

Jacob Wilbanks

I believe that I have been resilient in my journey as a community college student by always getting back up when I fall down. I have had a couple of weeks already where I had a really hard time completing assignments by the due date. However, every time I noticed that I was struggling, I talked to my dad. My dad is the one person who motivates me more than anyone, and every time I need some motivation, he gives me the best advice and reasons to keep going. On top of taking 5 classes this semester, I am also working 20 hours a week, which makes it easier for me to forget about assignments I may have due. That being said, when I do fall down and have a hard time, I always get back up again. For me, getting back up again means that I am taking care of all of my responsibilities, such as homework, my job, and my personal everyday responsibilities. Another thing about being resilient is that it is important to not be scared to ask for help. The majority of the time, your professors are willing to help you, especially when it comes to their class. I believe this is because they really do want you to be successful. Sometimes I struggle with asking for help from my professors, as I don't want them to think that I am not paying attention, however, I do just have so much going on in my life that sometimes I forget a lot of what I've learned. Another thing I do when I need to get back on track is to ask my professors if we will have any make-up dates as well as any opportunities for extra credit. So far, most of my professors have been super helpful in being understanding of my situations, however not all of them. While this is understandable, I will still ask because you never know what they are going to say.



In my opinion, it is extremely important to be resilient as a college student, as you will face so many challenges, whether it be a homework assignment or just simply having too much to do with not enough time. It can be a very hard thing to manage a school-life balance. For some college students, you have to try and balance schoolwork, a job, and your everyday life and responsibilities. For me personally, I live on my own and pay my own bills, so I have to work as much as I can but also have to find time to get my homework done. I have only been in college for 5 weeks now, so I am still struggling to find that balance and the time to get everything done. It is very important to be resilient as you never know what things will come your way, and you have to simply get right back up again and make sure all of your responsibilities are being taken care of.

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Kathleen LaGuerre

Merriam Webster defines the word resilience as the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress; or an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.

My name is Kathleen LaGuerre. I am a student at Central Piedmont Community College. I am a double major. I have recently completed my Associate's Degree in Science – Biology Pathway and am now completing the Associate's Degree in Nursing program. These paths have allowed me to prove my resilience.

After obtaining a series of certificates, Pharmacy Technician, ECG Technician, Phlebotomy Technician, and Clinical Medical Assistant; I realized none of them would put a lasting dent in my career path. So, in the Fall of 2018, I decided the traditional route was best. I returned to college.

As an adult learner with actual bills, you are faced with criticism for choosing to return to school full-time. "What are you trying to prove?" I am a PRN Healthcare Technician at Atrium Health. I work the night shift, 7:00 PM to 7:00 AM. Choosing to attend classes during the day is a great sacrifice. The cost of living is high and expenses do not wait. Financial assistance is scarce for a person earning an income. Completing the Nursing program requires that I reduce my working schedule to make room for course load demands. This puts a strain on maintaining my expenses.

In the Fall of 2021, I hit a wall. With COVID back on the rise, I was once again exposed at work. This put my academic career in jeopardy. I had to miss several days of school and work. I underwent a few COVID tests. This didn't make a difference to an instructor who penalized me ten points for having to reschedule my second lecture exam. The day before returning to class for the exam, a pipe burst in my apartment flooding my living room, hallway, and bathroom. Furthermore, a day before our third lecture exam and two days before the final, I received the news that my grandmother was diagnosed with cancer. What next??? Resilience, huh??? I don't know how I remained sane. I did push through. I passed both my third lecture exam and my final

exam. Disappointed, I still failed the course as a consequence of a low exam composite grade. The penalty for rescheduling my second lecture exam placed me at 1.2 points below the required test composite score. More devastating, my grandmother passed on Christmas morning.

I am still here. I decided to take ACA 122 in the Spring of 2022 because it was the last required course for my Associate Degree in Science – Biology Pathway. I am grateful I did. This class was a short-term course with lifetime information. More important, it was refreshing to have an instructor who was excited about teaching. I found it therapeutic on some level. It was great to complete assignments that I found useful. When ACA 122 came to an end I faced the reality of returning to my nursing courses. This brings me back to resilience. I had an instructor who also happens to be an assistant director of the program, say to me “you are brave for returning.” This was said to me in the most patronizing manner. I am currently repeating a nursing class because of events beyond my control. I am resilient.

Having an instructor be condescending is the least of my challenges. I am working at night while completing my academic career. Part of my class is to attend clinicals once a week while taking the lecture courses. My clinical sites are with my employer Atrium. It is very much like working the day shift after working nights. The physical and mental strain that comes with me continuing this journey is evidence of my resilience. The audacity to continue to dream of completing my Nursing Degree is resilience.

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Mariana Villafrade

I'm a young woman that started college a few months ago, I know what it is like to be young, naive and in my case a foreigner, but I still find myself to be a very resilient student despite the hardships I have had to face in my journey.

The fact that being resilient it's considered an "ability" and apparently it's not often recognized, made me understand how hard it is for young people like myself to work on this "ability", perhaps because we as students are mostly required to develop academic skills rather than social or emotional skills.

I think about resilience as a life skill that can be applied in any kind of setting. For me it has been a process of surviving through chaotic feelings, moments, people, judgment, and difficult situations I'm not to blame for. When I first came to the US in 2020, I was really excited and anxious to be involved in a different culture, I wanted to learn the language and to be able to study and go to college but unfortunately due to Covid19 my plans changed radically. To begin, the mandatory use of masks due to the spread of the virus made it very difficult for me to understand people when they spoke, not only because it wasn't my first language and I was just beginning to learn English, it was also because it was very difficult to hear and understand people without seeing their mouths move to vocalize, and of course people felt the same way when I spoke to them. Having to wear the mask on a daily basis was a huge hurdle, everybody was more distant, and making friends was twice as hard. In addition, I felt severely discouraged at the time and sometimes I thought it would be a waste of my time to study in general because classes were virtual and they didn't feel as demanding, but in the end all those factors didn't stop me from improving my English level and getting my GED. I didn't have to necessarily present the equivalency tests, since I graduated from high school in my native country but I still did it, just to challenge myself to improve my English level on the academic aspect. Now that I can remember those events I can't feel more proud of how resilient I was. Thanks to that achievement I started to study in my associate at CPCC and now I'm currently experiencing my first semester of college.

On the other hand, I get frustrated when it comes to financing my education, and sometimes before I worry about academic success, I constantly worry about how I'm going to pay for tuition. This semester I'm having an out of state status, that means paying three times more than a resident student, which at first made me feel very helpless and severely affected my mental health. Realizing how expensive it's for me to be able to access education in this country was one part and adding to that, the fact that I'm in a political asylum process and has been very taxing for me. I haven't been able to earn income, due to Covid and the fact that my work permit was delayed, I'm still waiting to receive my work permit impatiently; I ask myself all the time the same question: "How am I going to be able to get the money for tuition if I can't work right now?"

To be honest, at that point I just wanted to give up on my plans to study, nothing seemed to work in my favor and instead it seemed impossible to achieve. After feeling defeated, I once again forced myself to keep looking for opportunities against all odds, for a while I took free classes at CPCC for math and writing and without expecting anything a school grant was given to me, which I gladly used to pay my tuition this semester. Now, I know that if I had given up on my dreams of studying I wouldn't have gotten the school grant that helped me pay half of my classes.

To conclude, my journey as a community college student has begun with ups and downs as life itself. I'm sure every semester will be harder and even more challenging than the previous one. But as long as I'm strong enough to get over academics or financial difficulties, I know I will be closer to obtaining my career bachelor degree. A clear proof of my determination are my grades this semester and it provides me with the motivation to keep going through my journey in Central Piedmont Community College.

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Krystal Evans

Being resilient to me means being able to recover from any minor or major setback without letting it deter you from your goals. The ability to have resilience is a life skill I never really realized I would struggle with until the start of my journey as a community college student. Throughout the years of high school, I've never really had trouble with the workload. I was your average student who went to school and maintained her grades and had a little part-time job just to buy clothes and food. When I graduated from high school is when I had a huge realization that I had no idea what I'm doing with my life and that it was not going to be so easy anymore. I went to Winston Salem State University for a semester and then I realized that just wasn't the right school for me. So I withdrew from the school and registered for Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC). This whole process for me was pretty discouraging at first, all my friends were going to four-year universities while I was still back at home. I felt like going to a community college was a major setback for me. I didn't realize that this would become one of the best opportunities for me in the future.



When I started at CPCC I had also started working full time so I could help my parents pay bills and save up for a car. Within two weeks I got promoted to a supervisor which meant more responsibilities. At first being a full time employee and student was pretty easy for me. It wasn't until I started struggling with one of my classes where everything went downhill from there. I slowly started to get discouraged and having motivation for school just wasn't something I was capable of doing while working over 40 hours a week. Working during the pandemic was pretty hard because we were always understaffed so everyone that was there was overworked. I slowly started to fall into depression because my days were a constant go to work, come home and do homework, and then wake up and repeat. I didn't have time for extracurricular activities, see my friends, or just rest. I was constantly pushing

myself until I got burnt out and everything in life was just overwhelming and became too much for me. I wanted to give up so bad, however I knew I had goals that I needed to achieve because my dreams were just too big to give up. I want to transfer to North Carolina A&T FALL2022 and I realized I can't let anything stop that from happening. I asked my boss if I cut down on some of my hours at work. It didn't happen immediately however it did happen which was very beneficial because I had more time to focus on my school work. I then made me a schedule that I stuck to very seriously because if I didn't I was going to fall behind again. I stopped doing homework at my house and went to the library for at least 2 hours a day. Which allowed me to be more productive and have more time for rest. I did end up taking some winter classes that were only four weeks in order to get my gpa up. I was nervous that it wasn't going to be high enough to get into A&T. Everything did work out in the end and I was able to get it back above a 2.5. Around late February I received my acceptance letter. I was so proud of myself and so happy that I didn't give up. I was certain I was going to become burnt out, however I did push through and made small steps towards my goals. Now my next goal is to achieve my associates degree since I'm only a few credits away from it. One of the most important things I learned is that nothing is just going to come easy to me in life unless I work for it. In order to work for it I have to be resilient because you never know what can come your way.

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Candice Cole

Resilience, as in the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, is a life skill that is desperately needed but cannot be taught. It must be acquired from one's own life experiences. Therefore, resilience cannot be so easily defined as a one size fits all but is a spectrum of coping strategies that varies for each individual and set of circumstances. I believe that education is paramount to the betterment of each individual and society and the journey for everyone is different. My story of resilience is uniquely my own; no less and no greater than others. What's important is that I find the resolve within myself to persevere and that I can look in the mirror and know I did my best. I am not defined by the opinions of others; but only by my own actions and the resolve I aspire to daily. I am not a traditional student as I am married with three children and well past the typical college age. Completing school while with adult responsibilities does instill its own set of challenges. My education is very important to me and so each day I choose to be resilient and balance the scales of my own unique set of responsibilities. This past year I have been resilient through the responsibilities of motherhood, student, the diagnosis and raising of a special needs child and contracting Covid.

Each day brings its own set of challenges. How I have been resilient is to learn the time management needed to succeed. It's a balancing act between personal responsibilities and collegiate ones. The greatest detriment to student resilience is the myth of work life or school life balance. This so-called balance does not exist and is a mythological perception that a perfect balance will be obtainable. The scales cannot balance perfectly everyday. There will be a natural give and take between responsibilities that each person must learn the delicate placement of the scales. Which responsibility takes precedence today? Just like medical staff must triage patients, everyone must triage their own responsibilities each day. As an adult student I have learned this through life experiences and motherhood. I can balance the responsibilities I have to my children and as a student. It will not be perfect each day but at the end the scales do balance. So long as the scale hasn't crashed and broken then it's still in balance. Some days school will take precedence as there are projects and exams due. Being resilient means

knowing and understanding when to ask for help. Yes, I believe that resilience means acknowledging that no one can do it all alone and asking for assistance is how I have been resilient. I created a schedule between myself, my husband and family to ensure I can attend to the needs of my family while still completing the schoolwork needed. This schedule has been instrumental in my resilience and collegiate success.

My son was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder just after his second birthday. I know with absolute certainty that my journey to resilience started with his developmental and communication delays. The battle for my son to receive the assessment, evaluations, and therapies he needed was not an easy one. I have not completed a college degree yet and this process is what inspired me to return to school and complete my education. I was appalled at the system currently in place for special needs children and their parents. How hard it is for a parent to advocate and fight for their child to receive services. I had to learn how to advocate, speak up and fight for my child when he had no voice. Any parent that has gone through this knows it's a painful process. The pain of your child receiving a special needs diagnosis never goes away. However, if you stay there in that pain you will miss the beautiful moments that still accompany raising a special needs child just like raising any child. I was resilient when I decided to not wallow in that pain but go back to school and educate myself on how to help not only my son but others struggling. I will become the advocate needed in our community and society today. Everyday I must balance my responsibilities with my two neuro-typical children and my autistic son. He receives therapies everyday and now at the age of three is receiving therapy almost forty hours a week. However therapy doesn't stop at the center, it continues at home. The balancing scale continues and it's the give and take that everyone must learn. Which responsibility takes precedence today? Resilience is understanding that motherhood, school and life is a marathon not a sprint. It's a daily inspiration that we each must set for ourselves in regards to our own personal circumstances.

Completing school while an adult with children can be difficult and adding a special needs child while also in a pandemic adds a plethora of challenges. I

had created a complete plan for my academic success in December while taking the ACA course. I was so excited to see my plan and know how everything would play out. Unfortunately, that plan derailed in January when I contracted Covid. The spring session had just started and I was not feeling well. Once the symptoms started it began to snowball so I saw a physician and the test confirmed I had Covid. Needless to say Covid was not part of my plan! I knew the challenge before me as I was registered to take sixteen credit hours and immediately emailed the school and all my professors.

Quarantined in my room to protect my family I continued my school work to the best of my abilities. I was resilient through all the symptoms that I knew would eventually pass and persevered to complete my school work. I had a plan again; yet life often laughs at our plans. Everyone in my household contracted Covid so now my house has five sick people. My daughter and I displayed the worst systems and thankfully my youngest son was asymptomatic. I had to adjust my plan again. I decided that to balance the scales this time I need to withdraw from classes. Yes, withdrawing from the classes shows resilience. I had to understand that my wants and needs may contradict each other and remind myself that my collegiate success is a marathon not a sprint. Understanding what you can and cannot do; being realistic in balancing responsibilities and schoolwork is the highest level of resilience. I withdrew from two classes by emailing the professors that I could not balance, my responsibilities of motherhood and student while sick with Covid and taking care of sick children. I pledged that my academic plan would evolve and I would take these classes again. I am so thankful for my resilience as I developed iron deficiency anemia as a result of Covid and was ill for four weeks. I would not have been able to balance sixteen credit hours but I was able to balance ten credit hours while I recovered. My plan changed again and when I recovered I added two additional courses for the second eight week spring term. This has proven to be the best decision for me and I am so thankful that I was resilient and persevered. My grades are a testament of my resilience and that I made the correct decision.

Ironic as it may sound, I am thankful this semester transpired the way it did. I would never want to contract Covid again and want no one to experience that. However, because of Covid I now know the educational route I want to

pursue. My resolve and purpose are defined and priorities in order. I was originally pursuing the teacher preparation program but have now changed to an Associate of Arts. I want to transfer to a four year university and pursue a degree in communication sciences and disorders. This past year and specifically this semester with all its challenges has taught me my passion is speech development. The resilience I have learned through life experiences and school has brought me to this point and I am honored to have found my passion and purpose. I will need the resilience I have acquired to continue my collegiate journey, advocate for my son and become the professional I aspire to be.

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Rachel Lanham

In the face of adversity, we must take risks and do something to change our given circumstances. We can cope with difficult situations and make the most of opportunities that come our way. When our resilience is stronger, the difficult situations do not set us back as much. We are far more likely to keep things in perspective, solve life's problems easier, keep focused on what matters, bounce forward, and thrive. Life is always going to throw us challenges. What counts, is how we deal with them and learn from them. Research has shown that being resilient isn't just doing one thing and effortlessly gliding through difficulty. It's about bouncing back with optimism and being flexible on how we view the situation at hand. Knowing when to ask for help and embracing the support that is offered is the key to better preparing for the trials of life.

In my time as a Central Piedmont Community College student, I have been faced with challenges academically, financially, and personally but have found a way to navigate them. It has been no picnic making it this far. I first started at the college in 2012 when I was 18 years old. At the time, I had a general idea of what I could go into as a career but had not figured out what my desire and purpose in life were. I entered the Associates of Science pathway and enjoyed my first year and half of college experience. I met some great people, and the instructors changed my perspective on how to analyze and approach problem-solving in any area of life. My time spent in school ended after a year and a half when I had a miscarriage and fell into depression. At the time I still did not quite know what I wanted to pursue and didn't have the best support system to encourage me in any direction in life. I spent the next several years trying to figure out who I was and how that affected my place in the world. I've always been the type of person that desires to create change and influence others in a way that triggers a rippling effect. In 2017, I became a parent which offered me the unique opportunity for self-introspection. This ultimately triggered my inspiration to go back to school and get my associate degree.

I entered back into CPCC in 2020 in the Registered Health Information Technology program which is a fully online program. Being able to take

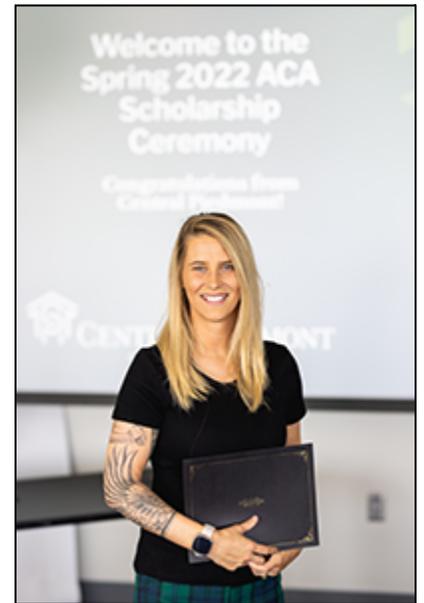
classes online was a leading factor for me seeing as I was a stay-at-home single mom at the time with a small pet sitting business. I had previously taken several courses in high school that gave me an advantage in succeeding in this pathway. I highly enjoyed my clinical experience with Atrium Health but after several semesters in the program, I still felt like the career path was lacking something for me. In 2021, the college got hit by a ransomware attack which was a major setback for all of us. It did however give me a chance to contemplate switching pathways. I felt as if I was still on the fence about the decision seeing as I only had one semester left. It was then that I found out CPCC decided to drop its accreditation for RHIT, and I would have to switch to a lower-ranking college (that happened to be 4 hours away) to finish out the program. This was ultimately the deciding factor for me to make the change. It was fate, right? I honestly love CPCC and did not want to switch colleges.

In the Summer of 2021, I switched to the Business Administration Program. This was the best decision for me as I have loved every minute of education in business. I initially wanted to gain further knowledge of marketing that would prove beneficial in my current small business. Flash forward to now, and I will be graduating with my degree in Business Administration (AAS) and a certificate in Brand Promotion this summer! The adversity of financial hardship has continued to be a struggle as a single parent, but I ultimately know that I am now entering a pathway that will enable me with a little more financial freedom to provide for my son as well as offer me the fulfillment of working in a career that I am inspired by every day.

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Miranda Weimer

The definition of resilience in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is, “the capability of a strained body to recover after deformation caused especially by compressive stress” or “an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.” Cambridge Dictionary defines the word resilient as, “one’s ability to be happy and successful after something difficult or bad has happened.” Words that stand out to me are stress, strained, misfortune, change, difficult, and bad. None of these solely define positivity or accomplishment, but finding success through things like stress, misfortune, and change is evidence of a resilient individual. Everyone goes through difficult times, some more than others, but I believe no one can compare hardships. We each have unique trails from our past and paths to our future and experience the world through different lenses, and students have resiliency that is leading them through their journey today. I am no exception.



Though I was small and fragile, I was mighty. Born two months before my due date not breathing, feet first, bruised all over, and under three pounds I had to spend seven weeks in the NICU. The hospital discharged me wearing a cardiorespiratory monitor to my eighteen year old mother combating postpartum depression and struggling to care for her 19 month old and newborn. We had nowhere to live before moving in with my mother's boyfriend as I simultaneously started kindergarten. My home life deteriorated when we began being abused and my mother beaten. It was in kindergarten that I learned school could be an escape. We moved around, my mom got a new boyfriend, and I started first grade at a new school. I was first assaulted by him at only six years old and the abuse continued through my eighth grade year. Through it all school remained my core escape.

I received an award of academic excellence in the second grade signed by President Clinton and learned to thrive off of positive acknowledgement and

reassurance through sports and academics. I started my work career at fifteen and worked full-time during the twelfth grade to provide for myself. Even with an unstable home and busy work schedule I was accepted into the University of Louisiana. Then days after my graduation I was kicked out and left to fend for myself. With two duffle bags and a greyhound ticket, I went to Louisiana where my grandparents temporarily took me in. I started the application for financial aid and hit a wall because without my parents' information I couldn't complete the FAFSA. School started and with their refusal to assist me I didn't. Three years later I joined the U.S. Navy where I served as a gas turbine engine mechanic. Halfway through I was honorably discharged after being diagnosed with PTSD from the prolonged abuse I suffered. My mental health declined for years and I was later given an additional diagnosis of inherited bipolar disorder type 1. I was able to find treatment and enrolled at Central Piedmont. It became challenging to attend class with my overwhelming stress and anxiety but CPCC's intimate setting alleviated those troubles.

Many semesters later my 3.98 GPA is giving me that same positive acknowledgement I thrive from when excelling in academics. Attending school comes with its own challenges such as my spouse and I fall under the lower middle class, therefore I must work to pay bills while attending school. After bills there is little money left for extracurricular activities or school. Thankfully community college students are able to build schedules around their responsibilities, but this doesn't mean it is an easy load to carry.

Maintaining my mental health while working full-time, moving forward while grieving my best friend's death and feeling alone in this world, all while sustaining a nearly perfect GPA is my story of resiliency. Being the first in my family for countless generations to attend college takes resiliency. School is still my break from difficulties I face today and my bridge to creating future stability. I find strength in the face of adversity and I am in control. There are copious amounts of students with comparable situations, but complexities cannot be measured as each journey is unique. College students like me are pursuing a better future for themselves through education no matter the current situation or destination. A better future for my family and gaining the

tools to serve others through dental healthcare will make this uphill battle all worth it because diamonds are made under pressure.

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