When I think about it, it is hard to believe that I am already a senior in college. I feel like I closed my eyes during freshman year and when I opened them all of a sudden I was a senior. As I reflect on the past three and a half years, I look at the different aspects that have made my college career meaningful. I have found that one of the major outcomes of them has been my increase in confidence. To understand how I've grown into a more confident person, it's necessary to revisit my past, including some pre-college experiences.

I was born in Israel, but when I was one-year-old, my family moved to Port Elizabeth, South Africa to be closer to my mother’s parents. I loved living in South Africa. I had great friends and loved living close to my grandparents. However, when I was seven years old, my parents informed me, and my two older sisters, that we were moving to America.

I didn’t know much about America. When I finally moved it was a major culture shock. Who knew that moving from one English speaking country to another could be so different, but it was. First of all, some of the English words are different. That was one of my hardest adjustments. One time in second grade I asked my teacher for a “koki”. After a few minutes of frustration for her lack of understanding, I finally remembered the American word, marker, and she gave me one.

Not only were my words different, but so was my accent. While my accent represented a south, it wasn’t the same south as Greensboro, North Carolina. I was the weird new girl from
Africa that no one could understand. I was also attending a private Jewish school. My class consisted of 16 students, majority of which had been in school together since preschool. This made it even harder to fit in, because the other students had known each other for so long and had already formed such close friendships. I eventually made friends with the other students, but it took a while, and hindered my confidence.

Another struggle when I moved to America, was feeling like I was put into a bubble. Up until college, I went to private Jewish schools my entire life, even in South Africa. However, my Jewish school in South Africa had non-Jews as well. Once I moved to America, away from those other cultures in South Africa, I felt like I was put into a bubble. I was surrounded by people who were similar to me because of my religion. We rarely strayed outside our bubble. We constantly interacted with other Jews, people like us. It wasn’t because we didn’t want to interact with anyone else, it is just easy to clump with people who are like you, who understand you. I learned about other religions in my classes, but rarely spoke to people who represented them.

While my schools gave me great education and amazing experiences, including two trips to Israel, I didn’t go out of that bubble. It was my comfort zone, and all I had ever known. While I had chances to grow in many ways, in some ways I was held back as well. At my private Jewish schools, everyone knew me. It was too small not to know everyone. My graduating high school class was only 50 people, and we were the biggest that had graduated from my school before. When you are in a class that small, you become the person everyone knows very quickly. Unfortunately, there isn’t much room for growth. If you were identified as the leader type, that’s who you were, and if you were a quiet follower, it was hard to get past that.
However, when I came to college, I only knew one other person here. I could really be whoever I wanted to be. I’m not saying I changed who I was, but it meant that I could take risks that I felt I couldn’t before. I could try new things like joining a sorority for example. Coming to college busted me out of my bubble identity. I was able to interact with many different kinds of people, who had various religions and cultures. I got to have different experience than the ones I had before. Once I left my bubble, my confidence started growing.

My major in college is Communication Studies, and I knew I wanted to use one of the many communication theories as my theoretical framework to explain my college experiences and my increase in confidence. I started looking, and the first one that jumped out at me was systems theory. Systems theory states, “Groups are open systems, which are influenced by such independent variables as; openness to environment, interdependence, input variables, process variables, and output variables” (uky.edu).

A system is an “organized set of interacting parts” (Smith, 2011). These parts are known as subsystems and they work together and are affected by one another (Smith, 2011). There are four categories of systems. The first type of system is a static system which “are not susceptible to change along with the environment.” The second system is a dynamic system which is “ever-changing and adaptable to the environment.” The third system is a closed system which “will have fixed elements and other relationships with the environment.” And lastly, there is an open system which “will be interactive and will be flexible with the elements and thus the output from the system” (communicationtheory.org).

There are also numerous elements that are involved in systems theory. While there are many to choose from, I will share the ones that I feel connect to my own personal experiences.
They are input, throughput, output, environment, and goal. The input is any type of information or effort that helps achieve the output. Throughput is the in between processing of the information or effort that leads to the output. Output is the final result produced by the system. The environment is the situation where the processing takes place. Lastly, the goal is the specific output that is trying to be achieved (communicationtheory.org).

At this point you might be wondering what all these things have to do with my college experience, but when you look closer, it becomes clear. I am a system. As a system, I go through the process of input, throughput, and output. The input in this case would be my 4 years in college. The throughput would be my specific college experiences which will be broken down later on in the essay. The output is who I am after my college experiences.

My system also has an environment and goal. The environment is UNC Charlotte and the goal is to graduate. I consider my system to be a mix of two of the types. My system is an open system because I am interactive with my environment, but my system is also dynamic because I am constantly adapting to new things and changing.

As I previously mentioned, systems are made up of subsystems. In the case of my system, my subsystems relate to the college experiences that I have had. The beginning of these experiences are the inputs. The throughputs are the duration of the experience. And finally, the output is the outcome of those experiences.

While my main subsystem’s goal is to graduate, there are other pieces to the output. As previously mentioned, when I look back at the experiences that make up my subsystems and look at the outputs of those processes, I have found that one common piece is confidence. Each of these processes have affected my confidence in some way. I wondered why now, in a new and
unfamiliar environment, did my secureness grow? Just the act of coming to college and leaving my bubble behind helped begin the process of my confidence growth, but college is such a stressful time, and it still seemed strange to me.

As a college student I have many things going on constantly. I have my classes and keeping up my grades. I have a social life that I try to maintain. I was away from the comfort of my home for the first time in my life. I have extracurricular activities and groups. And I try to balance them all, which is easier said than done. With all these things piled on me, it can be difficult to stay confident with all the stress. So why did I become more confident is such a stressful time? As I think about this more, I realize that it was these college experiences.

While I had a newfound confidence in myself when coming to college, it is not always easy for everyone, especially in college. Though I have gained more confidence over time, I won’t say that I am the most confident person. I still struggle with self-confidence, like most people do. But what is self-confidence? According to dictionary.reference.com, there are two definitions of self-confidence. The first is the, “realistic confidence in one’s own judgment, ability, power, etc.” The second is the “excessive of inflated confidence in one’s own judgment, ability, etc.”

Though there is a concrete definition for confidence, I think how someone defines their personal self-confidence depends on the person. For example, for one person, self-confidence can be speaking in public or giving a great presentation. To others it can be feeling great in a new outfit. Or it could be both. The definition can really be up to the person defining what it means to them and the experience they are relating it to. For me, I define confidence in multiple ways, especially depending on the situation.
When I was looking deeper into this concept of systems and subsystems, I thought about how my subsystems are somewhat categorized. When I looked at my artifacts and the experiences that they represented, I could see different aspects of my life and my college career that they symbolized. I have decided to organize my artifacts by the subsystem they represent. My artifacts are, my This I Believe essay, my sorority pin, my housing ambassador polo, a picture of my couch, my mezuzah, my confidence Ted Talk, and my Red Cross intern badge. Some of the artifacts represent the same system and some stand alone.

**Subsystem 1: Education**

Education is very important to me. I am also first and foremost in college to get an education. The two artifacts that represent my education subsystem are the This I Believe Essay and my confidence Ted Talk.

The first semester of my freshman year of college we were required to take a freshman seminar class with Julie Hicks. That class was one of my favorites in college because I learned a lot about myself and the world around me. I also met a lot of great people from the honors program in it, who I am still friends with today. In that class our final project was a portfolio. My portfolio is important to me, because it was one of the first major projects I did in college and for the honors program. My favorite part of the portfolio, and the artifact that I am discussing, is my “This I Believe” essay. This I Believe is an international organization engaging people in writing and sharing essays describing the core values that guide their daily lives (thisibelieve.org).

I wrote my essay about respect, an idea that has always been important to me, but became even stronger when I started college. Like I have previously mentioned, I had attended Jewish
private schools my entire life up until college. I was constantly surrounded by people who shared similar beliefs and values because of our religion. When I came to college, it was very different. All of a sudden Judaism went from being a majority to a minority.

I don’t really remember the first time I started realizing this. It happened gradually, but it became apparent with the people I met. For example, my high school friends would understand some Jewish reference, or a word in Hebrew. However, my new college friends did not. I found myself changing the way I spoke in some ways. I would either explain myself, or just leave it out of conversation in general. I also noticed it in my classes. Generally, at my high school we really only spoke about Judaism for the most part. But in my college classes I was getting input from other religions. While it was different, it wasn’t bad. In fact, it interested me.

I found the break from Judaism to be somewhat refreshing. Judaism has always been such a strong part of my identity and always will be. It’s also been the first thing that connected me to my previous classmates. When I came to college, I didn’t have that automatic connection, but it also meant that I could connect in other ways too. People didn’t have to learn about my religion first, they could truly learn about me.

It was difficult to adjust at first, because I had never had to adjust in this way before. However, I took this new surrounding as a learning experience. I asked questions about my friend’s religions and cultural practices because I was truly interested in broadening my own horizons and embracing the college experience, by learning in the classroom and out.

I believe that we as human beings have a hard time respecting what we do not understand, which is something I wrote in that essay three years ago. Respect was and always will be important to me, mainly because of my religion and where I am from. When I first meet
people, I hesitate to tell them where I am from. Do I tell them Israel, South Africa, or Greensboro? Greensboro generally wins out, because it seems to be the least controversial option.

Do not think I am not proud of where I’m from and who I am. I am and always will be. I’m only hesitant because while I respect other people’s religions and cultures, not everyone respects my own. Not everyone likes Israel or the Jews and sometimes it is easier to avoid it all together. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but not everyone chooses to use respect even when they do not agree with you.

In retrospect, the ideas that framed that essay continue to be a significant part of my personal philosophy and the way that I interact with the world around me. I am always excited to teach my friends about my religion and culture as well, because it shows me that they respect me enough to ask. This idea of respect has really shaped my ideas in college, because no matter if we agree or disagree with a thought, opinion, or idea, we must always be respectful. That class and essay taught me about myself and gave me the confidence to know what I truly believe in.

It also gave me the confidence to not back down when people don’t give me the respect I deserve. For example, a while after that class, during my sophomore year, I was waiting outside of my classroom before class had started. I was with Sarah, a friend from high school who was also Jewish. A group of students waiting for their class were also there. And I heard them talking. I don’t know what they were talking about but I caught the last few words of their conversation. One of the guys said, “I guess we can burn them like the Jews” and they all laughed.
I had never experienced anything like this before. No Jew I knew would ever say something as horrific as this. I built up the courage looked at them and told them that it was a very disrespectful thing to say and that I was Jewish, and my family had been murdered in the Holocaust. Whether or not they really meant harm by their words, or if they just didn’t know any better, I will never know. I don’t even know if they truly listened to my words, but I do know that I had the confidence to stand up for myself.

My “This I Believe” essay was my first “input” that produced the “output” of confidence. Finding my core values in life gave me the confidence to know what I believe and stand up for I believe in. This has helped me throughout college. I am not afraid to speak up when I believe something is wrong. Developing that essay also produced the output of respect. I continue to respect people, and I have continued and will continue to learn. I may not agree with you, but I will always respect you. However, I would consider this a dynamic system because this output is constantly evolving. There are many different roadblocks along the way that can hit you, and my idea of respect is constantly expanding.

I find it interesting that my two artifacts for education are from my freshman year, and my senior year. To me it represents how full circle my education experiences have come. Last semester, in the first course of my senior project, we were given the task of writing and presenting a Ted Talk relating to our project. When I first got the assignment I really wasn’t sure what to do it on. Confidence was the first idea that popped into my head, but I wasn’t sure if it fit for a Ted talk. Ironically I wasn’t confident in using confidence as a topic. After about a week of contemplation, I decided to stick with confidence and present it in an interesting way.
My Ted Talk started off with a personal story. I told the story of when my family moved to America. I was born in Israel, then moved to South Africa when I was one years old, and then moved to North Carolina when I was seven. I spoke about how everything was so different when I moved here, and I didn’t know anyone. This made my self-confidence suffer, but I slowly gained it back, especially when I reached college.

I then moved onto 5 steps to help you gain more confidence. They are: 1. “Surround Yourself with People Who Believe in You”, 2. “Focus on Learning”, 3. “Create a Ritual”, 4. “Accumulate Small Wins”, and 5. “It’s Rational to do the Irrational”. I went into depth about each of these and how they helped. Overall, the Ted Talk went well and my classmates and professor responded well to it. I was also confident in delivering it to the class, which is especially important being that it was a Ted Talk on confidence.

I found this artifact to be fitting for this project, because it helped me understand my own definition of confidence more than I ever had before. It also helped me realize that having a strong support system and the belief that you can do whatever you set your mind to can help you gain confidence. My Ted Talk helped with my general confidence output. I was confident when I gave the Ted Talk and learned more about confidence in the process.

These two artifacts represent very different experiences, but they both represent my education subsystem. They are also constantly changing and evolving. Just because I am about to leave college, does not mean that I will ever stop learning. I will always strive to learn new things. My education format might change, but I will never stop learning.

Subsystem 2: Social Life
Having a social life is a major part of college for me. However, making friends isn’t always so easy. I was having a hard time making friends in college, and I wasn’t sure if UNCC was the right school for me. Then came Sigma Kappa.

My third artifact is my sorority pin. My sorority has been one of the most impactful experiences of my college career and one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. I was hesitant to join a sorority. I didn’t know what it would be like. Would it be like all the stereotypes you see in the movies? While I had some doubts, I wanted to find friends and be a part of a group of women who shared the same values as I did. I joined Sigma Kappa in Spring of 2013 and never looked back. I joined a group of amazing, down-to-earth women, who care about service, sisterhood, and education.

One of my favorite things about Sigma Kappa are our values. They are friendship, loyalty, personal growth, and service. These are all things I am very passionate about. My favorite Sigma Kappa value is personal growth. While the other values are more obvious, personal growth intrigues me. I mentioned earlier that when I was in my Jewish day school bubble, growth was often difficult. I think this is one of the reasons I love this value so much. I find it so interesting because it is something that you don’t always notice at first. It happens over time and often without you realizing it. I also like it because the other three values help with your personal growth.

One example of my own personal growth is actually recent. On campus we have a Greek honors society called Order of Omega. It represents the juniors and seniors who are in the top 3% of the Greeks on our campus. It is based on grades, and chapter and campus involvement. Our sorority president sent us an email letting us know the applications were open to apply. My
freshman year, I would never have thought of applying to a program like this. I would have automatically thought I would be rejected.

However, last semester, I decided to apply. I wasn’t sure if I had a shot, but I had the confidence to believe in myself. After a few months, I got an email telling me that I had been accepted. I was so proud of myself for believing in my own ability. At that moment I saw how much I had grown from freshman year. I wasn’t the girl who feared failure, but instead believed in myself, and it worked in my favor.

Sigma Kappa, completely changed my college experience for me, and I truly believe if it was not for Sigma Kappa, I would have likely left UNC Charlotte for a different university. I am truly thankful I stayed because I loved UNCC from the moment I arrived on this campus, and I would have regretted leaving. Sigma Kappa continuously motivates me to excel academically; it introduced me to a diverse group of women who share my values; and I am a more well-rounded individual now because of it. Sigma Kappa is the next input for my confidence output. It gave me the support system I needed who respects me and pushes me to succeed. My sisters encourage me to be the best person I can be, and they give me confidence when I am having trouble gaining it on my own. I will be forever thankful to Sigma Kappa.

The next artifact in the social life subsystem is my couch. This piece of furniture is a symbolic representation of my roommates Laurie and Liza because of the time we spend on it, eating together, watching movies, doing homework, or just discussing life. We have been living together for three years. We definitely have our struggles like most roommates do, but I know that they will always be there for me.
They have greatly impacted my college career. They are usually the first people I see when I wake up and the last before I go to sleep. Being in the honors program together has made us push each other to do better, even when we think we can’t. There have been many times throughout the years that they have supported me, but one that stands out happened last semester. I lost my grandfather in November, and he had been sick for over a year. They were both there for me through it all, always making sure I was okay. When I found out that he had passed they were the first people I told, and while I was at home with my family, they checked up on me. This may seem like a small thing but knowing that they cared enough to make sure I was okay and doing whatever they could to make it better, was everything to me.

They are always going to be a main part of my college career. We have been together through the good times and the bad times. We have laughed, cried, and vented together. They are more than my friends; they are my family. My roommates have also added to my experience of confidence. They help me see that I can always believe in myself and that is something I will be forever grateful for and I am confident in knowing that I have a peaceful and supportive environment to come back to every day.

My social life subsystem is an important one to me. Having people who care about you and support you is incredibly important in college. As I previously mentioned when discussing my Ted Talk, having people who believe in you can greatly increase your confidence. Having a strong support system is so important in college, because you are constantly trying to figure things out. Everything can change so quickly and you need people to fall back on when you feel like you are drowning.
The input in this system has been the amazing friendship I have been given. The output makes me a more confident person, but the output is also that I have learned how to be a good friend in turn. I give the same loyalty and kindness back to the people who have given it to me. I have learned that being there for someone is one of the most important things you can do, and I will take that with me for the rest of my life.

Subsystem 3: Professional Life

Gaining professional experience through college is incredibly important because it helps you to find jobs in the future. I was lucky enough to get professional experiences. My two artifacts for this subsystem, are my housing ambassador polo and my internship badge.

During my freshman year I realized that I desperately needed employment, and without a car it had to be on campus. I applied to numerous jobs that I never heard back from. One day an email was sent to the student body about being a housing ambassador. I deleted the email at first, not really interested nor aware of what it entailed. However, my roommate who had also received it read it, and told me what it was about. I decided to apply, not really expecting much. About a week later I got an interview, and shortly thereafter I was offered a position as a housing ambassador. Though I desperately needed a job, this was not the only reason that I accepted it. For me, seeing housing was such an integral part of the college decision process, and made me that much more excited for college when I saw where I’d be living. I wanted to be able to give the same experience to potential students. Because of this job my next artifact is my housing ambassador polo.
I have now been a housing ambassador for three years. I give tours of housing to prospective students and their parents, and I love sharing my school with them. This job has given me great work experience and good friends. However, it has helped with my confidence too.

Public speaking is a huge part of my future career, and a skill I’m constantly working on. To be able, to stand in front of a group of 30 high school students and their parents, and tell them about housing has made me a much more confident public speaker. I am relatively good public speaker, but to be able to get such vital experience will help me immensely in the future.

At this point in college I must have given hundreds of tours, but there was one tour in particular, my sophomore year, that truly impacted me. On my tour that day I had a woman and her daughter in my group. After I finished my tour, and everyone else had already left, they stayed behind. We had an enjoyable conversation and parted our separate ways.

Last year, I saw my old roommate, Stevie, in the Union, the same roommate who had originally told me about the housing ambassador job. She was with a friend from her sorority, and as I was saying hello to them, the girl, Alex, looked at me and said, “I don’t know if you remember me. I was on your housing tour last year and you spoke with my mom and I after the tour. I just want you to know that you’re one of the main reasons I’m at Charlotte.”

This moment impacted me so much more than I originally thought. At first I did not know how to react, but as I thought about her words more and more, it hit me. My tour and conversation caused this girl to choose my school. It was the first time I had anyone recognize me from my tours, but knowing that the job I love made a difference in this girl’s life made me ecstatic. I haven’t had anyone else come up to me since, but it doesn’t matter to me, because this
one time was enough. This is why I do this job, because I love my school and I want others to love it too. This experience, along with the housing ambassador experience as a whole, has given me a confidence I never thought I’d have. I can go in front of a group of thirty or more people, and give them a tour without fear. It has become such a regular part of my day here and this helps me be more confident in classes and other experiences.

My next artifact is my internship badge. This semester I started an internship at the American Red Cross. I have already gained so much experience in the few months I have been there. One of the most insightful things to me was sitting in on a meeting. In the meeting they were having a discussion about getting ahead of the story before the media does. This way you can give the correct factual information, instead of giving the media time to come to their own conclusions. This was something that I had learned recently in my Crisis Communication class. While I had been given examples in my class on how these things should work, seeing them in action made it so real for me. I am a very hands-on learner, so learning the ins and outs of this career that I have learned so much about over the years has made me excited for my own future career.

This internship has also given me the confidence I need for my future. I will be graduating this May, and plan on finding a job in the public relations field. My main project for this internship is a social media campaign for Red Cross Month which happens in the month of March. I am responsible for preparing the posts and pictures for my campaign, and I learned how to add them to Hoot Suite, which is website that sends social media to multiple pages and platforms at once. Getting the experience of helping to run these pages is so rewarding, and the positive feedback I have received gives me confidence in my ability to do this job.
This internship is giving me great experience for the future and I have confidence in myself and my work. This internship has also given me the confidence to know that I have chosen the right field. I am loving what I am doing and excelling. I know that this is what I’m meant to do, and that is so important to me. This input is effecting a constantly evolving output that will continue to grow once I start my career.

This subsystem is especially important now that I am about to graduate and move completely into the professional world. I am lucky that I am able to have these experiences and prepare for my future. Once again this system is dynamic; it is constantly evolving. I will adapt with whatever job I get and continue to adapt as I move through my career. I have also gained confidence through my experience because I know that I am a hard worker who is capable of taking on the next challenge in my life.

**Subsystem 4: Judaism**

This subsystem only has one artifact, but it is also one of my most important subsystems. Judaism is the one constant that has been with me before I even started college. It is incredibly important to me. My final artifact is my mezuzah.

A mezuzah is described as “a daily reminder – and a public declaration – of Jewish identity and faith. Though mezuzah literally means "doorpost," it commonly refers to a scroll of parchment containing biblical verses, placed on the doorpost. The mezuzah recalls the Exodus from Egypt, when the lamb's blood smeared on the doorpost "identified" the Jewish homes that God passed over during the plague of the first born.” (Aish.com). My mezuzah is important to
me for a few reasons. The first reason is because my mezuzah represents my Judaism in college. This mezuzah hangs on my door frame in my apartment here, and is a constant reminder.

My Jewish identity has always been a strong and important part of my life. However, in college it changed and evolved. I wasn’t constantly surrounded by it like I had been previously, and at first it stressed me out. I couldn’t have Shabbat (the Jewish Sabbath) dinner with my family or celebrate every minor holiday like I used to. At first, I felt like I was being a bad Jew; I wasn’t doing what I was meant to.

It took some time, but over these four years I have realized that I can express my Judaism in different ways than before, and that’s okay. Being a Jew means that I am lucky enough to be able to express my Judaism “religiously” and “culturally”. So many of my Jewish friends who did not have the same Jewish background that I do, think they are also bad Jews.

After hearing this so many times, and having doubts about my own “Jewishness”, I started disliking this idea. I came to believe that if I am proud of my Judaism and will stand up for it, and if I love and support Israel, then I am not a bad Jew at all. I still love celebrating all the holidays and participating in the more “religious” acts, but if others don’t, then that doesn’t make them a worse Jew than me. This evolution of my Jewish identity gave me the confidence that no matter what I do in my life, my Jewish identity will always be strong, even it continues to evolve.

The second reason it is important to me is because I purchased it myself in Israel last December. I was born in Israel, and have been there twice before, one of those times for three months, this trip was very different for me. When I went to Israel the first two times, I went with my Jewish schools. I was in a class full of people who had approximately the same amount of
Jewish knowledge as I did. We learned these things together, so we were considered on the “same level”.

When I went to Israel last December, I went on birthright, a program that gives free trips to Israel for Jewish young adults. While the rules used to be that you could not go on a trip if you had been before, about a year before I went, they changed the rules, and I was finally eligible. One of the girls in my sorority, Rhiannon, is also Jewish, and she had never been. We decided to go together. We were not very close, but I was excited to know at least one other person on trip.

When we arrived in Israel, I realized that this trip was going to be very different from my last ones. As opposed to having classmates with the same extensive knowledge as me, I was with a great number of people, who for the most part, did not know much at all. This trip to them was so important, so that they could learn more about themselves and their Jewish identity. I learned so much about myself on this trip as well.

I learned not to take my past experiences for granted. I often forget that not all Jews I meet get the privilege of learning as much as I got to. On many of the trips we went on, I would share my own knowledge that I had learned and also explained things to some who were curious. I even helped some of my group members learn how to use Israeli money, called Shekels. It was such an eye-opening experience and I got to see Rhiannon, and the others, grow and start understanding their religion and culture more deeply.

This trip gave me a different kind of confidence. It gave me the confidence in the other Jews my age, that our generation will continue Judaism and never lose it. Even if we aren’t as religious as the generations who came before us. Judaism is not only a religion but also very
much a culture, and seeing how proud my group members were about who they were, makes me confident that we will survive and thrive.

This input was a little different than my others, because my strong Jewish identity started long before I came to college. However, it was exposed to different kinds of Jewish experiences. These input experiences have helped change and evolve my Jewish identity output. I realize that things are not always the same for everyone, and that’s ok. Everyone does things differently, but all ways should be appreciated.

Conclusion

Throughout my life I have always felt different. Not many people have lived on three different continents. This experience definitely hindered my confidence. Being the new girl in a small class is hard, but that on top of a new culture is incredibly difficult. Eventually I adjusted, but it always affected me and my confidence.

When I was younger, I didn’t like being different. I wanted to be like everyone else. I wanted to feel like I truly belonged somewhere. Now, I am thankful for my experiences. I’ve come to realize how lucky I am that I was able to experience so many different cultures and people. The acceptance of who I am, along with the college experiences I mentioned, have helped the growth of my self-confidence.

Through these experiences I have found that confidence can be shown in different ways and that everyone can view it differently. Because of these experiences, I have a support system that helps increase my confidence. I have the confidence to speak in front of large groups of people. I have the confidence to stand up for my beliefs. I have the confidence for my future career. And most importantly, I have found confidence in myself.
I truly found my place at UNC Charlotte, and while graduating is one of the scariest things I have ever done, I have the confidence in myself to face whatever life after college has to offer. The experiences I had at college are so important to me and I would not be who I am today without them. My college system is coming to an end and my subsystems will start to change, but they will always be an important part of my life. These subsystems make up the system of who I am, the system of me.


