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Miss USA Olivia Culpo, a BU student, returns to campus for first time since crowning

Posted by Matt Rocheleau October 5, 2012 06:06 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

For the first time since she was crowned Miss USA four months ago, Boston University student Olivia Culpo returned to campus Thursday.

“It feels weird,” the 20-year-old [Cranston, R.I. native](#) said while sitting on bench in the hallway of a building she last set foot in to attend a class. “I never thought that I would be back here as Miss USA. It’s nice.”

To fulfill her year-long duties as Miss USA, she has put her studies on hold. Once her reign ends, she’s not sure if she’ll resume classes at BU.

“I can’t say if I’m going to be back here or not because it’s so soon in my year,” Culpo said. “So, I’m just going to fulfill my duties as Miss USA first and then see what happens.”

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Her brief BU visit included recording a segment with the campus' radio station [WTBU](#). She plans to surprise friends and former roommates Thursday night by dropping by their off-campus apartment complex in Brookline.

She visited other sites in Boston this week – including [dancing around Government Center](#) with a group of pink-clad supporters – to help promote the upcoming [Susan G. Komen Massachusetts Race for the Cure](#).

The race, which helps raise money for and awareness of breast cancer prevention and research efforts, is set for Saturday, Oct. 20 at Joe Moakley Park in South Boston.

Culpo had never competed in a pageant before last September when she tried out, “on a whim,” as she puts it, to become Miss Rhode Island. She won the state title wearing a dress that cost \$25, was too short and had a tear in the back.

On Wednesday night, she attended the “Excellent Rocks Pink with Pride” fashion show at the New Balance retail store in Copley Square and wore another noteworthy dress. Her one-of-a-kind Jacqueline Quinn dress was made from running shoe materials, specifically from the plastic, rubber and other components of the New Balance Lace Up for the Cure 860v2 sneakers.

“I was literally wearing a shoe,” she said.

Asked if that was comfortable, Culpo replied: “They’re never comfortable. But I always say that if you can breathe in a dress, then it’s not tight enough. So it was perfect. I couldn’t breathe in it, so I felt good.”

When she won Miss USA on June 3, she became the first titleholder from her home state. She first wore her \$300,000 diamond- and emerald-studded crown shortly after finishing her sophomore year at BU, which she said she did by traveling back and forth several times each week from Boston to Rhode Island to fulfill her duties as Miss Rhode Island.

The thought of possibly returning as a student to BU, “Now that I became Miss USA – I don’t know. I would just be very, very odd,” Culpo said. “It would be like retracing – like going back a few years.”



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She said she's been following some of the string of negative headlines the university has made.

"I think that every college whether it's BU or not is going to face troubles with the students," Culpo said. "There's a big population. We can't expect everything to always run smoothly. I think it's a bump in the road but we can get through it."

An accomplished cellist, Culpo also enjoys acting, and she did well in her first ever Hollywood audition for a movie with close local ties.

She recorded a scene for recently-released the movie "Ted." The scene was cut from the comedy film's theatrical release, but appears in the DVD, according to Culpo. She attended the movie's summertime premiere and met its stars, including Seth MacFarlane, Mark Wahlberg and Mila Kunis

"I had a really small role in it. I was a karaoke girl," she said. "So like it wasn't huge, but it was my first thing that I ever tried for. It was in Boston. They just did a small casting."

"I like the movie a lot," she added. "I think Seth MacFarlane is a genius."

During her year as Miss USA, Culpo is travelling the country, appearing at events and promoting charitable causes. In December, she will represent the US in the Miss Universe pageant.

She's quickly discovered that with celebrity fame comes gossip. Culpo denied recent rumors that she and US Olympic medalist swimmer Ryan Lochte are anything more than friends.

"We're friends and we stay in touch, but we're not dating," she said.

New Balance hosted Culpo this week. The Brighton-based shoe company is a national sponsor of the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and will donate to the charity 5 percent of retail sales from its special Lace Up for the Cure Collection of footwear. Last year, a similar campaign by New Balance contributed more than \$1.2 million.

Culpo, the middle child of five, graduated with high honors in 2010 from St. Mary Academy Bay View, an all-girls Catholic school in Riverside, R.I., and has

regularly made the Dean's List at BU.

She's called herself a "nerd," and said that after attending the charity event Wednesday night, she was able to catch the end of the Presidential debate.

She said she'll "definitely" vote in November. But, "I can't tell you who I would vote for, but I do like to emphasize the importance of voting and protecting your rights," she said. "Let your voice be heard."

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

Miss USA Olivia Culpo poses outside of the College of Communication building on Boston University's campus along Commonwealth Avenue Thursday morning.

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