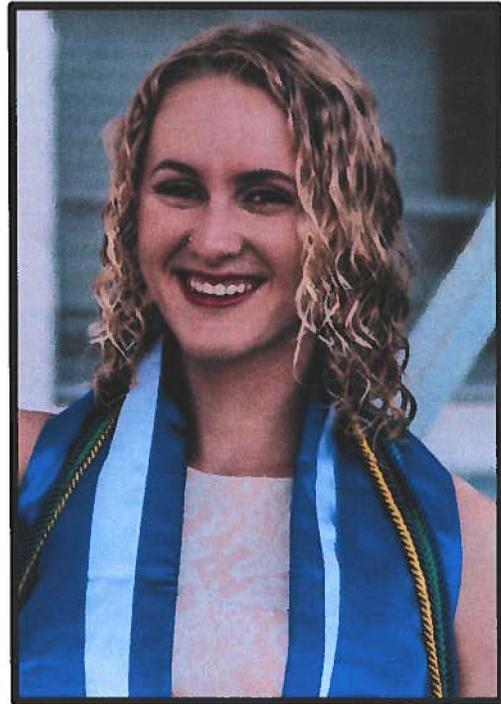


Dear Sponsor of the SAC Scholarship Fund:

I want to thank you for your generous contribution through this award. It will be a tremendous blessing, helping me to continue making my way through college debt-free.

I have been attending Florida Gulf Coast University since the fall of 2015. I represented the university as a student athlete for four years on the swimming and diving team, earning NCAA Division I All-American status in 2017. I graduated this past spring with a B.A. in English and minors in Education and Creative Writing, maintaining a 3.9 cumulative GPA and earning Summa Cum Laude status. I was also fortunate enough to be one of the first participants in the brand-new B.A./M.A. English accelerated program, which allowed me to begin taking graduate-level classes before the completion of my undergraduate degree. Because of this, only a few months after graduating, I am already over halfway through my master's degree.



It is donors and sponsors like you who have made this journey through academia possible. Throughout the past four years, I have received numerous grants and scholarships through athletics, academic merit, grants and government funding. I have also consistently worked various jobs to support myself, on top of tending to my studies and training 20 hours a week for swimming. Now that I have completed my eligibility as an athlete, I work full time for FGCU as an administrative specialist in the Department of Communication and Philosophy. This job has also been a wonderful blessing, as it pays for my tuition, gives me full benefits and allows me to foster close relationships with my professors and mentors.

Speaking of teachers, I could not possibly be more thankful for the incredible faculty members who have ceaselessly encouraged, challenged and strengthened me throughout my academic career. When I chose English as a major, I was not confident at all in my abilities. However, I will never forget the time when Dr. Gras pulled me into her office to tell me that the paper I had written for her African Diaspora Literature class was some of the best work she had ever seen, or when Dr. Totaro wrote at the top of my essay for Shakespeare Survey, "Eventually publishable!" I still keep that paper in my binder to this day as a reminder that I can do anything I put my mind to. It is hard for me to not become emotional when talking about my experiences with my educators at FGCU. I simply cannot say enough about the everyday investments they make in each and every one of their students. I would have never had the confidence to pursue a graduate degree if it hadn't been for the encouragement I received from Dr. Gras, Dr. Totaro, Dr. Mendible, Lori Cornelius and many, many others.

I used to have a quite set-in-stone vision for my plans upon graduation, which included entering the Peace Corps and teaching English abroad. However, as life goes on, it is interesting how plans can become less clear as we approach their appointed time of fruition. Now, while teaching English abroad is still a dream, I am considering staying to teach Composition here at FGCU upon the completion of my graduate degree. I could do this, or even take a completely different route and go into editing, copywriting or advertising, all of which interest me thoroughly.

In closing, I just want to thank you one more time for your generous support. It really makes a big difference for me and I truly appreciate every penny.

Sincerely,

Hannah Burdge