**James Oakes Address: 18869 Honeysuckle Ln. Porter, TX 77365 Phone: (832)-445-6138**

In high school, many of my friends would ridicule community college as being a place where dreams went to die; to them, everyone who attended a community college was either not intelligent enough to get into a university, or were senile individuals who had a mid-life epiphany. Reminiscing on how I previously believed these things as well irked me. Once I stepped foot on the campus of LSC-Kingwood, my previous beliefs would forever be vanished, and I would end up falling in love with the dedicated professors, small classrooms, and the easy learning environment.

As a graduating high school student, my plans were simple: attend a 4 year university and receive my bachelor’s degree in nursing. Although I was accepted to several colleges, the financial burden my family endured prevented me from reaching my goals. I had no other choice but to attend the local community college, LSC-Kingwood. I was saddened by the thought of having to wait 2 more years until I could transfer; however, attending community college has been one of the biggest learning experiences I have endured. I learned not only things about how college and all of its components intermingle, but I even learned things about myself that I would have never found out if I were to attend a large university.

The first days of LSC-Kingwood were very eye opening. The professors were very educated, loved interacting with the students and the small classroom sizes allowed for more one on one time with the professor if a student were struggling. My professors made sure every student was willing to make the effort of passing the class before helping them in need, which helped boost their self-esteem, confidence, and overall mood on achievement. I continually did well in my courses, but some difficulty impeded my potential in making great grades due to the fact that it was my first semester attending college, and adjusting to the work schedule was rather difficult. I did not let a low grade get me down; my dedication to do good in the long run still kept me motivated. The next semester, I enrolled in several courses and had some of the greatest motivation from previous professors. In the Spring 2013 semester, I managed to achieve a 4.0 GPA. Along with motivation, other aspects such as the large library (and access to books from other Lone Star libraries), computer access, quiet studying rooms, and the tutoring center improved my overall attitude on learning and success.

As my educational career at LSC-Kingwood approached the time for transferring to a university, I made a decision that would forever be one of my most favorite decisions I have made. After a little research, I found out that LSC campuses offered a program in which an Associate’s Degree in Nursing could be achieved. I quickly read about the program, hastily eager to find out the requirements in order to apply. Many courses that were required for the program were still needed to be taken, but in one more semester I will be applying to the program and continuing my career with LSC. Realizing that community college is one of the easiest ways to achieve your goals, alongside dedication, improved my overall look on education and how things should not be viewed in a negative manner due to naivety on the subject. I have learned new ways of looking beyond just the small scope that some people view through. The scope for me now has a wider view, and I do not judge things before getting to actually know about them. Lone Star College not only saved me from the large burden of financial debt after graduation from a university, but has allowed me to learn life lessons that will stay with me as I continue my education, and even for the rest of my life.