



Tips for Involved Parents and Students

Tips from Graduates of the Gwinnett Student Leadership Team after their First Year of College...

Know Yourself:

- **Consider your talents and passions from high school** as you consider the daily activities you want to pursue in college. However, just because you were involved in an organization in high school, you don't necessarily have to be involved in that same organization in college.
- **Develop a support group of friends in college.** Know that you are going to stumble and make mistakes. Your support group will help you make the transition.
- **Whether you were a leader in high school or not,** you can take a leadership role as a freshman in almost any organization you join in college. College can be just the place to reinvent yourself.

Know Your Body:

The "Freshman Fifteen" is not just a college myth!

- **Try to put variety in your diet** whenever possible, and consider taking a Foods and Nutrition class.
- **Be careful with unhealthy late-night snacks** while studying.
- **Walk to classes** whenever possible. Invest in some comfortable shoes!
- **Take advantage of workout facilities at your school.** Most are free for students. If they aren't free, just find a running partner.
- **Sleep is very important!** Take advantage of any chance you get to take naps and catch up on your sleep. Try your best to get at least seven hours of sleep per night.

Lessons Learned: If I Had Only Known...

Helpful Hints for the Transition to College

Know Your Campus Culture:

- **Learn about your campus geography and how that can affect your experience.** For example, living in a city versus a more rural setting will have an impact on activities. Come prepared.
- **Get to know the layout of your campus, and familiarize yourself with where everything is located.** Do a "dry-run," walking to each of your classes before they begin, so you can make sure that you know where they are located and how much time it will take to get to class.
- **Know your school's academic culture,** such as the grading system, popular class times, popular study settings, and individual professors' classroom atmospheres.
- **Explore your social culture,** including Greek life, popular sports, campus "hot-spots," party days, dorm life atmosphere, and possibly a "dress code."
- **Go to sporting events.** You might even consider trying sports other than just football and basketball.

Know Your Options:

- **Don't be overwhelmed** with all of the available opportunities.
- **Seek out information about each activity and organization in which you are interested.** You usually can go to informational meetings before joining a group.
- **Try something new.** You don't have to simply stick to the same things you did in high school. College is a time to try new things.

Continued

Tips for Involved Parents and Students:

Helpful Hints for the Transition to College *(continued)*

Know Your Options: *(continued)*

- **Be aware of the organization's reputation** and how that might affect your own.
- **Charter your own organization if you don't find exactly what you're wanting.** In college, it can be much easier to start a new club or activity than it was in high school, even as a freshman.
- **Be open to change!** It's completely O.K. to make changes in your life, including your major, dorm, roommate, activities, friends, etc.

Know Your Distractions:

- **College brings a lot of distractions.** Social networking sites, parties, organizations, friends, and relationships are an integral part of the college experience, but remember that, most importantly, you are in college to learn and start a career path.
- **Be organized and use your time-management skills** so that distractions don't get in the way of your education.
- **Be aware of the types of things that distract you.** While you don't have to cut out every distraction, being aware will help keep them in check.
- **Procrastinating in college has big repercussions.** With fewer grades in college, each grade is a lot more important! College professors generally don't offer extra credit or make-up work.

Know Your Networks:

- **Stay connected** to your networks at home.
- **Make new contacts.** They want to help you out!
- **Find out who you should know** for financial aid, registration questions, internships, organization sponsorship, or possible job opportunities.
- **Build relationships** with organization leaders, upperclassmen, professors, resident advisors, teaching assistants, and peers from each class. Networking isn't hard if you just get out there and do it!
- **Facebook and other social networking sites can be a very good network if used responsibly.** Don't put anything on any web site that you wouldn't

want your parents or a future employer to see. Privacy blocks don't necessarily guarantee that your material won't be seen!

Know Your Resources:

- **Make (and keep) appointments with your advisors** early in the semester. However, upperclassmen often can be more helpful than advisors.
- **Take advantage of tutoring opportunities.** Professors and teaching assistants often are willing to help you outside of class.
- **Put together study groups.** (Just don't let those become distractions, too.)

Know the Miscellaneous:

- **Take care of business.** Do your reading and homework, and go to class! Be disciplined!
- **Plan well.** Don't take all easy classes your first semester so you can "get used to college" first. Don't load yourself down either. Vary the types of classes you take each semester: fun classes, hard classes, project classes, reading classes, essay classes, etc.
- **Invest in some rain boots and an umbrella or rain coat.** You'll be glad the first downpour!

Know Your Limits:

- **Don't commit to too much,** but rather, take some time to see what opportunities are available.
- **Develop yourself over time.** Get involved, but don't try to conquer campus in the first week.

Know Your Destination:

- **Step back and evaluate** what you want to do and achieve, who you want to become, so that you can understand what to develop while in college.
- **Market yourself!** You are your own name brand!

