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Opinion: Going back to college in your 30s isn't that bad, worth the sacrifice

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Courtesy of Yudelca M.

As the school year comes to an end, it's the start of something new for graduating seniors. Some have plans, and some may not; some may still be figuring out what their next move is.

Many graduation college seniors are in their early to late 20s. You never hear the story of those in the 30s or beyond.

As freshmen, students usually feel excited, but lost. Often, they are told they have time. As for me, I returned to LSU in my late 20s in a pandemic.

Some say it was insane, but I knew I had to come back to finish what I started. I initially started my college career ten years ago as a science major.

As I come close to ending my education at LSU, I will be graduating in theatre as a first-generation college grad. What caused the drastic change? Life happened.

When I returned to complete my undergrad, there was a choice I had to make. First, I had to demote myself from a promising career that supported me financially alone.

I've been working since I was 18, so I have an idea of the workforce, networking, and connections. I never had any breaks, nor any other support. I decided to give up on what I've been working on to focus on school.

As many know, school itself is a full-time job. In returning to maintain any aid, I had to be a full-time student. Although this decision was tough to make, I was determined.

Second, I had to get back into the momentum of studying. Now, I was a part-time student once, so I knew it'd be difficult. I was not used to reviewing for an exam covering nearly five chapters or doing over 30-page readings overnight. It took me two semesters to adjust to the college student lifestyle again.

Without a doubt, I've been exhausted since 2020 (not including the pandemic). I was considered an independent student. I supported and financed myself. I worked summers, nights, and weekends to compensate for hours throughout the week. I saved on food, housing, and school supplies to get by; I also got a dramatic pay cut. It amazes me internships are unpaid and require so much work. But I knew I had to do it.

As my time at LSU comes to an end, I would not trade all the sacrifices I've made. I participated in school activities, discovered talents I never knew I had and published a few articles (18-year-old me would have never guessed that). On top of all that, I was on the President's Honor Roll for three semesters in a row. I hope my journey inspires others and never underestimates themselves. If I did it, everyone else can.

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