

Meet the novelist who has 'tried' it all

During her time at ASU, honors student Nancy Beckley wrote heartfelt stories, hosted social media series 'Nancy Tries'

By Brielle Cohen, ASU News
May 6, 2026

As Nancy Beckley prepares to graduate from The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences with a degree in creative writing this spring, she is reflecting on how her journey as a student at Arizona State University has given her a platform to create and explore not only her interests but also who she is as a person.

Beckley's passion for writing developed when she was in elementary school, when she would immerse herself in the worlds within her storybooks. When she was considering what to study at ASU, creative writing was a no-brainer.

"I heard that they had a really good creative writing program, and I wanted to try it out," Beckley said. "Since I was in fourth grade, I knew I was going to go into English."

As a Barrett, The Honors College student, Beckley did her thesis as a creative project and wrote her very own novel.

"I wrote a book for my Barrett thesis. It's called 'Pentagon.' It's a book about a girl who is on her mental health journey."

Beckley has a talent for writing pieces that can make her audience feel through complex characters, raw emotion and the very real journey that is discovering oneself and fighting inner battles.

"(My novel) follows her through her week of annihilation. She spirals without realizing it and has to clean up all the messes. It's very grief-stricken. It's very focused on mental health, being a woman, trauma and grief," Beckley said.

Her own experience at ASU has been transitional, real and enlightening — allowing her to grow a solid foundation as she ventures forward into her professional life. But it wasn't always easy.

"It's taken me four years to pick up the pieces as I go through my trauma and through my grief. I'm still learning to be an adult from being an adolescent. Things take time," Beckley said.

Despite the ups and downs, one professor, [James Blasingame](#), continues to motivate her and her peers every day.

"I have this one professor who, every day in class, says, 'I'm rooting for you. I've got your back. I'm there for you,'" Beckley said of Blasingame.

Thanks to him, Beckley was able to work on her book and conduct an individualized study.

Beckley also worked as a writer on the [Student Life](#) team at ASU, where she attended various events throughout the year and even conducted her own social media series, "Nancy Tries," where she tried various club sports and other activities offered around campus.

"It's been amazing. It's just been so eye-opening and such incredible experiences, and I feel that I've started my career already," Beckley said, adding that there are many parts of being a writer at ASU that she loves.

"I get to write. I get to go on these shoots. I get a job where I get to have fun and experience the real world while still in college," she said.

"It's something that got me out of my shell and allowed me to try new things that I never thought imaginable. I can use it to show my experience with social media and marketing. I just get to have fun and try things I've never done before."

Outside of school and work, Beckley is a rower. She began rowing during her time at ASU and was entranced by the sport from the jump.

"I walked past the SDFC and I saw an 8-foot oar. I looked down, I see a 12-foot boat, and I walked up and I said, 'Tell me more,'" Beckley said.

She instantly fell in love with rowing.

"And then like five days later, I was waking up at four or five in the morning for practice for a semester," Beckley said.

After graduation, Beckley wants to be a self-employed, published author so that she can continue writing novels.

"I want to publish my books under my own name and have full ownership of them," she said.

Beckley's college experience wasn't perfect, but through it all, she learned countless lessons and has gained beautiful memories that helped her grow as a person and a writer.

"You're going to get through it," Beckley advises those still in school. "If you're in a hard class, you're going to get through the class. If you are having a hard time, that hard time will pass. It's going to take time, but everything will pass."

She recommends the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) as a great resource for support throughout anyone's ASU journey.

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

Text image(s)



Nancy Beckley. Photo by Jr De Chavez/ASU