

## Suggestions for First-Year College Students

1. **Go to class.** New students often hear that in college, “You can go to class anytime you want.” This is not true!
2. **Learn the Campus.** Become an explorer and spend some time learning where everything is located. Don’t become one of those seniors still looking for the library.
3. **Know that the college has academic rules.** Confusion is one thing, but ignorance of rules says volumes about a person. Don’t become one of those students who always says, “But nobody told me...” Get and keep a copy of the student handbook and catalog.
4. **Ignore rumors.** If you hear a statement which, if followed, could affect your program of study, check with your instructor or academic advisor. Acting on or putting one’s faith in the validity of a rumor could prove embarrassing.
5. **Budget time.** Have a social life, but learn to plan your study time properly. This means you do not begin to study for a test the night before it is given or start writing a report the day before it is due!
6. **Accept constructive criticism.** If your work is heavily red-lined, then your instructor took a lot of time to show you how to improve. Listen to his/her advice.
7. **Realize that being a student is a full-time job.** You cannot study one day a week and hope your grades will be acceptable. Look upon collegiate life as a full-time career.
8. **Become part of college life.** Becoming part of the college community is just as important as going to class, writing papers, or taking exams. Being involved will only enhance your college experience.
9. **Get to know some instructors before you graduate.** Your instructors are the individuals who evaluate your work, supply references for that future career, and guide your intellectual development. Don’t let the titles of instructor and doctor frighten you.
10. **Be patient with yourself.** You will make some errors or mistakes during your collegiate career. When you realize you have goofed, set out to remove or correct your mistake. This is when your advisor or counselor becomes very important.
11. **Make your own decisions.** You must learn to take a chance (not a needless risk) when options are available and then accept responsibility for your decisions.
12. **You are in school for your education, not someone else’s.** If you let others decide what you are going to study and what you are going to be, you have ignored your responsibility to yourself.

13. **Know your academic situation prior to the withdrawal period.** If you have a question or concern about how you are doing in a class, go to the instructor and discuss it. If you wait until after mid-terms or until the last week of classes and experience failure, playing academic catch-up can be a no-win situation. Keep yourself informed.
14. **Learn to communicate in the classroom.** There are no dumb questions concerning subject matter. If you don't know or don't understand something, chances are good that several of your peers don't know either. Learning to ask questions is a life skill that you need to develop.
15. **Safeguard your physical and mental well-being.** No one is going to thank you for working yourself to a frazzle or getting ill by ignoring your basic needs.
16. **Accept responsibility for yourself and your behavior.** If what you say and do is prompted by others, or nothing is ever your fault, you cannot claim to be an adult, just a follower.
17. **It does not help to blame others for your academic problems.** If you are not doing well academically, get help from the tutoring center, the student support center, or your instructor. Very few students make it through college without some academic assistance.
18. **Locate and use all college services.** The college wants you to succeed and will help you. Student services range from writing and math centers to personal counseling. Let the college serve you; after all, it's your school.