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Growing up in Lafayette at a private Catholic school, I always felt like the path of my life was paved already for me. From Pre-k until senior year of high school, everyone I grew up with was expected to fit into the expectation of what a Catholic preppy student should look like. This expectation at times was hard. I was on the shy side and never someone that stuck out to most. Senior year hit along with the realization that my time at STM was ending. This chapter coming to an end made me wonder “Who am I?” and “Why do I not feel like I am myself?” with COVID-19 hitting not helping either. I felt pressure to be someone I wasn’t and attend the state college that most of my friends and classmates attended. Weeks went by of feeling so beyond lost and beginning to wonder if there would ever be a place for me somewhere. After reflection and prayer, I realized that attending LSU which was the expectation for me and my friends would only make me feel more lost. Causing a lot of shock and confusion to my family and friends, I made the wild decision to create a new path and go to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette which was only 10 mins away from my house.

Every week during COVID the Dean of Students hosted a new student zoom to get freshmen excited, and I attended every week. At first, it was extremely awkward and lowkey a little embarrassing, but I felt a need every week to go back. During these zooms, she would talk about involvement, leadership, and building a legacy on campus. During this period, I decided that I wanted to be unapologetically myself and to become an inspirational leader. I wanted to leave a legacy at the University and leave knowing that I took every chance I could to better myself. From SOUL camp to going through sorority recruitment, I told myself that if I was going to stay in Lafayette that I would put myself out there and take risks. I didn’t want to leave UL regretting my decision and wishing that I would have taken the easy option out. I wanted to be someone that stood out for the way that she treated people, led, and lived her life and not someone that fits into the stereotype that others put me in. Tri Sigma and my sisters empowered me early in my college experience to continue to pave the path that I want to build. I began to get involved in anything and everything like Tri Sigma, Student Orientation Staff, UL Lafayette Sales Team, Beacon Club, and Student Ambassador. I found so much joy and purpose in leading and learning that I never felt in high school. From hosting New Student Convocation to being awarded Outstanding Freshmen of the Year for the University, I can truthfully say that I am proud of the person and Sigma that I am today. Without having chosen to form a new path, I wouldn’t be who I am today.

The path less traveled caused a lot of heartache, trial, and self-doubt, but life is way too short to not be constantly trying to figure out how to better yourself daily. As Dolly Parton perfectly describes, we can create our own path and be changing while moving ever forward in our lives. Tri Sigma has empowered me to be an inspired leader and to continue to change my path daily towards a woman who exceeds our values.