

The voice of experience

Words of wisdom passed down to guide current classes

BY MARY KOHLMANN

Although incoming juniors receive a flood of advice from parents, teachers and administrators, the best information often comes from those who have stood most recently in their shoes.

Many new students cite roommates as a pressing worry, but relatively few Science and Math pairs or triples have truly unresolvable problems.

"Create a working relationship with your roommate, even if you don't interact outside the room," Caleb Lee said. "Don't give up. Go to hallmates for help, if needed."

A student with roommate trouble can also go to his or her SLI, RLAs or counselor. Ryan Kilby advocates the system of roommate contracts as a way of reducing conflict.

"Work out ahead of time all 'situations' with your roommate," he said. "This is all inclusive, from 'nekking time' to what happens when you are breaking in-room or off campus after hours to when your roomie should just flat out shut up and turn off the music."

Academics are, of course, another area of concern. "Learn to manage your time," Anika Shahrier said. "Prioritize your work; do first what is due soonest. Develop good study habits from the beginning so that you don't have to pick them up later. And don't stay up too late. It wrecks your concentration the next day."

Lee agreed. "Even if you don't have to, go ahead and do your homework," he said. "Don't stay up late—avoid all-nighters."

The social scene at NCSSM is also a major adjustment. Living with hundreds of peers from almost every background imaginable creates an environment that can at first be both exciting and intimidating.

"As a starter, try to hang out with your hallmates, juniors and seniors alike," Kilby said. "This is a good base that you can expand upon later."

The closest friendships often form quickly and solidly; Shahrier calls NCSSM friends, "the greatest people you will ever meet." But diversity among friends is also important.

"Get a circle of friends," Lee said, "but don't be exclusive. Have friends in all circles."

But what happens if one of these new close friends becomes something more? Many juniors are immediately warned about the "two week rule," which is a social convention that discourages entering a relationship during the first two weeks of school.

"At that point in time, you don't really know any person well enough," Kilby said. "Even what you may know at the end of that two weeks is just the facade or surface personality that they give off."

Premature dating may also affect friendships.

"The first two weeks is the best time to go up to

complete strangers and tell them your name," Shahrier said. "Do you really want to be known as 'So-and-so's girlfriend?'"

The most common piece of advice, however, is to have fun.

"Try not to worry," Shahrier said. "It only makes everything worse. Plus, it gives you wrinkles. NCSSM is one of the greatest places you'll ever be, so enjoy it."

Despite the different experiences the two NCSSM years offer, seniors receive little new advice other than to continue working hard and to do their college applications during the summer.

"I wish someone had told me to be myself," said grandsenior Thomas Manning, who will begin at UNC-Asheville this year. "I know that some of my friends and I felt that we had to be our seniors. It took awhile for us to realize that we were our own class and didn't have to live up to the amazing awesomeness we felt our seniors had had."

Appreciation for oneself and one's friends is also what UNC-Chapel Hill freshman Lindsay Haslebacher advises.

"Don't spend all your time in your room—go out and have some fun," she said. "Before you know it, you'll be up on that stage in your little caps and gowns. Just enjoy it, because it goes too fast."



Photo by Amy Bryson

Third West RLA Keith Grose and First Royall SLI Gail Morgan slip 'n' slide during an RLA activity on the IM field Tuesday night.

LEADERSHIP: students train for upcoming school year

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The MPCs serve to help and celebrate the diversity of the student body. A group of 13 students led by SLI Jennifer Ashe work throughout the year to build understanding among the many cultural groups on campus to increase acceptance and respect within the school. This year, they take as their starting point the words of writer Alice Walker, "I think we have to own the fears that we have of each other, and then, in some practical way, some daily way, figure out how to see people differently than the way we were brought up to."

Another leadership group that juniors will get to know very quickly is the RLAs. In charge of taking check and housekeeping, RLAs have a crucial role in the daily functions of a hall and work closely with their SLIs. They often carry on hall personalities and hall traditions. RLAs are the go-to people for those who have questions, need help, or have just had a bad day.

Seniors especially appreciate the help of the Peer College Counselors. They are responsible for gathering scholarship information, presiding over college information sessions and organizing College Eve. The PCC bulletin board on the First Reynolds breezeway contains valuable

information about information sessions and scholarship deadlines.

A less visible, but nonetheless important leadership group is the Development Attachés.

"Being an Attaché will mean great things this year," said senior Morgan Kears, a new Development Attaché. "We will be a part of the school, helping to raise the money that each student will be able to use in some way. Plus, we will be getting the opportunity to talk to very important people to make changes that we feel are important for the school. It is work, but with great people and in a great environment."

Although the Lit@Com Liasons also keep a low profile, they serve a significant role in school function. A group of five, they serve as a link between students and the resources offered by the library and Lit@Com program. In an academic environment ruled by science and mathematics, they try to advocate the literary arts while highlighting library programs and technology.

"I'm excited to be a Liason," senior Kathleen Hébert said. "It's only the second year of the program, so we have so many new opportunities and can take it so many different ways. We can really make our mark."

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