

Graduation to College

Final High School Transcripts

You may pick up your final transcript and diploma on the Wednesday following graduation. If you have any holds, those will need to be resolved before hand. All stoles and cords must be returned unless you want to purchase them.

College Credit Transcripts

Allow UCA a few weeks to get your college grades entered and then request a transcript be sent to the college you will be attending. The attached transcript request form should be mailed or faxed to UCA.

Personal Changes

College is a time of excitement and transition. It is what you have been preparing for and looking forward to for a long time. New roommates, food, classes, friends...enjoy this time and try to fully live each experience. At the same time, it's okay if you're not always living it up. Once the excitement of being on your own wears off, the reality of school sets in. School work has to be done and not every day is the best day of your life. 65% of college students report feeling homesick or lonely sometime during their first semester. Acknowledge and accept that it's normal. Try to eat healthy and get enough sleep. Take care of the things that need to be done and it will help you avoid unnecessary anxiety. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed or depressed, get help.

This is also a huge adjustment for your parents. They are going to worry about you and be curious about what is going on in your life. They are going to miss you terribly, so go easy on them.

Time Management

Managing your time when classes meet a few times a week and deadlines are few and far between, is one of the biggest challenges facing incoming college freshmen. Attendance in classes becomes more crucial as they won't meet as often but will still cover a wealth of material.

Tips for helping make your first year a success:

- *You may not be in class, but that doesn't mean it's all free time.* College should be a full-time job. You should expect to study for several hours each week for each class.
- *The syllabus is your best friend.* It will contain information such as how your final grade is determined, attendance policies, required reading, test dates, and project due dates. Make sure you keep a copy and review it regularly.
- *High school study habits won't cut it.* College is a bridge between doing the bulk of your learning in class like in high school and developing the entirely

independent critical thinking you need when you get a job. Normally, there is significantly more reading and writing and the material you cover in class is several times faster than what you're used to.

- *Stop burnout before it happens.* Taking time to care for yourself will save you hours in the long run. Meditation and exercise are great tools to help you relax and focus. Getting enough sleep and eating right are also very important.
- *Smart students get help.* Use all the resources your college offers. Tutors, counselors, librarians and professors can all guide you and save you enormous amounts of time.
- *Fit in fun.* The key is prioritizing. Don't lose track of why you are there, but once your work is done and you have free time, enjoy it.

Money Management

Have a frank discussion with your parents about their expectations and who is responsible for which expenses. It's important to make a budget and stick with it. It is very easy to spend money when away from home.

Do not respond to the myriad of credit card offers you will receive. Credit cards are easy to come by and difficult to pay off.

Studies show that students who work about 10 hours per week are better time managers and actually have better grades than those who don't work at all. But working more than 20 hours per week negatively impacts grades.

College Student Services

You've paid for them, use them!

- **Career Center** – An office designed to help you plan for your career after college. They can do career inventories, help with potential jobs, etc.
- **Counseling** – College can be stressful. Issues that you dealt with in high school may continue or new issues may arise. Take advantage of the trained professionals on campus to help you sort it all out.
- **Academic Help** – Most colleges will have a variety of academic assistance programs. This may range from writing labs to tutoring in individual classes. If you are having trouble in a class or just want someone to proof your papers, seek out these services.
- **Advisors** – There is a vast array of classes. Draw upon an advisor's expertise to help you. Just remember, it is ultimately your responsibility to take the classes needed for your degree. Make a 4-year plan!
- **Health Center** – Access to medical care is available.

- Professors – Get to know them. Visit them during their office hours; they are there to help you.

Get Involved

Most colleges structure the first few weeks of your freshman year to maximize opportunities for students to get to know one another and get involved in campus life. Try not to go home during that first month of your freshman year. It is a transition time for everyone.

Research opportunities for involvement ahead of time and attend a meeting for any you might have an interest in. The possibilities are normally endless: Greek Life, social clubs, intramural athletics, service clubs, honor societies, student government, performance groups, yearbook and newspaper staffs, etc.

Practical Living

Learn to do your laundry, sew on a button, clean a bathroom, and cook some basic snacks. Learning to change the oil in your car or prepare a Thanksgiving dinner is probably not necessary for freshman year.

Make time in your schedule for exercise, sleep, and meals. Sleep deprivation affects everything. Aim for 7-8 hours per night ... You'll study better, feel better, and be physically healthier.

Leave time in the summer to be with friends and family – to say goodbye.

Remember this is also a huge adjustment for your family. Go easy on them. Call your parents. Try to find a balance somewhere between never and 3 times a day.

Negotiate expectations for visits home. When you come home, be sure to schedule time with family as well as with old friends and let everyone know your plans ahead of time.

Roommate Tips

Have you ever shared a room with someone? For some students, living with a roommate will be a new experience. While you and your roommate do not have to be close friends, you do have to live together and will share many aspects of college life. The best way for you and your roommate to get to know each other and avoid unintentional conflicts is to talk about your likes, dislikes, sensitivities, and attitudes.

Your roommate most likely grew up in a different family, was educated in a different school, formed a different set of friends, and developed a set of values, beliefs, opinions, and habits that are different from your own. Most of us often overlook that our own habits, behaviors, and attitudes may cause unintended aggravation to others.

Contact your roommate prior to arriving on campus in the fall and discuss what items each of you has that you may want to share. Multiple televisions and other such items take up a lot of precious space in a dorm room.

Explore Classes

You may have a good idea of what you want to major in, but the most popular major is “undecided.” Even if you are sure of your major, use some of your electives to explore other interests.

Final Thoughts

Like most of life, college is what you make it. You can zip through for the sole purpose of getting a good-paying job, or you can stroll through making new friends, learning new subjects, and preparing yourself for the rest of your life.

I think one of my favorite quotes does a pretty good job of summarizing any advice I would give: “For what it’s worth: it’s never too late to be whoever you want to be. I hope you live a life you’re proud of, and if you find that you’re not, I hope you have the strength to start all over again.” – F. Scott Fitzgerald

Thanks for making this a great year. Keep in touch and visit when you can.