



College life: Time for preparation, adjustments and final checks

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The excitement of your high school graduation has probably worn off by now, and you're enjoying the rest of the summer either by being lazy or working at a summer job.

But the time has come to pack up the "eat-drink-and-be-merry-because-tomorrow-I-go-to-college" attitude and prepare to face those apprehensions that have been in your mind throughout the past year.

By now, all graduates should have realized that they have left the "frying pan" of high school and are entering the "pressure cooker" of the adult world. But if your immediate plans include continuing your education in an institution of higher learning, making last-minute arrangements should be first on the list of priorities for the rest of this summer.

College administrators remind you to send a deposit to the hous-

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-- Tracy Hicks

ing office to reserve a room if you plan to live on campus.

"A lot of people think the college will already have a room for them when they get there," says Tracy Hicks, admissions counselor at Winston-Salem State University. "But all universities require a deposit before reserving a room."

Another important reminder is to make sure that you have received a final financial award notice. Ms. Hicks says that incoming freshmen sometimes assume that they will get all of the financial aid that was said to be available in a letter received from the Student Aid Office. At times, circumstances change, making the total funds unavailable. Graduates must be sure to know the exact amount of financial aid that will be awarded.

A medical form, including the student's medical history and an immunization record, must also be sent to the student health service before a freshman can register for classes. Students must have a physical examination and state any mental or physical problems.

Ms. Hicks says that without these forms, a school could be held liable in the event of a medical emergency.

Most colleges and universities require high school graduates to send in a final transcript of their

grades and class rank immediately after graduation. The Office of Admissions should have received a final transcript before the end of June.

Once the arrangements have been finalized and you have entered college, making the appropriate adjustments should be next on the list of priorities.

In academics, freshmen should first develop time management and good study skills.

In making the change from high school to college life, many high school graduates think that having a good time comes before studying. But these college students have different attitudes now that they have become "veterans in the business."

Kenyon Andrews, a rising junior at North Carolina State University, says, "I think that having good study habits is most important. Without them, you'll have a hard time just getting by."

"You should use your time wisely, too," Andrews adds. "Don't wait and then cram for a test that you know of ahead of time. Study every day."

Shaw University graduate Celeste E. Beatty emphasizes the importance of going to college. "If you're not going to school to learn, there's no need to go," she says. "Some people go to school just to get away from home and have a good time."

"I like to follow Ralph Emerson's philosophy," Ms. Beatty says. "Keep in mind that college is not an education, but a means of education. To me, that means that college is the place to get the tools you'll need for work, but it's up to you to want to learn the tools."

Both of these students agree that students need a serious attitude in order to be successful.

Besides the academic adjustments, college students must also be prepared to make social adjustments.

William H. Cain, director of counseling at Winston-Salem State University, says that college should be a "50-50 proposition." "Fifty percent should be spent socially and the other 50 (percent should be spent) academically," Cain says.

But sometimes, he says, the ratio should change. "During finals or when a student needs to study, more time should be spent on academics. During Homecoming or other social activities, more time can be spent on social events."

"But you have to learn how to work with your time so that you know what to do when," Cain says. "You can't do everything at once."

Freshmen should also be prepared to deal with the change in class sizes upon entering college. Some classes may be held in

a lecture hall or auditorium and have a large number of students, making it harder to receive individualized academic attention.

A final adjustment is getting along with your roommate.

College students are often assigned to a room with a person whom they have never met. Sometimes these combinations do not work when attitudes and opinions conflict.

Disagreements may arise, but it's important to be able to talk things over and come to an agreement. If things do not work out, you can always plan to find a new roommate.

These are some final hints from college administrators for success in college:

- *Develop a plan for your college years.* Take general classes and take your time on deciding on a major. Talk to your adviser

or counselor to find out what courses would be best for you and your major.

- *Learn how to manage money.* Don't go shopping at the mall if you know you have a large phone bill or other bills to pay. You may not always be able to call home when cash is low.

- *Learn how to take notes.* Many instructors rely on lecturing and reciting as their teaching technique, and some students have trouble knowing exactly what to write. If an instructor repeats a statement, you most likely will hear or see that again on a test. If an instructor writes something on the board, it could also be important to record in your notes.

- *Get to class on time.* This will help you get in the habit of being punctual when you enter the workforce.

- *Learn not to take failures too hard and successes too high.* College will have ups and downs. Be sure to pick yourself up from falls and strive to achieve greater things.

- *Get involved in extracurricular activities.* First find out what is offered in the different organizations at the school and what kind of people are members. Then make sure the organization will be of benefit to you. Joining

groups that are related to your planned major will definitely be of help.

Ms. Hicks says that the most important thing to remember when you get to college is to have an open mind.

"Once you're in college, you have to be prepared to make decisions," Ms. Hicks emphasizes. "It's going to be the first experience in being on your own. You have to be ready for true independence."

Discipline

Not a problem in the schools

Most Americans, according to a new comparative study of public opinion polling results, do not see discipline as the major problem in local schools.

The study, published by the National Education Association, or NEA, reports that in 16 years of public opinion polling by Gallup and Phi Delta Kappa, the education honor society, an average of only one person in four has ranked discipline as the No. 1 problem facing America's public schools.

Asked to identify "the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal," only between 14 and 26 percent of the respondents named discipline in the Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa polling.

Measuring the extent of the school discipline problem, notes NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell, has always been complicated by the difficulty of defining "discipline problem."

Some people are referring to vandalism and other acts of violence when they speak of school discipline problems. Others equate discipline problems with a lack of respect for authority.

"Discipline problems often mean one thing to teachers or parents and something very different to non-parents," says Ms. Futrell. "As a result of this difficulty in measuring 'discipline,' the discipline problem may have Please see page A9

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