

A story of hope

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School/work-life integration is something that I have a unique relationship with. In the fall of 2018, I was dismissed from the University. An abusive relationship, a 40-hour work week, and interpersonal issues all played a role in my academic failures. The committee of academic standing gave me this advice; you have to learn to manage a work/life balance with school. That was a painful experience that shattered my ego. My system for time-management got an overhaul. Fast-forward to 2022, I am a 2-time situation prize winner for community advocacy, the recipient of the Sorrel Chesin Research award, the president of the Neuroscience Club, the Vice-President of the UAlbany student chapter of Doctors Without Borders , an EMT at a local government agency, and an ED Tech at Albany Medical College, a boyfriend, and mentor. I have been able to maintain all of these extra-curricular responsibilities while making deans list for the past 3 semesters. I have been able to pursue the experiences that will make me a better researcher and a better medical professional with the end goal of becoming a physician scientist. All the meanwhile, I have been able to make a real impact in my community. I have had the opportunity to tell my story to struggling Ualbany students with the hopes of using my story to instill hope into their lives. I still remember the words of that academic standing committee every day. Managing a work/life balance while pursuing a degree in stem can be very difficult at times. We often find ourselves having to reschedule with friends or missing family events. Those moments can be hard to swallow but we continue to strive for the future; a future marked by struggle and persistence. We hold on to that vision while making sure not to loose sight of other important aspects of life. Personally, I make sure to schedule out time for dinner dates with my girlfriend and time with my mom. This experience has really made me value the small things. Time to speak with parents over the phone is priceless for example. Embracing the spring breeze as it approaches, smelling the air, all things I could care less about now mean so much more. Taking care of myself and well-being has allowed me to become more present in every relationship I establish whether with patients or fellow researchers.