

I hear the question “What are you doing after college?” daily. And, to be honest, I don’t know. I don’t have a job, and it’s starting to look possible I won’t have one by May 11th. In my life, I’ve always had a plan. I mean, when I think about it, I committed to Xavier on December 1st. For once, I *really* don’t feel like I have a plan.

Obviously, being in Arrupe Leaders, I’ve had the chance to reflect on the past 4 years. As I have thought about all the successes and failures, I realized my Xavier journey wasn’t as linear as I thought. One of the main reasons I committed to Xavier was to be a “big fish” in a “small pond,” doing what I wanted to do. I played percussion in high school; I loved it so I wanted to continue in college—even to the point I considered adding a music minor. I grew close with my admissions counselor and was deadset on being a tour guide. I thought that’s who I’d be from Day 1—that was my plan. 4 years later, let me tell you how the story went. I quit Symphonic Winds and Pep Band at the end of sophomore year; I lost my passion for playing music. I got rejected from Admissions the first time I applied. Even just a few days to Xavier, I didn’t have a plan.

When life knocks you down, it’s cliché, but you get right back up. And that’s what I did. I reapplied for Admissions the next semester and was fortunate to get the job. Working in Admissions is a huge part of my Xavier identity, so much so that I became a Student Recruitment Director for my senior year. If I had to pinpoint it, I think I discovered my vocation through this position, which is a passion for people. I didn’t want to just work with people, I wanted to make a positive impact on everyone I interacted with. I felt the Xavier community for the first time during my Manresa experience and knew I wanted to be a more meaningful part of the program. I was selected to be a group leader my sophomore and senior years and had one of my most impactful Xavier experiences being on Core my junior year. I also wanted to help develop the next generation of Xavier leaders, so I became a leader for the ELR retreat. This was all because I wanted to give back to the community that gave so much to me.

Everything I just said wasn’t a part of my original plan. Throughout the past 4 years, I found myself, fell in love with what I do, and formed my own special version of community. I made mistakes and learned from them. When things didn’t go as planned, I blamed myself. And, I could’ve just stopped trying to adjust. But that’s not what I did. My leadership journey has taught me to be comfortable with the uncomfortable. I’ve learned to roll with the punches, and appreciate everything that comes my way. I embraced the process when life didn’t go my way. I

found MY way and fell in love with it. Looking back, I wouldn't want my Xavier experience any other way.

Now, it's okay I don't have a plan. I'll get a job eventually, but until then, I'll embrace networking and submitting dozens of applications. Yesterday, I got rejected from a job I thought was going to stick. When I called my parents upset, they reminded me to enjoy these final weeks. And we ALL have something to celebrate. We all found our way throughout a crazy 4 years, discovered our vocation, and are now discerning our path forward.

When I look around this room, I see how a few special people in this room unexpectedly became a huge part of my Xavier plan. Ella was already committed to St. John's, but she ended up choosing Xavier after we started talking and became my first-year roommate and truly my Day 1. Caden knew my suitemate and came into my Buenger room talking about nonsense during Manresa—I thought he was crazy. He is now like a brother to me. Finally, Maggie and I were the only two people who would consistently show up to our Marketing class in-person the second semester of our first year. Little did I know she would become someone I couldn't live without. Thank you to the friends, mentors, and memories that made my plan better than I dreamed. I'm ready to see what my next plan has in store.