

Eden Haven-Martinez: Focused and Determined to Find the Right Direction Facilitator's Guide¹

Discussion

The case, *Eden Haven-Martinez: Focused and Determined to Find the Right Direction*, is instructive in helping students understand that being open to change is a part of the educational process and graduate school experience. Too many students believe they have to know exactly the particular job or career they want in order to move forward, but Eden's broad ideas about self-sufficiency constitute her primary goalpost. Students should understand that moving is often part of the advanced degree process, and a student moving from community college to a four year university and on to graduate school may ultimately attend three different schools in three different locations. Eden's determination to find a good path is assisted by a strong adherence to her goal. By keeping this in mind, she is able to take stock of her options and make an informed decision to go forward, even when she feels something hasn't gone as planned. The case can be used to help students think about making goals and also revising goals when something doesn't go according to their idealized notion. The case is an example of resilience, determination and tenacity.

Abstract

The case illustrates the academic career of Eden Haven-Martinez, who has just completed an interview at UC Davis for the teacher credential/Masters program when the reader first encounters her at the beginning of the case. Eden has already attended four different schools to earn her bachelors degree and TESOL certificate, and recently has been employed working with autistic children. However, more education has always been a primary value, one she has made sure to articulate to her husband, Victor. The couple had ambitiously headed to CSU Humboldt for their first year of college after completing high school in Santa Maria, CA, but had quickly learned that there was more to higher

¹ This facilitator's guide accompanies the case of the same title and is to be used for class instruction and discussion. It was prepared by Sylvia Sensiper, PhD, Director of the Guardian Professions Program, Office of Graduate Studies, UC Davis. The following have provided funding for the GPP: The Stuart Foundation, the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust, The California Wellness Foundation and the University of California Office of the President.

education than just more complex classes. Almost immediately they had decided it was more reasonable, for both financial and practical reasons, to return home to Santa Maria and finish two years at the community college before moving on for a four year degree. Within two years Eden had transferred to UC San Diego to complete her BA in Linguistics and then applied to Masters programs at various CSUs. But even though she did a thorough check of her intended program, she had ultimately not been comfortable with the course of study. Deciding to only complete the TESOL certificate part of the program at CSU Fresno, Eden had returned to Santa Maria and begun to study for the CSET tests required by the state of California for teachers working in the public schools. Shortly after, she learned about the new opportunities with the UC Davis Guardian Professions Program.

Pedagogy

The class discussion could follow Eden's trajectory and decision-making process and then lead to an open-ended discussion of goal setting. Ideally students should research the programs they plan to attend, both undergraduate and graduate programs, and meet with faculty, staff and students to get a sense of the micro-culture and if they will feel comfortable studying on any given campus. But things may still not work out. Deciding on a new course of action is understandable and admirable and students need to learn how to set goals AND revisit and re-set their goals.

Teaching points:

1. Formulating a broad goal that allows for flexibility and opportunity
 2. What to do when you find the right program isn't for you
 3. Planning to move with a partner
 4. Support for alumni of care at the Graduate School level
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1. **Formulating a broad goal that allows for flexibility and opportunity:** Many students think they have to name a professional goal before they can even consider graduate school, but usually having a broader goal can be more useful as a student moves forward. Exploring graduate programs, talking with professors and graduate students, attending information sessions, and picking the brains of professionals can help students understand how they might begin to develop a career and how graduate school fits into that picture. Eden's very broad goal of becoming self-sufficient allows her a lot of flexibility, but she also engages in career preparation by attending meetings at UC San Diego where she learns about careers for linguistics majors. She also employs good strategic thinking by visiting the different Masters programs to which she is applying. When her plan to complete a Masters at CSU Fresno does not work out, Eden is actually flexible enough to shift gears, complete her TESOL certificate and move into a teaching career. Although it might appear to some that she gave up on her Masters in Linguistics, a wider view reveals that she was simply responding to her more profound goal to become self-sufficient and it became clear there was another avenue that would get her to that point.
 2. **What to do when you find the right program isn't for you:** Eden did her best to determine what Masters program she should attend and visited the campuses, but still

found that her program was ultimately not a good fit. In addition to experiencing difficulties with the program, Eden also may have under-estimated the difficulties with moving to Fresno. It can take some time to get one's bearings in a new situation and Eden needed to find a job and acquire a car. She also did not find that the foster youth support program at CSU Fresno could provide her much in the way of services. When determining what program might be a good fit, a student should also take into consideration location, the costs of getting settled, transportation, and what kind of support network is available. Students, however, should also take note of Eden's flexibility in decision-making and her ability to re-focus on a new goal of completing a teaching credential.

- 3. Planning to move with a partner:** Moving to another city to attend a graduate program can be stressful, and may be even more so if a student is married or has a partner or children. This may even determine what schools a student applies to or how far they are willing to travel (See the case titled *Eric Lehman: The Advanced Degree Trajectory* for an example of a student whose graduate school choices are constrained by family) Students can be asked to consider at what point in their lives would they want to attend graduate school and various options can be discussed. Depending on the degree type, many programs have online components or weekend classes: this is true mostly of MBAs and other professional degrees. Students could discuss the trade-offs between going to school full-time or part-time for any given career trajectory.
- 4. Support for alumni of care at the Graduate School level:** When Eden moved to CSU Fresno to work on her Masters degree, she was hopeful that the university would have a support program similar to what she found at UC San Diego. "If you're a former foster youth you tend to be independent and I liked that they [UC San Diego GSP] let us have that freedom but were also there when we needed them. I know some people went to more events and some people went to less and they just let you have the choice." However, Eden found that support at CSU Fresno was primarily for undergraduates. To date, there are few designated support programs in California with the mission to assist alumni of care at the graduate level. Many undergraduate programs will allow students to attend undergraduate events but will not provide other services. Funding is limited and the primary focus has been on serving undergraduates. However, there are other kinds of resources at the graduate level that students might investigate if they are concerned about needing assistance. Discussion of this point could ask students to think where they might find support if they needed it. Many universities are hiring diversity officers and other personnel whose mission is to assist under-represented students. In the future there may be more programs dedicated to assisting former foster youth apply to and attend graduate school.

Note: At the conclusion of the discussion, it can be revealed that Eden was, in fact, accepted to the teacher credential/Masters program at UC Davis and Victor was accepted to CSU Sacramento. The couple moved to the area in August of 2014 and both continued with their education.