

FIRST-GENERATION DRAGONS

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Hometown: Morral, Ohio

Biggest lesson learned in college: That I am the one in charge of my experience. At first, I thought it would be easy to sit back and let the learning and experiences that take place in college come to me, but I would have missed so much if I didn't work to create the experience I wanted. For example, I knew that I wanted to be a better leader. For that to happen, I had to look for opportunities that would make that happen. This meant taking the initiative of getting involved in student organizations, becoming an RA, and finding other campus jobs. All of those experiences created the opportunities that I have today.

Who or what motivated you to go to college: My family. Even though they didn't go to college they believed in me and so I believe in myself.

Activities and involvement: Marching band, concert band, university choirs, various music small groups, theatre, Kappa Kappa Psi, greek life, and residence life.

If you could give your high school self advice about college, what would it be: Believe in yourself. You have made it to this point, you are capable of doing what is necessary to be successful, you are meant to be here, and you belong. Stop doubting any of that, and just do it!



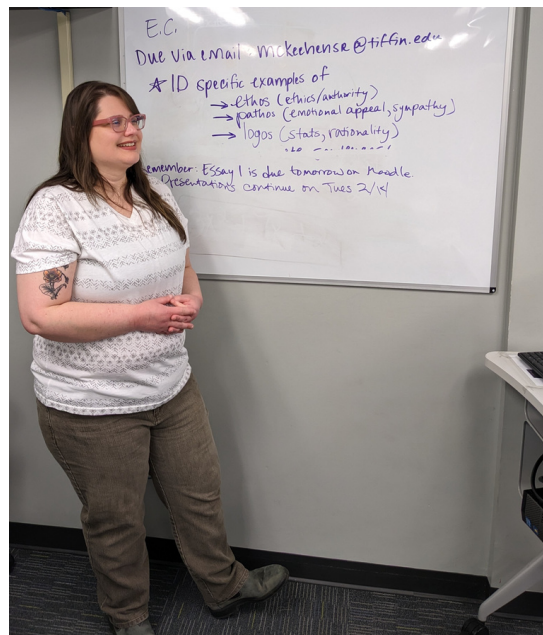
Name: Dr. Shannon McKeehen

Hometown: Bucyrus, Ohio

Biggest lesson learned in college: I learned that "smart" people asked a lot of questions, which resulted in their asking for help from others when needed. I aligned "success" with the following: admitting when I didn't understand something or know something, and figuring out whom to consult for advice. I know some folks worry about looking weak when they ask for help, with anything from class materials to where the closest food bank is located, but these resources exist for a reason.

Who or what motivated you to go to college: I was lucky to have high school teachers and mentors who saw a lot of potential in me. Mrs. Bower, my high school English teacher; Mrs. Light, my school counselor; and Mr. Chorba, my high school art teacher were compassionate and treated me like a competent person when I severely doubted myself. At home, my grandma, Virginia, was my closest confidant and best friend; she encouraged me to keep writing poetry and to keep being myself, even if it meant making choices that others in my family did not make at the time. Thanks to her part in raising my sister and myself, my sister is finishing her second Master's in Chicago and is a talented artist and photographer, and I acquired my PhD in Rhetoric and Composition. Sadly, she is gone now, so she can't celebrate our achievements with us, but it's reassuring to know that she was always very proud of her granddaughters.

If you could give your high school self advice, what would it be: I would tell my high school self to calm down and not be as hard on herself. I was a perfectionist as a student, and while I loved being in college, I would beat myself up if I wasn't performing at "my personal best." I should have just listened to my professors and mentors and paced myself. Constantly setting the bar too high for oneself -- only to fall short every now and then -- can certainly have a negative impact on one's self-image. I would also tell High School Shannon to worry less about what her peers thought of her, because they wouldn't be the ones deciding her future. Impress only the people who matter to your present as well as your future!





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