

TIP SHEET | HOW TO SUCCEED IN COLLEGE

Abridged from:
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Dear High School Graduate:

We have compiled some advice to help guide your success in the next phase of your life. We've distilled some of our own experiences from working at high schools and colleges, along with some of the feedback we've received from college students, to give you the essence of what you need to be successful over the next four years.

LIVE IN THE ACADEMIC MOMENT

Plenty of students complain about their work or obsess about their G.P.A., but that's just wasted energy and time. Instead, focus on your assignments, papers and projects for their intrinsic learning value; the grades will come naturally.

DON'T STUDY IN YOUR ROOM

Given the realities of dorm life, it's far too easy to wander across the hall and talk to your neighbor, or to have Facebook on while you glance back and forth from your book to the screen. Find a spot that works for you, and call it your "homework home." Oftentimes, smaller, more lightly used libraries on campus have great study spaces and light traffic. Unoccupied classrooms or common areas with less traffic can have excellent lighting, privacy and plenty of space to spread your materials.

FIND THE WORKING SIDE OF ACADEMIA

Every college has opportunities for undergraduates to do research or to assist in large-scale academic endeavors. If your financial aid package includes work-study opportunities, look for employment in departments and libraries instead of going to dining services or the athletic department. The connections you'll make outside the classroom could even lead to study opportunities.

CHOOSE PROFESSORS, NOT CLASSES

Find the best professors on campus and take their classes, even if they don't seem interesting at first read. You may find these professors by talking to your adviser, using the school's faculty review resources and asking older students about their favorite faculty members. Visit several classes the first week or two of a term. Most colleges have some sort of shopping period when the class rosters haven't been finalized.

GET CONNECTED TO CAMPUS LIFE

Academic clubs, social organizations and professional associations take on a larger, more applied and energetic meaning in college. The breadth of opportunity for student interaction is outstanding even at the smallest of colleges. Getting involved will dramatically increase your enjoyment and experience.

ALWAYS GO TO CLASS

It won't be quite so obvious as you settle into college life, when you realize that the professor's lecture notes are online and as your roommate pulls the covers over his head when the alarm clock rings for an 8 a.m. class. Your class hours drop by more half when you go to college. You have access to some of the most accomplished experts in their field, and you are paying a tremendous amount of money to have access to them. Don't waste it.

GO TO OFFICE HOURS

Take advantage of ways to talk to professors outside the classroom. You'll learn more, have a greater appreciation of your academic experience and have more ways to find mentors, professional and academic references, and employers for research projects. More important, you may be surprised to learn how they'd like to get to know you beyond the paper or lab assignment you've handed in.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Part of college life is learning how to take care of yourself. Regulate your diet by eating healthy foods and resisting the temptations of the unlimited and unsupervised dining options. Exercise to maintain your physical health. Don't forget to sleep. Keeping your body well cared for will help you stay healthier and be more successful academically.

BE PATIENT

This next stage for you is about living and learning independently, skills that develop over time. Be patient as you and your classmates settle into college life. Don't expect to be perfect, but draw strength and inspiration from your previous learning experiences.

Good luck!