

Dream Chasing

Thank you. My name is Trent and I am sincerely honored that Ms. Armstrong-Turner asked me to speak to you today. The Transfer Center staff does amazing work, and we all have them to thank for helping us get into a four-year school.

I started at LACC in the fall of 2007, and as you may have noticed, I'm extremely wise and handsome...I mean...I'm an older student who started my college career later in life. Why in the world would a guy like me go to college at my age? Two years ago, I wasn't even good at multiplication. I was raised in the south, southern Georgia, and let's just say that my school wasn't famous for developing mathematicians or scientists.

I'm forty years old, but I am still the first one in my family to go to college. Coming to school here was fun and frightening at the same time. When people first met me, they usually thought I was a professor. I can't tell you how many times on the first day of class, students would walk up to me and say "Can I add this class?" I'd say "I guess...I don't know. I'm not the teacher." I should've started teaching the class like Leo DiCaprio in *Catch Me if You Can* or Jack Black in *School of Rock*.

When I was young, going to college was the last thing on my mind. College was for the rich kids who lived on the other side of town. People like me either joined the military or worked in factories or menial jobs their whole life. My sister and two brothers, who are all in their thirties, barely graduated high school, and have earned minimum wage most of their life. I ended up graduating at 17 and joined the Navy to escape the clutches of my youth, and I was lucky enough to travel around the world and work with computers. After the Navy, I started a computer business that lasted for ten years. I enjoyed helping people, but my life was missing something.

Coming from such a poor family, I thought that money was the most important thing in life. People always say, that money can't buy you happiness. But I never heard a rich man say that, only poor people. Well, I made a lot of money, and the only thing that happened, was you buy more stuff. And that was it. At that time, I was quite successful, but not where it counted. I like to say that my wallet was happy, but my not my heart.

My life dramatically changed when I decided to leave my computer business behind and pursue my dream to make the world smile as an actor and filmmaker. It was a terrible and a beautiful thing. I've been poor ever since, but my heart is happy. And that's what's really important. Although, I never really got into that starving artist thing. As you can see, I've still been able to feed myself. ☺

I taught computer classes on the side to get by. And it was that skill that allowed me to go to South Korea for a year and a half to teach. My life changed again when I was in that beautiful country [Dae han min guk!].

I climbed mountains and had tea with Buddhist monks. I got a chance to look deep inside myself and to try to truly figure out what I wanted. I thought, what do I *really* want? What is my *dream*?

When I came back to LA, I started to pursue a dream that was hidden deep away since 1986. My dream to obtain a college degree. And something tells me, you guys all have the same dream. And that's awesome...

As an actor, and now aspiring director, I started searching for film schools in the area, but because of my poor high school grades and SAT scores that have years of dust on them, I couldn't enter into a four year school. And that's when I found LACC, a brilliant diamond in the rough. My experience here has been tremendously amazing. I've had the time of my life here with a great administrative support staff, incredible professors and awesome classes...wait...except for math. ☺

When I started here, it was my goal to sit in the front row, never be late for class, never miss a day, to get an A on every quiz and test, and of course, to get an A in every class. I might have missed a day or so here and there, and there were a few quizzes & tests where I didn't get an A, but I did get an A in every class...wait...except for math. ☺ ARGH!

I also wanted to be involved with anything that I could to help me grow as a student and to help me be competitive when I applied to a four year school. The Ralph Bunche Scholars Program, the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, and The USC SCholars Program helped me immensely and I'm positive that my involvement with each of those programs helped me get accepted into the USC...the best film school in the world...sorry UCLA fans. ☺

One of the most important things that I have learned in my life, is that you can't do anything alone. I used to do everything alone, but once I started here, I needed a lot of help. Places like the Pi Shop and writing center. And, of course, the professors. I got to know each of my professors well and they all knew my name. I was always bugging them with extra questions after class and I always concerned with my grade. Besides help at school, I've learned over the past few years, that you can't do much alone in your personal life either. I met an amazing Korean family, who became my extended family. And it was through their love and support, that I was able to do so well here. My Hyung bought my books my first semester, and my Hyung-su ended up making me countless sandwiches to bring every day. I learned that it's ok to rely on friends and family. Love and family are really the most important things in life...not being rich. Don't get me wrong, money is a cool thing. It can make your wallet and stomach happy, but not your heart.

It's a honor to be in the same room with so many bright young people, who are moving on to their four-year school of choice, and I congratulate everyone. I know we all worked very hard to get here. And what tomorrow brings, is entirely up to us. I hope that in the future, each and every one you figure out what *truly* makes you happy and to *never* stop chasing your dreams. I'm living proof, that it doesn't matter how long it takes you to chase your dream, just as long as you never give up on chasing it.

Thank you.