**COLLEGE TRANSITION 101 LAYING THE GROUNDWORK**

**FROM THE DESK OF THE DEAN**

**WHY ATTEND A 2 YEAR FIRST**

**TOPIC 1**

**Discover why students should consider community college.**

The traditional four-year college experience isn't for everyone. Some students aren't sure what they want to study, while others are looking for a more affordable education. Many students study for two years at community college before transferring to a four-year college, saving significant money on tuition. Additionally, students interested in some fields can expect to earn more than $50,000 with an associate degree, and community colleges afford job training and certificates that can be valuable. If you're considering attending a community college, or if you're curious about the benefits, check out the following reasons why attending one might be a good decision.

**1. Money**

Paying for college is a big consideration, and the average cost of annual tuition and fees at four-year institutions in the 2021-2022 school year will be $38,000 at private colleges, $10,000 for state residents at public colleges and $24,000 for out-of-state students at state schools. As the national student debt tops $1.7 trillion, the rising cost of tuition can lead to significant student loans. In contrast, community colleges charge about $3,660 on average per year for in-state students. Many states are adopting free community college programs like the Tennessee Promise program, which provides funding for students to fill the gap between Pell Grants and other grant aid for high school graduates who meet certain requirements.

**2. Academic flexibility**

Attending a community college can be a good way for students to ease into the world of higher education and learn at their own pace. This is especially true for students who struggled in high school or anyone who's unsure if they want to make the significant time and money investment in college, experts say.

**3. Financial aid**

Financial aid isn't only for four-year college students – community college students are eligible as well. Federal student loans require students to be enrolled half time – about six credit hours, or two courses. Students just need to make sure they don't drop out of classes or they'll risk losing their aid award.

**4. School-life balance**

About 60 percent of community college students attend school part time. So anyone interested in taking one or two classes at a time will not feel out of place. This makes community college a good option for nontraditional students like parents and older students who wish to balance school with family or career obligations.

**5. STEM education opportunities**

Community colleges have associate degree programs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. These so-called STEM subjects are in demand by employers, and some community colleges are supporting these students as they work their way up to a career, experts say.

**6. Transfer agreements**

Enrolling in a community college doesn't have to be a student's final destination. Many two-year schools offer admissions agreements with public colleges that allow qualified students to transfer their credits toward earning a bachelor's degree. 30% of community college students matriculate to a 4 year college and graduate within 4 years of the transfer.

**7. Elements of traditional college**

Two-year colleges haven't always provided the same student experience as four-year schools, but that is changing. Over one-quarter of community colleges offer dorms housing, dinning commons and extracurricular activities.

.**8. Online class options**

As is the case with four-year universities, certain community colleges have expanded online course offerings and in states like California have created a Virtual Community College in order to take classes at multiple institutions while home basing at another.

**Here are 10 reasons to attend community college:**

Affordability

Academic flexibility

Financial aid options

School-life balance

STEM Opportunities

Transfer agreements

Elements of traditional college

Personalized attention

Professional certificates

Online course offerings

**TOPIC 1**

**DISCUSSION QUESTION 1**

A 2 Year school offers many opportunities that are not applicable at most 4 year universities. For example – small classes hands-on skill learning, certificate programs, vocational classes and many more that are applicable in a work situation while a traditional 4-year college offers the same boiler plate of options that have existed for 100 years.

**The next steps will be an opportunity to inform US about YOU. We need to understand who you are. What your dreams and expectations are going forward. And we need to learn How we can help you best.**

Below is a sample (Personal Inventory) of the questions from the first of three inventories. We would like you to answer in 1-5 sentence answers after downloading the documents from our site. In response, please answer on the templates or on a separate document with the question above your answers.

What's something that inspires you and why?

What's your best quality and why?

What's is your greatest strength outside of school and explain why?

What's one of your weaknesses you would like to improve upon and why?

What are you most proud of and why?

Who is your mentor or person you look up to and why?

**DISCUSSION QUESTION 2**

What is your dream job and why?

Would you like to own your own business and why?

Do you perform best as an independent worker or on a small team?

What does a perfect day look like from waking up to bedtime and why?

What is your favorite subject in school and why?

What is your least favorite subject in school and why?

If you could live anywhere in the world as an adult where would that be and why?

What is the best thing that has ever happened to you and why?

What is the worst thing that has ever happened to you and why?

**DISCUSSION QUESTION 3 – SET UP CALL WITH THE DEAN**

**Please have your questions and assignments available to discuss in a 15-30 minute block.**