

# Getting yourself into the groove

BY JOHN BORWICK

Now at NCSSM, you are part of a diverse community of students attempting to "accept the greater challenge" and yet have a social life, also known as fun. So here is what you need to do to get oriented as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In your first few days on campus, you are going to have free time. Yes, despite Concurrent Small Group Sessions at all hours of the day and copious amounts of hall and group activities, you will be living the good life. Your mission should be to meet as many people as possible.

Meet and know your hall. Between check and lights-out you have lots of time to spend with your hallmates. Use this time to see how you might fit in with everyone else on hall. During the day, go outside and see what the rest of the junior class is like.

Seniors will then arrive. Spend time with the senior class. We are already "in the groove," even if we don't want to be. Most of us will be nice so make sure you speak up. If your senior sibling approaches you, get to know them, because he or she can help get you oriented even better and faster.

Now you will need to know a little about your roommate, and yourself. For example, if you and your roommate are heavy sleep-



The guys of 4th West "get into the groove" with their hall last school year.

ers, then you will need to talk about waking one another up in the morning for class. Try to get along with your roommate by working out personality conflicts before they get blown out of proportion.

Understand that we have our own lingo

here. Three-letter acronyms are all over and everything gets reduced to the minimum number of syllables necessary to communicate the idea. Ask questions and you will be fine. Don't lose your curiosity and nurture your creativity. It is not important to remember everything.

Intelligence will keep you out of trouble, and wisdom will keep you happy.

A quick bit of wisdom on romance, for all those interested. It is to your best interest to hold off on serious relationships for awhile. Someone you think is really masterful in the first few days of school may turn out very different in time.

Class is right around the corner. Make sure that you have pencils and pens, spending money for lab books, a bookbag, a planner to write down your homework, and someone to talk to. If you are missing one or more from the above, talk to your RLA. He or she will know what to do.

Some people think about leaving, but please give school at least a month before seriously considering going back home. Take time for yourself every day to keep school from overwhelming you. Do not lose yourself in the classes, because classes are only a part of what the NCSSM family provides to its students. Good luck.

## Maintaining your confidence

BY L. WHITNEY DUFF

Each new junior arriving at NCSSM, this year and every year before, came from the top percentile of his class. Most likely he was one of the students who made straight A's at his old high school, but never really had to work for them. He was the student whom his peers expected to make the best grades on tests or papers. He was also probably the student taking many honors or advanced classes.

Upon arrival at NCSSM, this junior is grouped with 550 other students who all come from the same background. The school says that these students are some of North Carolina's "best and brightest." But, with so many other stars, it is sometimes hard to shine.

Probably the hardest thing about S&M is maintaining confidence in yourself. When you arrive, and realize how talented and bright your fellow classmates are, you feel humbled. Many students begin to lose confidence in their own abilities.

It is important to remember why you are here: the application process selected you out of hundreds of other candidates. You were chosen because of your academic record, the way you challenged yourself at your former school, and what teachers and other adults said about you as a student and as a person.

And at NCSSM, just like other schools, there are plenty of opportunities to excel, in academics as well as in other areas. For example, even if you are having a difficult time in Chemistry, you may be the top student in your History class. Or you might be on an academic team, such as Science Olympiad or the Quiz Bowl team. You may even find another area to shine. Many NCSSM students show their talents through art, photography, drama, dance, writing, varsity sports, intramural sports, and music.

The students who really succeed at NCSSM, and those who get the most out of their two years here, are the ones who don't lose confidence in themselves. The students who push through, even when their

grades aren't what they would like them to be or when they feel overburdened with work, are the ones who find the many ways to shine.

It is important to remember that you are no longer competing with your classmates. It isn't about who is in the harder classes, or who is making the better grades. It is about pushing yourself, and doing the best you can. Do not lose faith in yourself. And when everything starts weighing you down, take a minute to think about how you got here.

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## How to get what you want & make your teacher happy, too

BY JULIE SIKKINK

As a humanities teacher, my goal for students is to learn a lot and enjoy it, while having a real life too.

The point of class is to learn, not to simply get the best grade you can. Grades are only helpful motivators. Don't be afraid to take on a bigger challenge just because it is harder if you know that it will interest you or that you will learn a lot. Easy A's are simply validations of mediocrity. Hard won C's can be medals of honor, and stepping stones to greater things.

Figure out whether you're a procrastinator or a perfectionist and then change that. Learn to get started early and work steadily, so that you can also take breaks and stop working at a reasonable hour. If you live from crisis to crisis, you aren't doing yourself any good, and can be creating chaos for everyone else too.

Abandon old study habits such as never taking notes because you'll remember all that stuff when the test comes or the thought that tutorials, exam review sessions and meetings with teachers and guidance counselors are just for "dumb kids," not you. Don't expect teachers to explain everything to you. Start studying more than 10 hours before that 8 a.m. test.

Be careful when you take notes out of books so you don't plagiarize.

Your state of mind has a big impact on how "hard" or "boring" or "stressful" the work feels. Rearrange how you work so that you don't overload yourself with a task you don't like. If nothing works, though, please get help and don't suffer alone. YOU are why we have people like SLI's, counselors, nurses—so make use of the human resources provided for your needs.

Participate in class. You learn more, have more fun, are less likely to get called on, and it looks good to teachers! If you get shy in discussions, come prepared with a question to ask. If you didn't do the work, admit it fast, and then get busy contributing whatever you still can.

Also, realize that if teachers were really sadists, we could find much better paying employment elsewhere! Try to see the value in the "boring" or "painfully hard" projects we assign. If you think a certain assignment is really unfair then come tell us. We might agree with you when we see your point of view or you might come to appreciate our perspective. Feel free to email when you cannot otherwise reach us. Communication can only help.