Reflective Essay on Finishing My Bachelor’s Degree

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I am close to completing my bachelor’s degree, and for the first time the end feels visible. The phrase “light at the end of the tunnel” describes my relief, but it does not fully describe what the degree has required. The learning process has been difficult, and there were moments when I felt frustrated with myself, uncertain about my academic direction, and tired of balancing long-term goals with immediate responsibilities. I continued because completing the degree matters to my future and because I want to set a strong example for my sibling. My progress shows that education does not have to follow a perfectly straight route to be meaningful. I changed my degree strategy more than once, yet I repeatedly returned to business and accounting because those subjects connect analytical work, professional responsibility, and practical decision-making.

Seeing the End of a Long Process

Approaching graduation changes how I interpret the earlier stages of the degree. Courses that once seemed unrelated now appear as parts of a larger education. Difficult semesters are no longer only memories of stress; they are evidence that I learned to adjust, seek information, and continue. The end also creates a new kind of pressure. Finishing a degree means leaving the structure of assignments and entering a professional environment in which I must set goals independently. Graduation is therefore both an achievement and a transition.

My Motivation to Finish

My sibling remains one of my strongest motivations. I want my example to show that difficulty does not require abandonment of a goal. Being a role model does not mean pretending the process was easy or claiming that I never made mistakes. It means demonstrating that a person can reconsider plans, accept responsibility, and return to work. I also want my sibling to understand that education is not valuable only because it produces a title. It changes the way a person reads information, asks questions, communicates, and evaluates choices.

Changing My Degree Strategy

I altered my academic strategy several times. At first, these changes felt like evidence that I lacked direction. I now see them as part of discovering which subjects held my attention and which career possibilities felt realistic. Each change required me to compare requirements, consider transferred credits, think about time, and decide what I wanted the degree to represent. Returning to business and accounting was not a failure to choose something new. It was confirmation that these fields continued to fit my interests after I had considered alternatives.

Why Interdisciplinary Studies Fit My Journey

The Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies allows a student to connect learning from more than one field and build a coherent course of study. That flexibility reflects my academic experience. My goals involve accounting, but professional accounting does not operate in isolation. Accountants communicate with managers, clients, regulators, employees, and investors. They work within law, technology, economics, ethics, and global business. An interdisciplinary education helps me connect technical information with the people and institutions that use it. (University of Houston-Downtown, 2026)

My Concentration in Business

My business concentration gives the degree a practical direction. Business courses teach how organizations allocate resources, measure performance, respond to risk, and make decisions. They also show that organizations are social systems, not only financial machines. A decision that improves one number may create costs for employees, customers, or the public. I want to understand financial information well enough to support decisions while recognizing their broader consequences.

Financial Accounting

Financial accounting focuses on preparing and communicating information for external users such as investors, creditors, regulators, and suppliers. It requires consistent classification, measurement, and presentation. I am interested in how financial statements translate complex operations into reports that other people can evaluate. The work requires accuracy, but it also requires judgment because estimates, timing, and disclosure can affect the picture readers receive. Learning financial accounting has strengthened my attention to detail and my awareness that numbers need context.

Management Accounting

Management accounting supports internal planning and decision-making. It may involve budgets, forecasts, performance measures, cost behavior, and analysis of alternatives. I find this area interesting because the information is used directly to guide operations. A management accountant must understand what decision a manager is trying to make rather than produce a report without purpose. This requires communication as well as calculation. Different managers may need different levels of detail, and a useful analysis should make assumptions visible.

Cost Accounting

Cost accounting examines how organizations assign and understand the costs of products, services, departments, and activities. It can help identify waste, set prices, evaluate efficiency, and plan capacity. The challenge is that cost does not always have one obvious meaning. Direct and indirect costs, fixed and variable behavior, overhead allocation, and opportunity cost answer different questions. I want to develop the judgment to select an appropriate method and explain its limitations rather than treating one computed figure as absolute truth.

Tax Accounting

Tax accounting interests me because it connects financial information with law and public policy. Tax rules change, and professionals must research current requirements rather than rely on memory. The work also involves ethical boundaries. Legitimate planning is different from concealment or misrepresentation. A tax professional must protect confidential information, document positions, and communicate uncertainty. This field would require continuous learning, which is one reason a broad academic foundation is valuable.

External Auditing

External auditing examines whether financial statements are presented fairly according to the applicable framework. Auditors need independence, professional skepticism, evidence evaluation, and clear documentation. The profession does not promise that every fraud or error will be detected. It provides reasonable assurance through planned procedures and risk assessment. I am attracted to auditing because it combines technical standards with investigation and judgment. It also demonstrates how public trust depends on professionals being willing to question information rather than accept it automatically.

Writing and Critical Reading

My university education improved my ability to interpret, write, and read critically. Earlier, I often approached a text as information to remember. I now ask who produced it, what evidence supports it, which assumptions are present, and what information is missing. Writing assignments taught me that a conclusion needs a visible line of reasoning. These skills apply directly to accounting because professionals read contracts, standards, policies, reports, and explanations that may contain ambiguity or competing interests.

Oral and Interpersonal Communication

Accounting is sometimes imagined as solitary work with numbers, but communication is central. A professional may need to interview a client, explain a variance, present a budget, ask for missing evidence, or discuss an uncomfortable finding. My courses in oral communication and group work helped me recognize that the same information must be presented differently for different audiences. Technical accuracy is not enough if the listener cannot understand what action is required.

Working in Small Groups

Group projects taught me that collaboration requires more than dividing the assignment into equal sections. Members need shared expectations, deadlines, communication, and a process for resolving disagreement. I learned to listen for what another person is trying to accomplish and to make my own contribution reliable. These habits will matter in accounting teams where work passes among staff, supervisors, clients, and specialists. One incomplete task can delay the entire engagement.

Quantitative Skills

Statistics and quantitative reasoning strengthened my ability to interpret patterns and uncertainty. A number can appear persuasive while being based on a weak sample or misleading comparison. Business decisions use averages, trends, forecasts, and probability, so I need to understand what each measure can and cannot support. Quantitative skill also helps me review my own work. If a result is mathematically correct but economically unrealistic, I should investigate the assumptions rather than trust the calculation blindly.

Ethics and Social Responsibility

Ethics became more concrete during my degree. It is not limited to extreme cases of fraud. Everyday choices about disclosure, confidentiality, pressure, bias, and documentation can affect other people. An accountant may face incentives to improve reported results, ignore an unusual transaction, or disclose information improperly. Professional responsibility requires standards, but it also requires the courage to raise a concern. I want my career to be built on work that others can trust.

Globalization and Diversity

Organizations operate across cultures, currencies, legal systems, and supply chains. Globalization means that an accounting decision in one office can affect employees, investors, and customers elsewhere. Diversity also influences communication and problem-solving. Working effectively with people from different backgrounds requires curiosity and respect rather than assumptions. My education broadened my understanding of these differences and made me more aware of how organizational decisions can affect groups unequally.

Technology and Information Systems

Modern accounting depends on information systems, spreadsheets, enterprise software, databases, analytics, and increasingly automated processes. Technology can improve speed and consistency, but it can also reproduce an error across a large volume of data. I need to understand the source of information, access controls, system logic, and the limits of automated output. The profession will continue to change, so my goal is not to master one software product permanently. It is to build the ability to learn new tools while preserving professional judgment.

What the Degree Has Taught Me About Adaptability

Changing my degree plan, managing difficult courses, and returning to my central interest taught me adaptability. Adaptability is not changing goals whenever work becomes uncomfortable. It is adjusting methods while remaining honest about the objective. In a workplace, regulations, technology, clients, and economic conditions change. The ability to learn and revise a plan will be as important as the information I know at graduation.

Managing Frustration

I have been frustrated with myself during this process. Sometimes I compared my progress with other students or focused on what I had not completed. I learned that frustration becomes useful only when it identifies a specific problem. I can ask whether I need more time, a different study method, clarification, tutoring, or a more realistic schedule. General self-criticism does not complete an assignment. Specific action does.

Persistence Without Denying Difficulty

Persistence is often described as never doubting, but my experience was different. I continued while doubting and while reconsidering the route. This form of persistence is less dramatic but more realistic. It involves returning after an unsuccessful exam, reorganizing after a difficult term, and accepting that progress can be uneven. Completing the degree will be meaningful because it represents repeated decisions rather than one moment of motivation.

Career Possibilities

My interests include financial accounting, management accounting, cost accounting, tax accounting, and external auditing. I do not need to pretend that I have already selected one permanent career. Entry-level experience, mentoring, further education, and professional requirements will help me refine the choice. I can approach the first opportunity as a place to build competence and observe which work fits my strengths. The degree gives me a foundation, not a guarantee or a finished professional identity. (University of Houston-Downtown, 2026)

Professional Competencies I Still Need

Graduation will not mean that I know everything required in practice. I need to continue developing technical research, data analysis, business understanding, ethical judgment, communication, and project management. The AICPA's foundational competencies framework emphasizes skills that apply across public accounting, industry, government, and nonprofit work. This reinforces what I learned through interdisciplinary study: professional success requires more than technical calculation. (AICPA & CIMA, 2022)

My Plan After Graduation

After completing the degree, I plan to organize my job search around positions that allow me to apply accounting knowledge and continue learning. I will revise my résumé to show projects and transferable skills rather than list courses alone. I will practice explaining how interdisciplinary studies supports business work. I also need to research the education and examination requirements for any professional credential I may pursue. A realistic plan will include networking, applications, interview preparation, and continued technical study.

Responsibility to My Sibling

The example I want to give my sibling is not that a bachelor's degree makes life easy. It is that long-term effort can expand options and that changing direction does not have to mean giving up. I want to be honest about the cost and the support that made progress possible. I also want to respect whatever educational path my sibling chooses. Being a role model means demonstrating responsibility, not demanding imitation.

What Completion Will Mean

Completing the degree will mean that I followed through on a commitment despite uncertainty. It will give me pride, but it will also create responsibility to use the education well. I want employers and clients to see reliability in my work. I want my family to see that their support contributed to something lasting. Most importantly, I want to recognize that the discipline developed during the degree is part of the qualification, not only the diploma.

Conclusion

My Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Houston-Downtown has developed into a pathway connecting business, accounting, communication, ethics, statistics, technology, globalization, and critical thinking. The route changed several times, but my interest in accounting remained. Financial accounting, management accounting, cost accounting, tax, and auditing offer different ways to use information responsibly. The degree also taught me to manage frustration, work with others, and adapt without losing direction. I am motivated by my future and by the example I want to set for my sibling. Graduation will not complete my learning, but it will confirm that I can finish a difficult process and enter the next stage with a broader understanding of both business and myself.

References

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