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ODYSSEY ORACLE

IMAGES OF SECOND SEMESTER



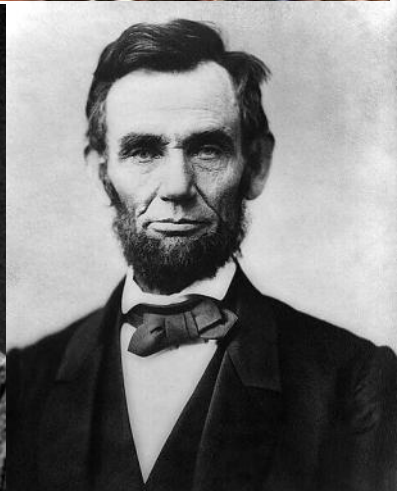
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Emily Auerbach, Project Director; Oracle Editor
Beth McMahon, Oracle Designer

eauerbach@dcs.wisc.edu
608-262-3733/712-6321

www.odyssey.wisc.edu



MAKING A CASE FOR SEMESTER TWO



Jasmine Banks

Why should I be allowed to keep going in the Odyssey Project?

This is a question that I never thought I would be asked because I looked Emily straight in the eye during my interview and told her

that I wouldn't quit—not when it's 20 degrees below zero outside and my car isn't working or for any other reason, for that matter. According to Emily that day, no excuse was a good excuse.

With her faith in me and my determination not to be a “quitter” again, I have made it to class on time and been prepared 9 times out of 10. I have been enlightened and hoped that I have enlightened others. As I stated in the paper “Alternative Forms of Learning,” I am feeling myself going from the passenger seat into the driver's seat. Not only am I transforming but I am truly enjoying and proud of my transformation.

What I intend to do once this class is over is still in the making, but I am praying for the courage to continue on until my name is called as I walk across a college stage to receive my diploma. To do what, I haven't a clue, but greatness is a serious possibility.

I should be allowed to continue on this journey because I have made an honest effort to take complete advantage of the seat that I have been given at the table of thirty. I am truly looking forward to the day that I can “pay it forward.”

What have I learned along the way? I've been truly “mis-educated,” and this is my opportunity to “re-educate” myself. I've learned not to judge a book by its cover

(Sorry, Craig Werner), I've learned to have an open mind (the more open minded the more I can learn), and I've learned to trust myself.

Last but not least, why should I continue on this journey? I learned a while ago to be silent and pay attention to what God is saying to me. Two years ago I applied to the Odyssey Project. I was sent a letter stating that I had missed the deadline and given information regarding other opportunities. I interpreted that as God saying it wasn't my time.

The following year, I was sent information suggesting that because of the circumstances from the previous year, I was encouraged to reapply. I did, and lo and behold to my surprise I was one of the chosen few out of many. In my heart and because I listened, I believe that my time is now. Not only do I believe that, but Emily did/does too because she chose me. Why, I do not and may never know, but the most important thing is that she did. The strongest argument of all for my continuing in Odyssey is that during my interview with Emily she stated that if I were to quit in the middle she would not be able to replace a seat at the table of thirty.



**Lewis Black**

This program is a great opportunity for me. There is not a chance I am going to mess it up. I feel blessed to even have a chance to hear about the Odyssey Project. I think this is God saying to me, "Son, this is another step to going where you're trying to get, so take it." And I am.

**Tanatnan Chaipang**

English is my second language, and I've learned how to speak and communicate with other people a lot better because of this class. I always wished that one day I would be able to read a whole book in English and be able to write better in English. It's not easy at all, but I'm trying. Many people ask me why I'm studying English and going back to school. I am 36 years old and have my massage studio, so why don't I just focus on my job since I don't have much money? I'm asked a lot of questions, and it bothers me. I answered them, but it didn't seem to go through their ears or their brain or their feelings at all. They still question why I'm going back to school.

After a car accident, I had a hard time figuring out how to live without money and how to find a place to stay because I can't work. Being without family here, I felt insecure and hurt when I couldn't support myself. I

ended up living with my boyfriend's dad for two months. Sometimes my boyfriend says stuff that hurts my feelings as well, like "You're going to school without any plan? What're you going for? You're not even getting a grade, and you have no plan at all."

I am so sick of these kind of questions, but it seems there's nothing I can do. I need a peaceful place to myself. This is the way to help me focus because nothing will change my goal. I know about my plan, and I am happy with what I'm doing. I'm moving out on my own again soon and hope I don't have to deal with these kinds of questions much anymore.

Anyway, I'm so excited for next semester. I have tried to study very hard with all my worksheets. Other students might need only 20 minutes to finish reading four pages, but for me it takes about three hours or more because I also have to look up the words I don't know. I tried to put the words together to make it make sense as much as I can. That doesn't bother me. I have never given up, and I'm happy I'm doing this.



Odyssey, you're helping me so much. I spend lots of my time following your guidance every week, and I want to complete the program along with everybody. I'm so excited seeing everybody's writing and reading, and one day I hope I can do that, too.



Tracey Cherry

Why do I think I should continue this journey? For one, I am not a quitter; I am a fighter. I know why I started this class. We will be reading a lot. I know sometimes I have a hard time reading and understanding. But this class helps with vocabulary words and with a different American history than I studied in high school. In class we write about different topics that are put in the Oracle every week. Even though I feel behind in homework, I come and get help from Kathy or Emily. I love my classmates, and Emily has given a positive role model for everyone that has been in Odyssey. I just want to get more education and training because the occupation I have

now is not a job with a good salary, and it is hard on your body. This has always been one of my goals: to go to college and continue my education. When I interviewed with Emily, I was put on the waiting list. When she called that there was an opening, I gave her my word that I would work hard and be in class every Wednesday.



Eunice Conley

The Odyssey program has motivated me to become a part of society again. I feel more confident in the decisions I make now, and my children like the person I am becoming.

I consider now the long term effects that I have on my entire environment. I am a lot more positive and confident now in my striving to reach my goals that I set for myself.

I have suffered from depression and anxiety issues. They haven't gone away, but coping with them hasn't been as difficult as in the past. I plan to continue my education in spite of adversity. My finances don't allow me a lot of advantage; however, I can go as far as my esteem will allow me to go, and Odyssey has definitely improved my self-esteem. Everything inspires me. The first semester has been hard, but as history has taught me, people like Frederick Douglass can overcome despite all the obstacles, and so can I. I think I can benefit



others even more once I help my own self. My children are watching to see how I handle the one job I expect of them: education of self. Overcoming obstacles put before me is what Odyssey is about to me. Emily, Diane, and Jacob seem to love to be a help and support to my kids and me. They seem to understand the mother I want to be—supportive and appreciative of what God wants me to accomplish. I love the camaraderie that I have with my classmates. We all strive for excellence. The staff doesn't lord their accomplishments over our heads. They want to help us accomplish our dreams.

Though I have nothing and barely survive every month, I look forward to class on Wednesday because there is a meal that I'm not responsible for and I see my tunnel widen for me and the kids. I am like the people in the Allegory of the Cave, yet I am coming OUT!!



China Moon Crowell

The column [by Joe Robinson] in an Oracle properly named "Don't Quit" reiterates my constant struggles with balancing home, work, life, and now class. There have been times during these past three weeks that I've felt overwhelmed, but I use that as further motivation to press on, not as an excuse to call it quits and renounce my will for



further education.

Although quiet at times and preoccupied with life's distractions, a commitment is important to me, and every Wednesday distracts me from the distractions of my week. Odyssey class provides nearly three hours of knowledge and mandatory eye opening. It lets me know things aren't that bad and are getting better, even if it doesn't feel like it. From the material we read, I recognize someone is or was worse off than I was/am. My eyes were opened with the introduction to

this Odyssey program and remain exposed to all the positive and prodigious experiences that await me next semester and for the rest of my natural life.



Angelica Cuahuey

Throughout this semester, I have learned different subjects such as American History. In this class I learned about historical information including the Declaration of Independence and slavery. Since literature is not an easy subject to understand, I wanted to challenge myself to become familiar with it. As a second language learner, I was able to add new words to my vocabulary and also to improve my writing skills. I notice that there are fewer grammatical errors in my writing than a few months ago. However, my reading skills still need to improve. I am working on this by reading more often in my free time

instead of watching TV or surfing the Internet.

My goal is to become an active reader and to continue my journey as a student. I must continue to keep going in this class because I want to continue learning as much as I can. I want to help my children with their homework and be a role model for them.



Akilah Freeman

To live is to learn, and to have learned so much in so little time, I thank you so much, Emily and the Odyssey Project. I knew that when high school was over, I wanted to pursue a higher

education. Being a teen mother didn't make it easy, but I tried. I went the traditional route, applying for classes I had little knowledge of and going to school for six plus hours out of my day. Never had I felt so unhelped and ignored in a class setting. Just two months after starting a program at MATC, I had given up on school. In that same month, I attended the Odyssey Project graduation. The ceremony was beautiful. To see people get up and tell relatable but heartfelt stories of how Odyssey helped them succeed in life really touched that part in me that wanted more out of life while still here in Madison.

My mother attended the Odyssey program in 2010. After hearing the benefits of this program, I had to apply. The Odyssey program looked like the best choice for my life on the inside and out. The classes are flexible and convenient. Two semesters after being accepted, I will have six college credits. Could it get better than that? When classes started, I was nervous, but now that we're half way through the school year, I'm proud of myself. I'm ecstatic to have met amazing, powerful-minded people. I love the class!



Sharisse Hancock

I am so thankful to have made it this far in the Odyssey program. The first semester will shortly be over. We are that much closer to graduation day. This journey is really a once in a lifetime

experience. I still remember interviewing with Emily and the questions she asked. One question I'll never forget: "Sharisse, is there anything that will prevent you from coming to class?" I answered, "The only challenge I foresee is the depression side of my manic depression. However, I don't believe it will stop me from attending. I will probably be less vocal in class discussions during this time." I have been to every class and on time from the first day to the present. I feel attendance is important as well as the homework. I have also handed in every assignment on time because I value my success. I



dependable. I have not missed class, and I have been on time. My homework assignments have been turned in on time each time they're due. Odyssey is helping me to fulfill my dreams and goals, and I can't stop now. I see something in myself more than I have before, and that's to not quit. It's easy to quit, but boy does it take faith to go through to the end. I'm leaning on my faith to continue to do my best to strive towards my goal. I am asking the Odyssey Project to allow me to keep going on this journey. It's only just begun!

Shalonda Hilliard-Jones



I really enjoy coming to the Odyssey class every Wednesday night. I know I'm probably the most shy and quiet one in class, but I know I listen and take in information given by my classmates. I love to hear their opinions and thoughts on different topics we talk about. I have learned so much, and I would love to continue the second part of this Odyssey journey. Hopefully second semester I will open up more, and maybe my classmates will take in information I provide. I'm eager and ready for 2013 of the Odyssey Project.

believe I'm putting forth my best effort, and it is truly being recognized. When I come to class, I look forward to getting my homework back and reading Professor Emily's comments, suggestions, and notes of encouragement.

In the efforts and hard work I've put into my attendance, class discussions, studying, and homework, I feel that I am in a good position to be a student able to continue the Odyssey Program journey. Once again, I cannot express how grateful I am to be a part of the Odyssey Project 2013. This opportunity has come at a time when I am 100% willing and able to put my best foot forward. I thank God for everything he's blessed me with throughout my life and especially Professor Emily, Coach, Professors Werner, Feraca, Phillips, and all my Odyssey classmates.



Dominique Haskins

I should be allowed to keep going in the Odyssey Project for second semester because I have been





Fantasia House

Although I have faced many obstacles during this journey, I have learned a lot. I've read about Socrates. I've read amazing poetry. I soaked up so much

knowledge about the power of reading and writing and how important it is to have it as a tool in life. I look forward to every class once a week, and I have not missed one yet. I even recommended this program to my siblings, and they seem interested. The reason why I should continue with this program is so that I can prove to myself that I am committed enough to stick to something for this long and that I can get an education and work as well. I am extremely grateful to have had this opportunity, and I am excited for next semester. Next semester will be even greater.

Once I graduate from this program, I will not stop



Angela Jordan-Jackson



It's amazing how we sit around and wonder the what-ifs. But when the chance comes and you're living out one of your thoughts, you realize you are on an odyssey in the present. I feel

like there's a plant nursery living within me, and I feel sunshine and watering as I continue this odyssey. Watching all these wonderful visions dance in my mind, I continue to speak with the tools we are learning. I can't bring you into my mind any deeper, but if you were there you would see all the wonderful colors of ideas waltzing like girls with pink and blue tutus. My mind is having the time of its life in the program.

I feel blessed and privileged. I'm thanking all the teachers who give of their time, and I thank their families for sharing them. We the Odyssey students (and I do speak for my class) are grateful for this wonderful mind-opening experience. Watch us continue to grow.



Carrie Llerena Sesma

Odyssey has been a pleasure to be a part of. I look forward to coming every week so that I can catch up on my classmates' stories. For me, being around other classmates who have a common goal is exciting because they can relate to what I'm going through and help me do and understand homework. We have discussions about the content or issues relevant to class, and they are so interesting! You can't get that kind of camaraderie anywhere else. Even though we clearly all have differences of background, experiences, and views, I'm sure we can all agree that we feel comfortable that we are in the right place and exactly where we are supposed to be at this moment. We feel the enthusiasm in each other that motivates us to participate and try hard to get something good out of every class. We expect—I expect—to learn something new every day.

I feel I'm just getting started growing in this class. There's so much more I want to do. I'd like to get to know everyone better, network, and share the gifts and talents we all have. We have seen and learned lots in so little time. I'm hoping for more time to expand so that more learning can happen

and sink into my soul so it will stay with me forever.

Before I joined this class, which is such a blessing (thank you, Odyssey!), I started seeing and hearing about the program and wondered what the big deal is. I said, "Oh, it's probably not for me." But OMG! I'm so glad I was privileged to be a part. Now I'm recommending that my family and friends apply to get scholarships and experience the power of learning.

I hope to go on to take courses in Education and Arts and get a degree so my passion can then be "qualified." I want to continue doing what I love: teaching. Half the battle is won. Here's to the home stretch!



Derrick McCann

My journey with the Odyssey Project so far has been heartfelt. I have been touched by so many people's lives and stories. When I first began this class, I never knew my mind would be opened up and transformed and that I would be inspired to step out of my comfort zone, look at myself in the mirror, and ask, "Who are you, Derrick McCann? Why are you stuck in the same place when there

is a whole world waiting for you?" I have been through a lot of pain, hurt, and mistreatment from the court system in Dane County, bad relationships, and racism. I have two kids that I never had a chance to see grow up because of the racism and injustice of the Wisconsin court system. . . .

My dream is to become a musician, make music, and perform live. . . . I have been on the radio over four times as artist of the week. . . .





Not only have I enjoyed all of our professors in the class, but I also truly enjoy my classmates. They are all, every single one of them, a huge part of my life. I get to learn about other people, other situations, good and bad; I take it all in. I honestly don't know what I am going to do without my Wednesday night crew when this is all over.

I would like to continue in this program; I would like a strong finish as well. I love the challenge even though it gets difficult with the other things that are simultaneously going on in my life (work, family, children),

but I realize that my focus stays on Odyssey and finishing.

There are many things that I would like to accomplish in this course; finishing strong is the first one. The second one is to be able to give back.

This Odyssey Project has given me the confidence to speak up. . . . I feel I should be accepted for the second semester of Odyssey because I am putting forth the effort and time to open my mind to see the world through others' eyes. This class is a blessing in my life. I need the love and support at this time.



Mary Millon

When I first started Odyssey back in September, I was so eager to learn new things, as I still am, but it has really opened my mind into learning again. It was difficult at first and at times I was a bit overwhelmed by all the reading. I had not read literature like this in a long time.

As the semester crept along, I found myself really looking into my future and what I wanted to do with this newfound interest in reading and learning. I realized I liked writing. I never thought I was a good writer and still know that I need a lot of work, but my creativity has taken off. I have realized my dream of becoming a comedy writer. I love sit coms. I think I have good ideas, and I take real life scenarios and turn them into comedy sketches.





I would love for everyone to be able to have this opportunity. For those people who feel that their voice is not heard or are in a job they dislike or regret never finishing school or folks who never thought they would be able to get a college degree, I want to scream “Yes, you can!” and take them by the hand to lead them to Emily’s office!

Odyssey truly has been a gift that I never thought I would get. I enjoy every minute of it and am proud to say that I was a part of it.



James Morgan

My interest in the Odyssey Project was initiated by family, friends, and other alumni of the project. I was encouraged and amazed by what they related and by what I’d observed in

their growth—both public and private—which they attributed to having been Odyssey students.

It took a couple of years for me to work up the courage to apply because I really didn’t think I could function in an academic setting outside of prison.

Facing some issues (identity and others), I applied with Odyssey, needing and wanting

acceptance and confirmation of my humanity. The course material, instructors, and my fellow students have given me a sense of connectedness that was absent in my life for close to 30 years!

At this juncture, I think, no I know, that I belong in the Odyssey Project, to continue to learn, mature, and explore, but also to contribute in my own little way to the personal growth of my family and friends and the wider community.

To and for me, the Odyssey Project is a gift. It is a treasured gift that’s by no means something I take for granted. I appreciate and love being an Odyssey student.



Lolita Phillips

Why should I continue? Odyssey has become a part of my life, and my life has become a part of my Odyssey. I’ve learned so much already about all history, yet I

haven’t learned enough. This semester has gone by, and I do not want to be disconnected ever from the Odyssey Project. I feel like I need to come back to classes again to re-discuss Plato because it covers so much. I need Odyssey, and the people I’ve met in Odyssey are my new family. I think they need me, too. Warmest regards.



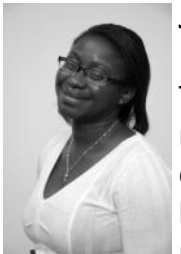


Jovenus Price Pierce

My reason for staying in the Odyssey Project is that this is where I should be, having an Odyssey Night Delight. I'm learning about the humanities, learning about Frederick

Douglass, William Blake, William Wordsworth, and Socrates. We acted the classical "A Christmas Carol." We learned about women of courage and all had to understand why our society kept slaves back. The white women were kept back also for 300 years. They make up the majority of the world's population.

Women are heads of households more than men. Women have come a long way and are voting and holding political offices. Author Toni Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize and Nobel Prize. . . . Our history tells how women have been in the front but had to take a back seat to do women's work. Men were the only ones in control.



Jovite Rayaisse

Thank you, Odyssey, for accepting me into the program. The first day of class, I felt weird myself for not being to school for a long time, but I made a promise to myself that I have to make it.

Every Wednesday I am so excited to go to class because I feel like I am in a family, not in school. The class is helping me a lot with my reading and my writing and is ameliorating my vocabulary. It makes me enjoy reading, which wasn't the case before. With homework, I am getting better in my writing and making fewer mistakes.

In this program, I learn a lot about literature and about the history of the United States. I think I am accomplishing my goal because my goal was to improve my grammar and my



vocabulary in order to be able to express myself in public or on paper.

After this class I would like to continue my study in Computer Science or Business.



Michelle Reams

The Wednesday night Odyssey class has been somewhat of a sanctuary for me this last semester. I have gone through the most challenging times ever in my life. . .

It has always been hard for me to get my thoughts on paper, but I am finding that what Emily said is



true: "The more you write, the better you'll write." I have a tendency to shy away from things that I can't do well, but practice does help. I'm not perfect yet and may never be, but I am getting better.

Reading about the courage it took women from the 17th and 18th centuries to write, be educated, and heard was inspiring. Jane Austen had to hide her ability to write and her identity. She still found a way to write and be heard. . . .

Marshall's mastery of words makes learning about their roots and meanings fun. I feel like I, too, can master words one syllable at a time. Craig gives it to you straight. He helped us see how when James Madison wrote the Federalist Papers, it was intentionally broad so that people around the world could identify with the words and ideals. Those same ideals were later used by the abolitionists and the Civil Rights Movement to help their cause.

I think this is a robust class. We get some really good stuff here. I was pleasantly surprised by the quality and knowledge of my fellow students. I am not just learning from the professors but also from my classmates. I may not be at my best, but I am learning a lot. Every week after class at 9 PM I feel a little rejuvenated. I would like to continue through the next semester to see how much more I improve.



Britney Sinclair

It's only been a couple of months but it feels like a year. I remember when I first got accepted into the Odyssey Project. It was like a new beginning. I attempted college a

couple of times, but due to finances and hardship I couldn't continue. It's a relief coming into this project knowing that every obstacle can be met. I never knew of a program that was so willing to get me where I need to go. I know that I would only be stopping myself if I don't proceed.

I can admit I was a skeptic at first. I thought there was some catch to it. Further into the program, it is a better me that is the reward. The professors are genuine, wanting us to achieve our goals. The students are supportive, even through their troubles. This program has given me a new perspective on myself and others. It has moved and shaped me to be more determined. At times it seems challenging and hard to complete assignments. After readings such as Plato, women's poetry, and Douglass, it pushes me more. Being that those of my history came so far and fought through those tough times, I know I can get through my situations.

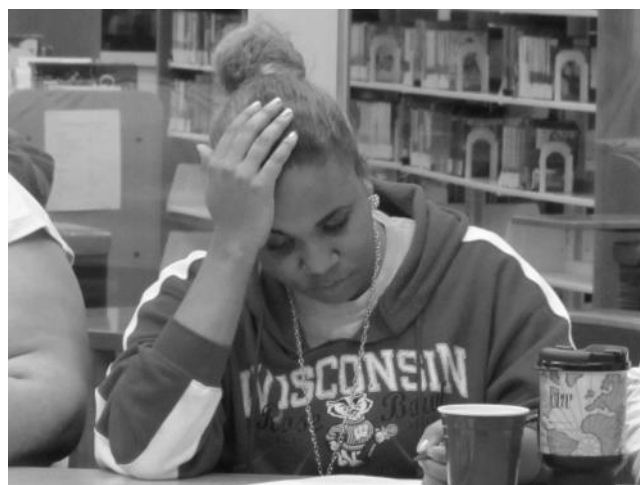
Within these months I've been through a break up, losing my children, and struggling financially. There is something about coming to class every Wednesday that makes life worth living. I cannot give up on something God planned for me. Everything happens for a reason, and there is a reason God put me with Odyssey. Odyssey is one piece of my puzzle that will complete my dream. I will finish. I need to continue this journey to keep this fire burning. If I'm not able to continue with Odyssey, the fire within me will die.



Patrice Smith

I am truly grateful for this opportunity. I couldn't imagine not finishing this journey. I have NEVER been so excited to learn as I am now. I've never appreciated school or education, for that matter. Being in this class has truly opened my eyes to a brighter future for myself and others around me. My experience in this program has encouraged me to reach for my goals and has showed me that I'm not stuck in my past or destined by my mistakes. I have grown as a woman and would like, would LOVE, the opportunity to continue to grow into the woman I know I can be.

First semester has planted the seed of encouragement; second semester will water and enable this seed to bloom and give birth to many positive pathways to success. I already feel like a



success, and I'm only halfway through. This course is truly a blessing, giving me the chance I would never have given myself.



Amber Turner

The Odyssey till this point has been an amazing journey. I have enjoyed every moment I have had with my classmates and teachers. Being in the Odyssey Project, I have learned things that I never knew; it was taught at a pace where I could understand. The Odyssey Project does more for me than I could ever know, and for that I can't say thank you enough. This project has definitely owned up to their word and given all of us more than what they have to.

I have been at a weak state in my life for a while, and my escape is Odyssey. This program is building me as a person. Everything is improving from my education to my life in general, although with struggles and trials. This program is here to guide me and push me to keep moving forward. Odyssey has my back no matter what. I want to continue my journey because I don't want to stop. I don't want to ever have the label of "Giving Up," so therefore I want to continue my journey till the end. I know this semester will end strong, and so will next semester. I'm ready to get my completion certificate and show that yes, I made it!

**Nancy Wambua**

Dear Odyssey,

Since I started this wonderful journey my life has been changed for the better because I feel like I have an excellent future ahead of me through education. The professors, classmates, books, homework, meals, and many more things are wonderful. I was nervous on the first day, but now I do wish that this journey will never come to an end. I didn't know about a lot of the people, but through reading books and the help that I always had from my tutors, I learned a lot.

Odyssey is not just a place of learning but a place where I have found peace, love, and care. I get to laugh, and it makes me feel like I'm with my own family because of the welcome that I get every Wednesday. It has helped me to open my heart and mind and help me to remove my doubts and fears. I always get all the support that I need, and I have gained more strength which I didn't have before. This journey has made me realize that my dream can come true and I can be able to achieve anything I want in life. I'm so grateful to be a part of this journey, and I'm looking forward to being given a chance to continue.

**Tosumba Welch**

I am happy to have the opportunity make a case for why I should be allowed to move on to the second semester in the Odyssey Project, a sequel to an everlasting journey of life. The

Odyssey is led by a host of professors and professor aides whose drive and determination is to expose others to free education and to give them the hope and goals to achieve.

I am surrounded by a family of classmates who have showed great empathy for one another when times get hard. Odyssey has given me hope when I thought there wasn't any and brought me back to life. It has opened my mind to new dimensions of education. Odyssey has been there for me through my past and most recent hard times.

My mother passed away December 6, 2012, and it left me feeling like everything inside me was taken with her. I was down and out, but only for a short period of time. I sat and thought about how much Odyssey has helped me discover things from inside myself, the things I was blind to, and most of all the power of higher education.

We always say the sequel to a movie is never better than the first, but in this sequel I am back stronger, more determined, and hungrier than ever before. I look forward to being a better student and classmate to complete this chapter of a never-ending journey of self-growth and unlimited education to better myself as a man and father. I will achieve success regardless of the effort and sacrifice it takes and will embrace the dignity and respect of this amazing journey.

This is my case for needing to continue

with Odyssey. This is the beginning of the great use of my newly found talents that I'm so looking forward to expressing and having a chance to share with the world.



Munroe Whitlock

I came into the Odyssey Project with a misunderstanding that this course would not be a struggle, not even considering that I had been away from school for more than twenty

years. And as I've said the misconception came from the joy that past students described as their experience from being a part of Odyssey. (My own arrogance played a part of those thoughts also.)

The reality is that I had too much on my plate for the first semester and became overwhelmed with the course and the other projects in my life. But studying the subjects in literature, art, history, government, writing, poems, vocabulary, and philosophy touched on interests that I have dreamed about in the not so distant past. It was exciting to gather and learn from the subjects that were assigned to us in the first semester and even more exciting to hear my classmates express their understanding of those assignments, to hear and even see their understanding from their points of view.

So I am anticipating the second semester. I was able to remove some items from my schedule which hindered my ability to study at the level that was needed to be able to own the knowledge from the lessons assigned. As I have stated in another writing, I understand my level of reading and comprehension and plan to set my homework schedule accordingly. My goal for the course is to learn and even re-learn subjects that I may have studied in the past, meaning study it as if I've never studied it prior to it being assigned. I look forward to studying the subjects that will be assigned next semester, and I don't care that I am not as smart as so and so or as fast witted as so and so or that I



never had some of the experiences as so and so. I'll just be glad to take in the information given in this course, study in the library system that is available to this course, and see and hear from my classmates their take on our assignments.



Michelle Whitman

This is a project that has helped me to realize the **O**pportunities that I never knew were available to me. It has put me on the path leading me in the **D**irection my life was meant to go.

Odyssey has started the process of finally **Y**oking together my past, present, and future, and I finally feel as though I have been given a **S**igh of relief from all the turmoil in my life. Odyssey has allowed me, someone who felt she had lost her place in this world, to **S**ubdue most of my fears about going back to school at my age. I have met people I can not only call friends but family who give me **E**ncouragement. I not only should but would be forever grateful to **Y**ou and Odyssey if I could be allowed to continue for a second semester with the rest of my Odyssey family. I believe I have a lot to offer this world.

Opportunities
Direction
Yoke
Sigh
Subdue
Encourage
You



Brandon Williams

This has been a rough semester for me. I have struggled with money, paying bills, letting go of a past relationship, and staying true and positive about myself. I have finished 2012 in a rough way. I do want to continue my education. I believe that I am embarrassed and ashamed about asking for help. After seeing my mistakes this year/semester, I will be able to stay on track with homework and asking for help. I have cried all semester about my cave, but next semester I would like to show myself that no matter how many times I fall, as long as I get back up and try I will succeed.

This class is filled with a lot of people who want to do better. In this class I have learned a lot of new things. I have learned that there is more to something than the eye sees. A picture has a reason for its design. I have also learned to comprehend what I am reading. This class is wonderful, and I will finish all my missing assignments.



El-Rasheedah Wilson

I would like to continue my journey with Odyssey because I enjoy being a part of the program. I have learned so much in this short time and have met beautiful people. It's been amazing for me and has taught me a lot. I now have a different outlook on life and learning. I have a family here! Odyssey has shown me that the sky is the limit. . . . I want to write my own fiction book and start a make-up line.

I worked hard first semester, and I will work even harder next semester. I need this program because I want to continue my education so I can have the skills to see my dreams come true. Who would pass up on this opportunity? There has been a lot of struggle, but I pulled through. The staff here is great!



Emily, Coach, Jean, and all the staff have shown me so much love, support, and understanding.

This year hasn't been a great one for me, but I kept pushing and moving forward. There were days when I wanted to give up, but I kept hearing Emily and my daughter saying you can do it! Emily lost her mom, and it was a very sad time. Coach lost his brother, and classmates lost family members, but everyone pulled through it. Their strength keeps me going.

Our lessons from Socrates, Frederick Douglass, women of courage, and learning about politics have made my mind be on overload, but I like the feeling. I believe in myself. I know I've got what it takes to finish what I started here. I can't let myself down because I've come too far.



Classroom photos in this section by Laurie Greenberg

CONGRATULATIONS TO KEGAN CARTER '04

Congratulations to Kegan Carter (Odyssey '04) for earning a 4.0 GPA in her first semester of graduate work in Afro-American Studies at the UW-Madison.



CONGRATULATIONS TO TINEISHA SCOTT '04

Congratulations to Tineisha Scott (Odyssey '04) for earning her Master's Degree from Edgewood College.

