files. You've had a relationship or two and your fair share of "Walks of Shame" across the campus. Summer was spent in either a major city working a great job or in beautiful Worcester working a schlep job. You'll gained a sense of maturity, although you'll still love watching cartoons Saturdays after walking back into the dorm having been waiting outside for the bomb-scare to subside. At this point, you have declared yourself a Geography major because you hated going to Chem lab and all the Freudian nonsense was ruining your fantasies. You realize, when you meet a first-year, that you have actually grown up a bit in the two years

by Mandy Reyna

you've served at this institution. Spree Day becomes more enjoyable because you will have graduated from Michelob to vodka and tequila and won't puke until after the last band has finished. Moiney and Ralph will be your new best friends, and the Blarney is always a Stone's throw away. If not, well, there's always Grind Central.

By your fourth-year, you've gained an appreciation for the city referred to as the "armpit of Massachusetts." You have found most of the diners and bars, and have experienced the local clubs. To take a phrase from the infamous Randolph Mack, you are the "King Shit of Turd Mountain." You'll be living with one or more of our closest friends in either Maywood or in an apartment. You are faced with the decision of going to grad-school or facing reality (I myself am teetering on the edge of avoiding reality as long as possible). You have attended seminars on how to create the "perfect" resume and suddenly you are hit with the realization that you should have at least attempted to apply for the fifth-year program.

You'll be able to enjoy Fridays off, until you remember that your capstone project does count towards graduation. The person you have been dating begins to ask you what your plans are after graduation and you decide that going home to work at the mall is looking better and better by the minute. Spending summer in Worcester is actually enjoyable when you find that people who went home had a horrible time. Sure, graduation is approaching, but when we're sitting under a tarp with a piece of paper signed by Dick, our asses will officially be on the line. The question is, what are we going to do about it?

I for one will be enjoying the last few moments of sanity as I begin my capstone and complete my transformation into an anal-retentive cleaner. I refuse to believe that I have to stop eating Fruity Pebbles and wearing Underoos. When I'm thirty-five, I will sit back and wish that life could only be as simple as it is now. Enjoy yourself, it's getting later by the minute. •