

## It's Everyone's Responsibility

"Always ask if you are unsure about anything. Know the guidelines, and if you don't, clarify them with your professor. The one thing I've learned from my teachers is that they like inquisitive students, even if you are asking them the same questions that they just answered. It is better to be over prepared than under prepared. And finally, always try to be honest to yourself and to your teachers."

—LISA, STONY BROOK STUDENT

## COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL: THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE



You may first notice it during your new student orientation over the summer; or during the first week of classes; or after your first big exam: college is completely different from high school. Not only are the social and co-curricular opportunities different, but academics at the college level are more comprehensive than those in high school.

Classes in college are often larger, longer, and meet only certain days of the week. It is necessary for you to stay on top of the reading and assignments for each class. Much of the material covered in your classes may not come from the required reading, but from the professional expertise and research interests of your professors. For this reason it is important to attend every class meeting for all of your classes.

College professors do not typically monitor attendance as your teachers did in high school. At the University, it is your responsibility to contact professors if you miss a class session or an assignment, if you are struggling with the material, or if you want to discuss a grade. Papers and projects are assigned well in advance of the due date. It is each student's obligation to be responsible for remembering when the work is due and to address any questions before handing it in. You are encouraged to meet with your professors not only for these reasons, but also when you are doing well in your classes. Professors can offer valuable information and guidance outside the classroom.

The level of learning required in college is also very different. In high school, you may have been primarily tested on facts and details covered in class and the textbooks. Many high school students rely on studying techniques that center on memorization without a deeper understanding of the material. In college, you will be challenged to step beyond this more superficial level of learning and begin to think analytically. Critical thinking is an important part of the college learning experience. You should be prepared to discuss your ideas and respond to topics covered in class. Active participation is expected in some classes and can be a factor in grading.

As you can see from the examples above, the main distinction between the high school and college experience is that you are held more directly responsible for your progress. While this may seem like a lot of work for you to do on your own, do not mistake this for a lack of interest or concern on the part of your professors and the University staff. You do have the right to a quality education and the faculty and staff are here to help ensure that you receive it. In many ways, your college experience will be what you make of it, and there are plenty of resources available at Stony Brook to insure success; you just need to take the initiative.