



## Advice for College Freshman

Real insights from P2P alumni now on-campus

- Don't take too many credits your first semester. You may done well in high school but in college you need to balance many things. Between classes, making friends, trying to exercise and not gain the 'freshman 10' and roommate issues you could be overwhelmed.
- The opposite of the first point is if you feel you're being pigeonholed into what your advisor thinks you can do, speak up. You may be able to graduate early if you take more classes during your first years. Only you know what you can handle and if you can do more, say so.
- Stay informed of campus events and activities. Many times a club or organization can provide great experiences outside of the classroom.
- There are so many resources available to assist you (both academic and personal.) Don't be afraid to ask for help. You may never have needed a tutor before but could really use the extra support-don't look at it as being weak.
- Many college students treat their professors as their peers and dispense with formality and etiquette. You will stand out more if you are well spoken and respectful of them. When sending emails or texts, remember you're addressing adults so don't overuse teenage language.
- Professors appreciate you taking the time to meet with them. They usually have office hours so you can stop by. Don't wait until you have a problem to seek them out.
- Take "interesting" classes outside of your major. They will expose you to areas you may really enjoy and also help to relieve stress.
- Take risks out of your comfort zone. It will challenge you and also give you more confidence.
- Pack clothes for all occasions. There are so many events where you'll be hunting around for the perfect look so be ready!
- The first couple of weeks of college are the easiest time to make friends because of all the social events scheduled. Reach out and get involved.
- As a second semester senior, make sure you understand the importance of AP exams. Study and get the credits for the course. It takes a huge burden off of your college load.
- Many freshmen have strict rules at home regarding curfew etc. so when they arrive at college they tend to overindulge in freedom. Make sure your parents give you some space while you still are at home.
- Keep a neat workspace/dorm etc. It will help you stay organized and will be one less thing to worry about.
- If you are at a research university, try to do some research. If you find a topic that interests you, talk to that professor about working in their lab.

- Don't be surprised at how much you will need to learn on your own. You may not be used to reading your textbooks in high school, in college, it's critical to stay ahead in class.
- Don't forget that college is about social learning as well as academic. Take time to enjoy yourself and grow as an individual. It can take a long time to establish true friendships. Just because you went to high school with kids doesn't mean you have to cling to them in college. Many times, you do that because you're homesick. Don't forget that having some alone time is a good thing too.
- When arriving at school for move-in, try to arrive at least a day before to get acquainted with your new surroundings. Move-in is crazy. Try to only bring the absolute bare essentials. You won't know exactly what you'll need until you are there. Sometimes your roommates won't like you using their things so you'll need to have your own and other things you can share.
- If you don't like your roommate, talk to your RA. Make friends with other kids so you don't rely too heavily on your roommate. If it's really uncomfortable, remember that many kids leave after the first semester which opens up new rooms.
- Textbooks are a huge expense each year. Check used websites and rental sites for your books. You can save more than half rather than buying new. If it's a book you know you'll use for several classes or to keep as part of a professional library, then it may be wise to buy it new.
- In your room, a mattress pad is essential for most beds to make them more comfortable. Plastic bins are good to keep snacks and drinks. Many kids read lists and buy what others tell them they'll need. Don't forget that you can get supplies from kids who are moving out or on Craigslist etc. You'll probably have a computer but most colleges have free printer access so you don't need one. It takes a lot of space and often is unnecessary and expensive.
- A lot of kids skip the weekend meal plan and then end up eating poorly over the weekend. Over the summer, check the cost/benefit of having the weekend meal plan if you're staying on campus. Sunday brunch is one of the best social events at college.

### **Credits**

Matt Costales, Angela Malczyn, Cody Nathan, Vinoo Ganesh, Ryan Connelly, Nina Paraloglou, Laura Sheys, Angela Ye, Joanna Cornell, Sonia Jeffers, David Kuiper, and Brett Rosenberg.

