

Upperclassmen offer advice to incoming first-years

By Carissa Canzona, Staff Writer

As a new class of incoming first-years prepare to move into their dorms, Staff Writer Carissa Canzona asked upperclassmen to share some of their experiences and biggest pieces of advice for students beginning their college journeys.

What is your number one tip for balancing schoolwork and your social life?

Anna McDermott, junior biomedical science major: Honestly, it's really difficult and it took me the first two years of college to be able to get where I currently am. Don't worry if it takes time to figure out... that's what college is all about!

My biggest recommendation would be to make sure you still have fun. Personally, being pre-med makes it too easy to get lost in schoolwork. However, you are not going to present your best in class if you don't allow yourself to enjoy life along the way. Explore the city and set aside a few days a month for self-care — it makes all the difference.



Fikayomi Olagbami | Staff Illustrator

Nicole Salkin, sophomore marketing major: My biggest tip for balancing school and a social life would be making sure all my work was done before the weekend so I could have those days to rest and socialize without worrying so much about schoolwork. Throughout the week, I would make sure to go study either alone or with friends from my classes, which helped a lot with balancing.

Where is your favorite place on campus to study?

Jamie Gilligan, sophomore nursing major: My favorite place on campus to study is the Quad because it gets me outside while still getting work done and is well-shaded enough so I can see my computer screen.

Logan Skelly, junior human resources management major: Hillman ground/1st floor is the best, especially with the right people.

McDermott: I personally love studying in Posvar Hall. Sometimes the library can get overwhelming so changing scenery is very helpful. I also love the Starbucks on Forbes for a darker environment!

Where is your favorite place to go outside of campus?

Skelly: Go to the West End Overlook! My favorite spot to look out into the city.

McDermott: I love going to Lawrenceville for a nice night out. They have beautiful restaurants and a ton of ice cream joints along with a great lovely atmosphere. Another great area is the Waterfront, which has a ton of shops and restaurants to enjoy for the day.

Salkin: Outside of campus, I loved going to the Roxian Theatre. They host a lot of events, like disco nights, and smaller artists have concerts there!

What are some things you wish you knew before your first semester at Pitt?

McDermott: I wish I knew that I wasn't alone in the struggle between class and social life. Especially for me being seven hours from home, living on campus was a large shift in my life. Once you find the right people and immerse yourself in the amazing activities Pitt has to offer is when you really find yourself at home. It is not easy but it is 100% worth it. I wish I had someone to be there and tell me that they went through it too and that college is indeed so much different from high school.

Sydney Gilmore, senior biological sciences major: I wish I knew more about the different extracurricular activities and opportunities offered on campus. Coming into college during the pandemic, I didn't have a formal activities fair. If I were a freshman now, I would take advantage of that resource.

Gilligan: Something I wish I was reminded of before coming to Pitt is remembering every student is in the same boat, so don't be afraid to be the one to put yourself out there.

Where are some of your favorite places to get food on campus?

Gilligan: Other than Chick-fil-A, I love going to eat at Shake Smart and The Roost on campus. Shake Smart has smoothie bowls and protein shakes and The Roost has different types of chicken, so it is very similar to Chick-fil-A.

Skelly: I eat True Burger almost every day, and don't hate me, but I love The Eatery on special occasions with all my friends.

McDermott: I love the sandwich shop in the [William Pitt] Union if you are going for an on-campus option. But if you are going for a nice dinner on Forbes my all-time fave would have to be Roots. It is a great option to get some healthy food into your system and fuel your brain for studying. But it is also delicious, literally addicting.

Gilmore: I love Las Palmas on Atwood Street and Stack'd!

If you could give your past self one piece of advice, what would it be?

Gilligan: If I could give my past self advice it would be to join everything that looks interesting at the activity fair. Signing up for something does not mean that you have to keep showing up if you don't like it.

Salkin: One piece of advice I would give my past self is you do not need to rush into things. I often felt the need to have an established group of friends, find my roommates for next year, and have my career all picked out within the first weeks of school. But a lot of things can change in the duration of a year, and I wish I knew to take my time and not be as stressed as I was about the future.

Gilmore: I would advise my past self to always make sure to take care of myself and my emotional well-being. Although college is tricky, you can find balance by surrounding yourself with a good support system.

McDermott: Live a little. College is all about trying new things and learning from mistakes. If you don't give yourself the space to grow, then you'll stay where you're currently at. Please take the time to immerse yourself in clubs and activities on campus. Go to the football games and make amazing memories because it all goes by way too fast.

I found some of the most amazing people when I joined a sorority and immersed myself in a few clubs on campus. Don't sell yourself short of amazing experiences! School is super important, but so is your mental health, so please take care of yourself while succeeding at your academic goals!