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### Expectations and Confidence

If you are anything like me and grew up in a small Alaskan community, you probably have a lot of fears and doubts regarding your post-secondary education at the moment. As many of you have likely noticed, your future plans tend to be a primary focus in your everyday conversations, especially when regarding how you can achieve them. In many ways, this sort of engagement in conversation can be helpful to you and but there is some cons to them.

Like you, when I was in high school I got a lot of talks about what my expectations should be and how I should handle my education after high school. Due to living in a rural Alaskan village, I was told that I would struggle because I did not have as good of an education as I would have if I grew up in a bigger city that had more options available to me. With all of these thoughts coming to me at once I began to become overwhelmed by the idea of college and my hope for how well I would do plummeted. Coming from a small town, I am here to tell you one thing, do not let these comments about your future get the best of you.

If there is one thing that I learned since I began college, it is that the biggest struggle for you will be finding confidence in yourself and your work. I know at times it can be very difficult for us to believe in ourselves, especially in the situations where it feels absolutely impossible. There will be times where it feels like you aren't going anywhere, where you've had enough of everything, where you do not even want to start

your day because of everything you will have to face. I am here to tell you that you are not limited by how you grew up and just because you are not at the end of your journey to becoming successful does not mean you are not going anywhere. Every little struggle is just one step closer to you completing your education wherever it may be. You have all the capability to achieve what you want to achieve, to go where you want to go, and the only way you can awaken it is by having confidence and hope even in the most difficult situations.

I am not going to deny the fact that in college you are likely to run into some obstacles, setbacks and even make some mistakes; but you are not alone in this. Negative experiences are something everyone needs to have in order to grow and figure themselves out, especially in the beginning of your journey to success. As a former high school senior, my hope is you recognize that no matter what others say or what they tell you to expect remember you can rise above that if you put some faith in yourself and your direction.