

In a lecture hall of 400, this ASU grad found his place

After early academic struggles, Connor Behm discovered direction in sociology and a path to graduate study

By Jennifer Martin, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2026 graduates](#).

It was fall 2022 when Connor Behm of Tipp City, Ohio, stepped into a big Sociology 101 lecture hall. The dimly lit room stretched upward with rows of students, more than 400 in attendance — double the size of his high school graduating class. It was hard not to feel small in it.

A political philosophy major, Behm was there on a whim and didn't know what to expect. But as the lecture began, his world came into focus. It was as if someone had finally put language to experiences he'd long felt but hadn't been able to name.

"I was hooked," he said. "Somehow, in a lecture hall with over 400 people, I felt seen in a way I never had before."

Soon after, he changed his major to sociology.

"It opened up worlds of new possibilities. The idea that in a room of many people, every single person could have a different interpretation and perspective on an aspect of society was remarkable," he said.

The years leading up to that junction were not easy. He had been struggling academically, failing classes and losing scholarships. At one point, he began to wonder if he had pushed himself too far.

"I truly thought I was a lost cause," he said.

But over time and with a new direction, he turned it all around. He credits a network of people for pushing him forward, including sociology professors and friends who encouraged him to keep going. The support of his peers and mentors braced him as he rebuilt his confidence brick by brick, and he went from surviving to thriving.

“I was able to recover to the extent that I have because I had a strong network of friends and professors who truly believed in me, which gave me a foundation to believe in myself and achieve things far beyond what I ever thought I would,” he said. “As I stand today, I am immensely proud of myself for how far I have come.”

Now, Behm is not only graduating, but leaving ASU with solid research experience — including a qualitative study on masculinity among undergraduate men — and has been accepted to several sociology graduate programs. He is headed to the University of Chicago for a master’s degree, where he plans to continue that work with the goal of pursuing a PhD.

We caught up with Behm to learn more about his time at ASU.

Question: Why did you choose ASU?

Answer: I chose ASU after a college-touring road trip across the country with my now-girlfriend. It felt like a space buzzing with opportunity and the freedom I so desperately craved to determine my own path in life. I loved how flexible the options for majors are, and the size and diversity of the student body was very exciting to me. Also, the campus is absolutely beautiful, which definitely helped.

Q: Shout out a professor, advisor or someone else who made a big impact on your journey — what did they teach you?

A: Professor [Jon McQueen](#) has made a huge impact on my time at ASU. Not only was he the professor who taught my first sociology class, but I feel like he was the first professor who saw my potential and pushed me to actually try and achieve the heights of that potential. He is also the professor who introduced me to masculinity studies, which inspired me to conduct my own qualitative research project on the manifestation of masculinity among undergraduate men at ASU.

Q: What’s the best piece of advice you’d give to those still in school?

A: You are never a lost cause. It always gets better. Life might look different than you expected, but it will always get better in one way or another. There is love out there for you in the world, and the first step to gaining confidence in yourself is starting to accept the love that people around you are willing to give.

Q: What’s one change you’d love to see in the world — and how would you use your degree to help make it happen?

A: I want the world to be a safer space for transgender people, especially trans youth. Transgender people deserve all the same comfort and safety assurances that are granted to the rest of the population. As a transgender man, I know firsthand how scary it can be to be out and exist as your authentic self. I hope that with my degree, I can contribute to the existing body of academic literature on the intricacies of transgender identity and also serve as a model to trans youth that it is more than possible to live a happy, fulfilling and successful life.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



“Somehow, in a lecture hall with over 400 people, I felt seen in a way I never had before,” said Connor Behm, who changed his major to sociology after joining a class on a whim. Courtesy photo