

"Getting the letter of my acceptance I was confused about the program and did not know if this would be good for me or not. I did my research though and knew it was what I needed to get on the right track into my college life. I was nervous about staying eight hours away from home and staying all summer with people I did not know, but I soon learned that I would make friends that would last a lifetime. The Academic Success Program changed my way of learning, more importantly though, it changed my attitude towards college.

College is amazing. I love the friends that you make, and the adventures that you are able to take. ASP has shown me that I can make it through college, join in the community, go rafting, and still make great grades on my work. My life at Western Carolina University is way more than what I thought it would be. I love all of the friends I make and the classes that I take. Getting to live and learn on this campus is the best experience that I can have; it is beautiful here and I love every mountain. The student that I am today is more than what I ever thought I could be. I never thought I could do well on college level tests or get good grades on the papers that I turn in. I love my life here at Western and I would not want to be at any other college."

~Justine Dale, 2013 ASP Student

"One day after school, I checked the mail box and noticed that I had received a letter from Western Carolina University. I ran back to my house and dropped my book bag down and sat on my bed with the letter in my hand. I took a big breath and slowly opened the letter with my eyes closed. When the letter was open, I opened my eyes and before my eyes I saw the word "Congratulations." I was filled with excitement and happiness, but as I continued to read the letter I realized I was not fully accepted to Western Carolina University, I was offered the opportunity to be part of the Academic Success Program. I was very confused at the moment because I didn't know what the program was, and I was unsure of my acceptance to Western Carolina University.

After I found out a little more about the Academic Success Program, I was upset because it sounded like summer school, which was not a good thing in high school. I felt like I was not good enough for the university to fully accept me, but I didn't understand why I was not good enough, because I felt like I have done well throughout my high school career. That night I cried, because I thought all my hard work I did in high school was for nothing and that everything I have accomplished was to be offered summer school and be rejected by the university that I wanted to attend the most. However, I didn't want to give up my plan to attend Western Carolina University, so I looked up more information about the Academic Success Program, I realized that I actually liked the program.

I looked on the bright side and thought that I would be able to attend Western Carolina University early to get a head start and learn my way around campus before the freshmen that would be attending in the fall. The only down side to the program was I barely had any summer vacation, but I did not mind it so much because I did not have any plans for the summer. In the end, I was happy that I was offered the opportunity to be part of the Academic Success Program this summer. Western Carolina University is all that I thought a college would be. It has everything I thought would be on a college campus and all the experiences I had were what I wanted to experience in college.

My experience in the Academic Success Program has helped me to become a better student and a person. I love the student and person I have become today and it's all thanks to the opportunity I was offered to attend this summer."

~Nicole Fritts, 2013 ASP Student

"[The letter I received from Western Carolina University] was not what I expected and I was livid at first. It stated that I was accepted to the university but that I must attend the Academic Success Program (ASP) over the summer and complete summer classes. The classes were going to count towards my college credits but they were like a booster to prepare me for college level work. The Academic Success Program was the farthest thing from my mind; I completely shut down Western as a choice for school. There was no way that I was cutting my summer down into two weeks before leaving for college. I was going to miss our family beach trip, all of the random trips to the lake with my friends, and most importantly my senior retreat with my youth group. I was so set on completely dropping Western out of my mind even though it was my first choice of where I wanted to go.

I had the most difficult time deciding if this is where I wanted to be. I loved the school and the people, but I absolutely did not want to give up my last summer before college. I had so many people praying for me and I cannot tell you how many times that I talked to God about what I was going to do. Eventually, I started thinking about my new chapter in life and what was going to be best for me in the future instead of what I was going to miss over the summer. I realized that if I attended the program then I would be ahead of everyone else. I would make new friends and get to know the campus, so I would not look like a lost little freshman.

Since the beginning of ASP, I have grown a lot as a student in academic ways and personal ways. I learned what works best for me when preparing for a test or quiz, what kind of person I want to portray myself as and also how I want to spend my free time. I have realized what it takes to be a successful student and to get the grades that I want to get. Overall, I have grown a lot as a student and a person and I can thank the ASP for that. I had to grow up a little faster than most of my friends and learn how to do things on my own. I think that if I did not participate this summer then I would not like college. It has been a blast so far even though there can be challenging times!"

~Allison Watts, 2013 ASP Student