



Portrait of a Graduate

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8th Grade, GSL

- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
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- Bachelor's degree in Applied Behavioral Analysis '22
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True Ventures is an early stage venture capital firm that invests in smart people doing weird things. We're industry agnostic and follow where our founders go. I was first introduced to True through their fellowship program where I worked as a product manager for one of their portfolio companies, Hatch. That summer I fell in love with the work of True and, more importantly, the team. They must have liked me enough to keep me around, and I joined the investment team earlier this year.

I changed my major nine times while at Carolina. I never really settled on one and, instead, designed my own interdisciplinary major in Behavioral Data (my dad still asks me what that even means). Clearly, I was not decisive in what I wanted to pursue, and at my most insecure moments, this terrified the type-A part of me. However, in hindsight, it was the most fruitful way to spend my college career because I got to be excited about many distinct areas without ever feeling tied to one.

When I discovered True and the work of venture capital, I realized that there is actually a job that allows you to do just that: learn about wildly interesting ideas and meet the smartest people working on them, every day! Needless to say, I was sold. My days are spent meeting people who are creating technologies that are changing the way humans interact with each other and operate today as we know it. It's an incredible feeling to walk into every meeting and think this might be the one – the one to create a life changing biotechnology or mitigate climate change or expand financial freedom to all.

Our job at True is to empathetically connect with a company founder's ideas and excitement and translate their vision to those who don't see it yet. That work is all about people. The same skill set that is required to be a good friend is required of a good early stage investor. When I think of where I learned that, it's not in any college lecture hall or online seminar; it's at GSL, in all the great and messy moments from Miss Lee's playground to the Nantahala River. GSL gave me the space to mess up and learn to love better, and taught me how to trust others and myself – and that's maybe the most important skill I practice in my job today.

GSL teachers have a special ability to ensure students feel seen. They let us spend hours sitting on top of desks during lunch asking them questions about their lives, they entertained our antics on class trip bus rides, they stood by us when we were frustrated on the court, and above all, they saw us not for who we were then but who they believed we could become. I am certain I would not have had the confidence to discern what I want and then to ask for it if it had not been for my GSL teachers modeling to me that I deserved to be in whatever room I dreamed to be in.

When I tell my college friends that I'm texting my middle school English teacher or sitting by my fourth grade teacher at church, they sort of take a pause. I try to explain to them that this is normal, but then I'm reminded, it's not! And for that reason, even more important.

The advice I'd give GSL students today is to go where good people are, and once you find them, hold on to them. Many of them might be sitting next to you at lunch or in Lass Hall. All the rest works out as long as you hold on to the good ones (and try to be one yourself). Oh, and ask a lot of questions – always, and about everything.

And if in 10 years you find yourself starting a company, you know where to find me! :)

GRACE-ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL
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