Life not at home

Written by Oliva Cabaleiro
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Hi, my name is Oliva Cabaleiro. I came all the way from North Carolina to Dominican University, 2,860 miles away, to be exact. A lot of people ask me why I chose to go so far away from home, so this week I'll be explaining the pros and cons of why I decided to move across the country for university. Hopefully, some of y'all (we say "y'all" in North Carolina) reading this can relate.

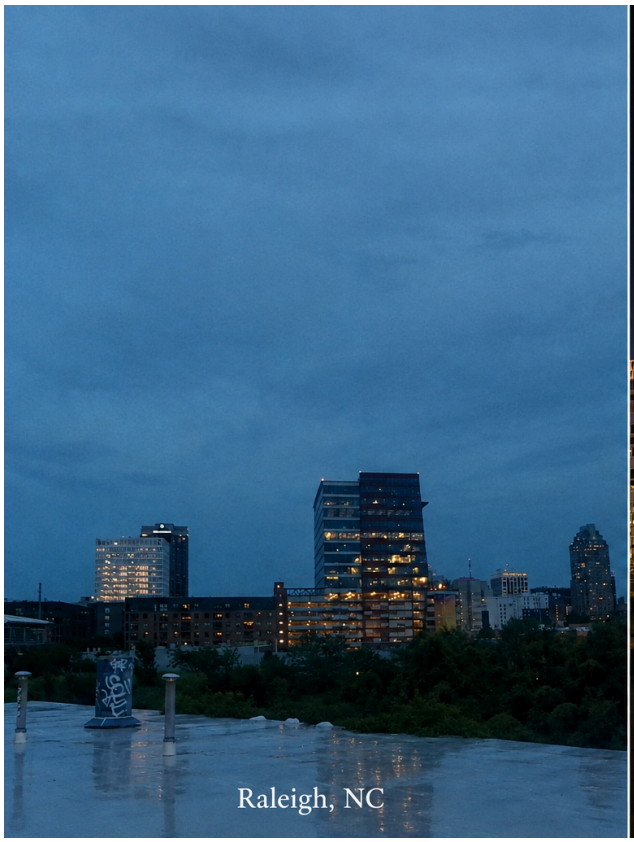
One of the biggest pros for me has been getting a fresh start. Being thousands of miles away means that I'm not surrounded by the same people or situations I grew up with. No one here knows the old version of me, which gives me the chance to meet people, make new friends and figure out who I want to be. I get to make my own choices and create a new life without feeling like I have to be the same person I was back home. Another big part of moving to California has been getting to experience new things. The weather here is very different from North Carolina. Back home, it's usually hot, humid and rainy, but here it's cooler and more comfortable. I've also tried a lot of new foods since being here. Even the stores are different, and I've noticed that everything feels more organized and clean.

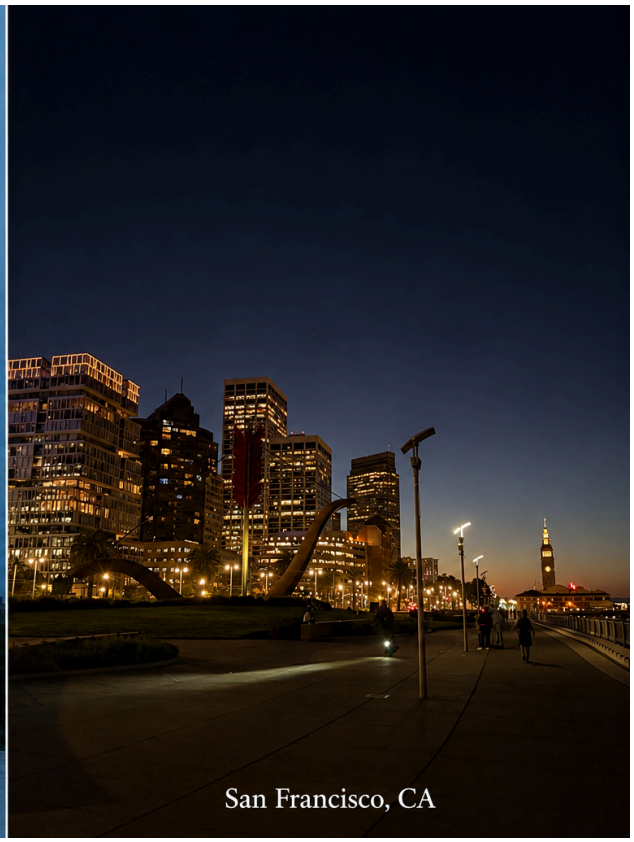
I've also gotten to explore places I had never been before. I was able to see San Francisco at night, which was super cool for me, and I've even been to the pier and Chinatown. Being somewhere completely different has allowed me to experience things that I probably wouldn't have if I had stayed in North Carolina. The community on campus has also been a big positive. Since it's a smaller school, you can get closer with your professors and actually get to know them. There are also lots of clubs and groups to join, which makes it easier to meet new people and have new experiences. Having professors who are easy to talk to and willing to help has also made college feel less overwhelming. Of course, moving 2,860 miles away isn't perfect. One of the hardest parts has been being homesick. I can't just go home whenever I want to see my friends or family. Even the time-zone difference makes calling people harder. And honestly, I miss my dog the most.

There are days when I feel alone and wish I was back home with my friends, where I could see them whenever I wanted. It's hard knowing that you don't have the people you're used to having nearby. Moving your stuff across the country and getting used to a completely different environment can also be stressful. At the same time, being in a new place gives you the opportunity to meet new people who can become your support system. I'm still adjusting, but I'm learning that being uncomfortable sometimes is part of growing and becoming more independent.

At the end of the day, moving across the country has definitely been an adjustment. I've had moments where I miss home and wonder what it would be like if I had stayed. But I've also gotten experiences I wouldn't have had if I never left. I've met new people, explored a

completely different part of the country, and gotten the chance to start a new chapter of my life. So, even with all the cons, I think the move was worth it for everything I've been able to experience so far and whatever else is waiting for me.


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