

Words from the wiser: Upperclassmen share secrets

They can tell you what they'd do differently if they were freshmen again. They've been there. *And they survived.*

The College Press Service

Ask a college senior or junior what they remember as the most difficult thing about their first days on campus, and most are quick to respond.

"Not knowing what to expect," says Denise Palmer, a Brigham Young University senior.

And perhaps just as bad, "not knowing anyone," adds Beverlee Bailey, a senior at Columbia College in Chicago.

Surviving the adjustment from high school to college can be a tough time for incoming students. There's dealing with roommates, being away from home, and coping with studies.

In fact, national statistics indicate one out of four students will drop out after freshman year. That's one reason why newcomers may want to seek the advice from those who know campus life best: upperclassmen.

"Students are far more likely to believe it's the truth if it comes from other students," says Dr. Betsy Barefoot of the National Resource Center for the Freshman Year Experience at the University of South Carolina. "The most recent research indicates that the power of upperclassmen to affect the success of first-year students is unparalleled."

With that said, here's some tips from a few seasoned collegians on how to survive campus life and make the most of college years.

•Danger Zone: no curfews, no parents

Ahh, there's nothing quite as sweet as the first taste of freedom--but don't overdo it, students caution.

"When you first get there, any holds that your parents had on

you vanish," says William Lee, a sophomore at Western Illinois University. "You have the option to do whatever you want. It you want to party the entire weekend, you can."

Like it or not, there are no parents to wakt you for class; no school principal keeping attendance. Brian Hulse, a sophomore at Utah Valley State College, says he had trouble adjusting to that. "There's no penalty for ditching, and I just didn't go," he said.

Even if professors may not require attendance (but most Methodist College professors DO for 100 and 200 level classes--better check the attendance policy!), don't forget that you're really there for class, says students.

"Go to class. Don't skip. It's a really bad, bad habit to start," stresses Sarah Carlson, a University of Michigan junior. "Once you start, you think, 'Oh, that wasn't such a big deal.' Then you skip again and again. The problem is if you aren't there to hear the lecture, it's hard to understand it when it's on the exam."

While it may be a relief not to have anyone nagging you to get to bed early or to clean your room, the flip side is that Mom isn't there to help with laundry, either. Some students report that juggling a full course load, a job, and a social life make for a serious time crunch.

Kristen Rolf, a junior at Harvard University, says it was hard "finding the time to do all the things you never realized you were going to have to do, like doing your own laundry and buying your own shampoo."

•Finding in

You don't know anyone yet and your bags are barely unpacked, but it's time to register for classes. Next you've got to pick up textbooks. Where's the business office again? You

don't know your way around campus!

"Don't get stressed out," advises Faith Moody, a Kansas City Community College sophomore. "Relax and you'll be able to do your best."

Take time out to take care of yourself, no matter how busy things are, say students. "Take a jog every now and then," suggests Kedar Kulkarni, a junior at the School of Art Institute of Chicago.

Amber Zimmerman, an Eastern Illinois University senior, says trying to "fit in" to the social scene really stressed her out. "Now that I'm a senior, I'd tell freshmen NOT to try to fit in," she says. "Just be yourself."

Some students who attended larger colleges say the enormous size of first-year classes was overwhelming.

"I came from a small town, and the most difficult thing was probably adjusting to a large number of people," says Meagan McGahuey, an Iowa State University sophomore.

It's best to turn to others, whether you're confused about your major or fighting with your roommate, says April Richardson, a St. Phillips College sophomore. "If counselors won't help you out, ask other people, upperclassmen mainly, for help," she says. "They've been around and should know what they're doing."

•Sharing space

Once you've got beds, desks, dressers, and everything else imaginable squeezed into the tiniest space possible, well, it's easy to see how you and your roommate could get on each other's nerves.

"Communal property can be a problem. Just be aware of that," says Andreas Ringstad, a University of Chicago junior. "And don't monkey with your roommate's stuff. Some of them can be very touchy."

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Student researches causes of first-year "homesick blues"

By Colleen DeBaise College Press Service

Homesickness can put a damper on the first few months of freshman year.

While some first-year students are out meeting new friends, cheering at football games, and whooping it up at dorm parties, other are doing nothing--except thinking about home.

Why do some students get homesick, and others not?

That's exactly what Nicole Scaramelli wanted to know. The 1997 Dartmouth College graduate spent her senior year researching a problem that experts says afflicts as many as 30 percent of first-year students.

"Homesickness is one of the leading causes of people coming into the health center to see a counselor or doctor," said Scaramelli, a psychology major.

For the 12-month project, she studied about 100 Dartmouth students and dug up evidence to suggest that homesickness is mostly linked to a student's personality; people who are introverted tend to be more likely to be homesick, according to her study.

Scaramelli says she delved into the topic even though she herself never experienced a bad bout of the homesick blues. But during her freshman year, "one of my roommates

had a difficult time adjusting and ended up leaving school," she said. "That kind of sensitized me to the issue."

Working with Dartmouth professor William Morris, Scaramelli asked first-year students to fill out a questionnaire in the summer before starting Dartmouth, and then six weeks after arriving on campus. The questionnaire tested students' personality types.

Scaramelli says she thought the survey results would verify what she calls her "grieving hypothesis," that "people who were happiest in their home life might have a greater sense of loss in a new situation, and would therefore be more likely to experience homesickness."

But that was not the case. "We were pretty surprised," she said. "The

results were exactly opposite. People who were most unsatisfied with their homelife were most likely to be homesick."

Students were deemed to be homesick by the way they responded to statements like "I feel lonely here" and "I think about home constantly."

The ones who battled homesickness also were msot often introverted students who tended to be dependent on others. "It sort of seemed like a double-edged sword," Scaramelli said, explaining that introverts find it hard to meet new people. "It you have trouble getting that support, you're kind of in a bind."

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If you're feeling homesick, you're not alone. But don't suffer in silence! Here's where to find some help:

The Resident Advisor or Area Coordinator for your dorm
The Counseling Center--630-7150
The Campus Ministry Center--630-7157

Budget pact offers wealth of education tax breaks

The College Press Service

WASHINGTON--College students and their families could reap major benefits from a new balanced budget agreement between the White House and Congress that includes as much as \$40 billion for education-related tax breaks.

The plan contains both tax credits and tax deductions for higher education, while a separate agreement should pave the way for continued increases in Pell Grants as well.

"It's a tremendous package of new resources for families and students going to school," said Edward Kealy, executive director of the Committee for Education Funding, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group.

The tax provisions are similar to President Clinton's original HOPE scholarship, which provide tax breaks for the first two years of college. But the final budget plan also follows a complex formula that may have most families looking to their accountants for help.

"It probably will require better advice and more information from both college financial aid officers and high school counselors," Kealy said. Despite the complexities, the plan "opens up the possibility of college for all families," he added.

Here is a brief description of the tax provisions:
•Freshmen and sophomores would get a tax credit on the first \$1,000 of tuition and a 50 percent credit on the next \$1,000. For example, a student with \$2,000 in tuition costs would receive \$1,000 plus half of the next \$1,000, for a total aid package of \$1,500. These students also would remain eligible for Pell Grants of up to \$3,000 in 1998, based on financial need.

•Juniors, seniors, graduate students, and returning adults would receive a 20 percent credit on the first \$5,000 of tuition and fees through the year 2002 and the first \$10,000 of tuition and fees thereafter. These students also would remain eligible for Pell Grants.

•All students could get a tax deduction of up to \$2,500 a year for interest paid on education loans. Families and students could claim this credit even if they do not itemize their tax returns.

•Families and students could make penalty-free withdrawals from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to pay for college costs.

•Students whose employers pay for undergraduate education could receive benefits worth \$5,250 a year before incurring any tax liability.

White House and congressional negotiators still



are working on details of eligibility for the programs. One option under discussion would offer eligibility to two-parent families earning up to \$80,000 a year and single parents earning up to \$40,000 annually.

Two-parent families earning \$80,000 to \$100,000 a year and single parents with incomes of \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year still would get some benefits, but those with higher incomes would lose eligibility.

The tax credits also are not refundable for low-income families, which means that students or their families must incur some income-tax liability to qualify for the new benefits.

"Combined with the Pell Grant increase, this agreement can allow families and college to put together financial aid packages that make higher education accessible," Kealy said.

He also praised negotiators for promoting lifelong learning through the 20 percent credit. "It's a lifetime credit that's there to be used at any time."

The tax package differs in some respects from the President's original proposal, which included an annual guaranteed \$1,500 tax credit for the first two years of college and a \$10,000 tuition tax deduction. But that plan did not allow students to get Pell Grants in addition to the tax breaks.

"The most needy student does better in this agreement," said Ray Taylor, who represents community college leaders in Washington, D.C. By adding the Pell Grant provision, he said, needy students can get both direct assistance and tax benefits.

Republicans also claimed the President's original plan could promote tuition inflation among colleges. A broader approach to tax relief, with several different components, will not increase inflationary pressure, they said.

But the complex new package will force colleges to step up their financial aid advising. One potential headache is that families still must pay their tuition and fees in the fall and will not get the tax credits until they file tax returns the following April.

"Colleges must advise students of the new system, at the very least," Taylor said.

MC to honor Fred Chappell at 13th Southern Writers Symposium

Staff Report

Methodist College will honor North Carolina author and teacher Fred Chappell Sept. 26-27 at its 13th Southern Writers Symposium.

The theme for the two-day event is "Fred Chappell: Places of Possibility." Dr. Mary Wheeling White, assistant professor of English, is serving as symposium director.

A well-known poet, novelist, and UNC-G English professor, Chappell will read from a book in progress, *Look Back All the Green Valley*, at a dinner Sept. 26 at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12. On Sept. 27, he will give an informal reading and talk, "Chat and Backchat, Sass and Talksass," at 2:45 p.m. in Hensdale Chapel. This is open to the public at no charge.

On Sept. 27, the Methodist College Theatre Department will present a staged dramatic reading of Chappell's poetry entitled "Hillsides and Holler: Voices and Echoes." Tickets for this event, scheduled for 8 p.m. in Reeves Auditorium, are \$5.

"Much of Fred Chappell's work deals with region--specifically North Carolina--and explores the infinite possibilities found within seemingly limited places," said White. "For two

days, the symposium participants will share their ideas on how Chappell's literature, criticism, and even his teaching journey into unexpected places, from the magical to the technical."

For more information, contact Dr. White at 630-7492. A complete schedule of the symposium events is on the Web at www.apcnet.com/Methodist/Methodist.html.

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Welcome to all freshmen and new students, and welcome back to all returning Monarchs! The *Pride* is your voice on campus, so let us hear from you.