

Samuel Patton, 2017 Scholarship Applicant

Agriculture has always been a passion and I've been around it my entire life. Since I was small, I've grown and raised many things on our ranch. When I was little, I had chickens. These chickens became one of the best lessons in business. I would collect the eggs and sell them to my neighbors. This is where I first learned about supply and demand. Too many customers and not enough eggs meant I lost business to other sellers. Too many eggs and not enough customers would equal mom cooking me the surplus for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Chickens also taught me the vocabulary of cost, profit, net, and gross. I would take the money I made from selling my eggs and first, buy feed. Once I covered my cost in feeding the chickens, the residual became my profit. I quickly learned the lesson that what you net does not equal what you gross! From pumpkins and rabbits, to cattle and corn, I have grown or raised just about everything. For the past five years I have had a veggie stand and I sold the things I grew in our garden. The people loved my veggies and I made friends who came back every year to my stand. This experience also led to a lesson in business. My first attempt at selling my product was a giant flop. I sat in the sun for hours without a single customer. When I came home disappointed, my mom explained that it might be because folks didn't know what I was sitting by the road for. This became a lesson in marketing. I made signs, put up a nice umbrella, used attractive table clothes and display boxes for my veggies, and made business cards to give to everyone that stopped by. I learned a lot about business marketing that first summer of selling.

Eventually, I became interested in bigger endeavors, choosing to raise, show, and sell beef cattle. When I turned nine, I raised my first steer and learned how to handle, feed, groom, and show. Lucky for me, I had two older sisters who showed steers already, so they were a lot of help. This experience led to even more interesting lessons in business. There is a lot of money involved in raising a market animal. Because of this, I learned to control cost by researching economical feeds and negotiating purchase price with local store owners. I negotiated those feed discounts by offering advertising to business owners. I did well in the show arena which put me in a great position to advertise the feed I used. Keeping control of project costs also led me to read crop market reports. I began to understand how pricing would fluctuate with cost, demand, and even government control. These lessons and more brought me to where I am at now, pursuing an education and career in agribusiness. I am on the constant watch for opportunities to increase my knowledge in the field. The speaker series put on by the Nevada County Fairground Foundation was exactly one of these opportunities, offering the experience and knowledge of great business professionals to learn from.

To be successful, a person must be motivated. The speaker series was a great chance to hear from some very successful and motivated people. Mike Naggiar is a very motivated individual unafraid of change, and when he spoke, he gave me the feeling that he loved what he did. I appreciated hearing that you can make a living doing something you love, rather than

just working a job to make ends meet. Mr. Naggiar had a contagious enthusiasm which I found to be very helpful. After that first speaker event, I felt very motivated to get going on my goals. I immediately started looking into degree programs and colleges. I wanted to ride high on that motivation to get forward progress on my path to success.

Finances can be a road block to success. Speaker Debra Ortiz shared that attending a junior college is a money saving step for students trying to make ends meet. At times I have felt discouraged about being able to pay for college. Our family has been through a lot with my mom being diagnosed with bone cancer and disabled with surgery. At times, our struggles have made it feel like college was out of my reach. Ms. Ortiz made me realize that my education was obtainable and that finances would not be a road block. I started making changes after that speaker event. I knew that I would need to switch jobs to make more money and allow for flexibility to attend college. I now work at Rebies Auto Parts where they are flexible with my school schedule and give me enough hours to make my ends meet. I also began to research financial aid options for attending college and have since applied for my financial aid. After listening to Ms. Ortiz, I feel confident that finances will not block my road to success.

Lifelong learning is a key to being a flourishing individual. At times, I can be stubborn and set in my ways, which is not good for an 18 year old. Anita Oberbauer shared that change is a normal part of being successful. She shared that she had altered her path many times while obtaining her education. This made it clear to me that I better be more flexible and accepting of change. I used to feel that once I committed to my choice of major I had to stick to it no matter what. I now realize that if my area of interest changes, I can be flexible and modify my goals and educational plan. Ms. Oberbauer shared that she was constantly in a position to learn. This became a key factor in getting her to where she is now. I now understand that being stagnant will hold you back from success. This realization has led me to register in summer personal development classes at Sierra College. Rather than focusing only on my academic goals, I want to help myself with life learning topics as well. I believe this type of well-rounded learning will lead me to success.

The speaker series was a great opportunity to gain insight from successful people. I attended each event and I think all of the guests were very well spoken and did a nice job talking about their road to success. I feel very excited and motivated about my future. Speaker Caroline Beteta encouraged us to not be afraid to try out new paths. I intend to embrace that approach to my future. Attending the series gave me the opportunity to evaluate myself as a person along with my academic and career goals. Not only did I identify areas of weakness, but also areas of strength. I intend to work diligently on those weaknesses so I can reach my goals. The speakers, and the information they provided, helped motivate me to get started on my future and career goals. I am now enrolled in college classes and have started my new job. I attribute my motivation to what I learned through the speaker series. That motivation has led me to take the first very concrete steps to becoming a successful individual.