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The pandemic has presented me with challenges that I did not expect during my first semester of college. Online learning has proven to be a unique challenge. I found that studying for college courses required a great deal of focus and dedication to the material, and in many ways, it was almost like being self-taught. It's not as easy as showing up to class, doing a little studying, and being able to ace the test, largely because students do not have the advantage of the in-class questions and interactions which are routine with in-person learning. I have been able to maintain a 4.0 GPA, but it is definitely more challenging than I was expecting.

With school events, activities, and in-person learning put on hold, I knew that I needed to expand my skills in a new way to complement my online learning. One goal that I have always had for myself was to get my Private Pilot's License. Last October, I started working toward this dream. Conducting in-person training and discussions with the instructor has reminded me of how important in-person learning is, and I cannot wait until all education has returned to normal again.

This pandemic has certainly affected all of us. Although I have been successful with my studies, I understand that there are many who have not done as well and others who have had employment and health impacts. I am extremely grateful for the Wings Over America Scholarship since it has allowed me to focus on my education, and less on the cost of college. I feel sympathy for everyone who has been challenged by work, or education, and especially for anyone who has lost someone during these tragic times. Together we can continue to work hard, be safe, and get through this.