



NEWS & INFORMATION ABOUT
PLANNING FOR AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

The GEAR UP Gazette

FALL

FOR PARENTS OF FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS

4 CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE BEFORE COLLEGE

Whether your student will be living at home while starting their postsecondary education or leaving for college across town, the state or the country, there are a couple of key issues that should be discussed in this initial transition.

TOPICS	QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION
MONEY	<p>How will personal finances be handled? Students should have a clear understanding of how much responsibility they have for their expenses.</p> <p>Will your student have a credit card? Many students apply for credit cards once in college and quickly get into debt. Students should understand the principle of interest and how quickly costs can increase. Discuss the importance of a strong credit history.</p>
GRADES	<p>What are your expectations for academic performance? Similar to high school, be sure to let your student know your expectations for good grades and/or a certain GPA. Discuss how they might get help if they are struggling in classes.</p> <p>Do you expect to see grades? The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that all financial and academic information go directly to the student. Discuss early whether or not you expect to see your student's grades.</p>
HOUSE RULES	<p>How often should your student come home during the first semester? Being on campus on weekends helps students make social connections and feel more connected and engaged in campus life. Your student will most likely get homesick, but explain that it's normal and that it will pass.</p> <p>What are the house rules/expectations if your student is living at home and/or when your student does come home for breaks? College is a new phase of life and parents cannot expect students to maintain a high school lifestyle. Agree together on a reasonable curfew, expectations to help out at home, when to eat meals with the family and other matters.</p>
COMMUNICATION	<p>How, and how often, should you communicate with your student? It's easy to communicate instantly and often through cell phones, text messages and social media. There is no right answer for how much communication is right—it's a balance between allowing your student independence and providing support.</p>

Source: [College Parents of America, 2013](#)

ADJUSTING TO COLLEGE

CAN BE TRICKY

Approximately 50% of respondents said that if given the choice, they would still choose to enroll at their current college, while 34% were undecided. The items below provide us with a look into how first-year students acclimate to their new school.

FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT SAFETY ON CAMPUS



24%

Felt unsafe on campus



25%

Believe sexual violence is prevalent on campus



23%

Are not aware of their college's harassment/assault reporting policy

WHILE COLLEGES TOOK STEPS TO EASE STUDENTS' TRANSITION TO COLLEGE,



30%

Participated in a common book or summer reading program



51%

Took a course or first-year seminar designed to help students adjust to college life

FYE

54%

Were satisfied with first-year programs



63%

Were satisfied with their orientation

MANY STUDENTS STILL HAD DIFFICULTY ADJUSTING.



47%

Found it difficult to manage time effectively



36%

Had difficulty developing effective study skills



47%

Frequently felt overwhelmed by all they had to do



57%

Felt isolated from campus life



71%

Felt lonely or homesick

WHILE SOME STUDENTS MAINTAINED CONTACT WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES BACK HOME....



36%

Interacted with parents or guardians daily



24%

Interacted with siblings or extended family daily



20%

Frequently went home for the weekend



29%

Contributed money to help support their family



34%

Felt their family responsibilities interfered with schoolwork

MOST FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS ESTABLISHED CONNECTIONS AT THEIR NEW SCHOOL.



86%

Felt that faculty empowered them to learn



85%

Agreed that at least one staff member took an interest in their development



72%

Found it easy to develop close friendships with other students



75%

Interacted with close friends at their school daily



73%

Received advice/counseling from another student



66%

Are satisfied with the overall sense of community among students



The more you know about your students, the better you can understand their needs. With insight from CIRP's Your First College Year Survey, the most comprehensive tool addressing first-year programming and persistence, you'll be one step closer to providing the best environment for student learning and adjustment to college.

Survey Source: CIRP Your First College Year Survey 2016

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It's important to understand some of the challenges your student might face in his/her first year of college.

SUPPORT SERVICES & ACTIVITIES AT COLLEGE

There are countless people and services available to help your student on campus. Here's a rundown on the important ones to know.

ACADEMICS

Academic Advisor: Your student's point person for academic questions and concerns. At some colleges, it may be a professor, at others, it might be a professional. Students can set up appointments to talk about class registration, majors, and programs.

Computer Lab: A facility with computers, printers, and other tech equipment for use by students at no charge. Some campuses also lend out laptops, tablets, and other equipment for academic use.

Computer Help Desk: People to troubleshoot computer problems with hardware and software.

Library: More than just books and desks, college libraries may house tutoring services, group study rooms, computers, coffee, and helpful librarians.

Office Hours: A set time to meet with a professor and ask questions.

Registrar: Helps students enroll, add or drop classes, and send transcripts.

Tutoring: Most colleges offer additional academic support for students who might need help in a class. Tutors might be other students or qualified instructors.

Writing Center/Math Center/Etc.: Many colleges have people and places dedicated to helping students with the basics like math or writing. Your student can ask his/her advisor or search the college's website to see what services are available.

CAMPUS LIFE

Student Clubs: The more involved your student is on campus, the more likely she will continue on and graduate. There are countless ways to get involved, so encourage your student to check out a couple of student clubs that sound interesting.

Greek Life: Your student's school may have fraternities or sororities that bring together men and women for philanthropy and social activities.

Residential Advisor (RA): A student leader who lives in the residence halls or dorms on campus and helps resolve roommate conflicts as well as leads social and educational programs.

Residential Director (RD): One step up from a RA, a RD is often a graduate student or professional who serves as an advisor and resource for students living in the dorms.

Health Center: Many campuses have a small clinic on campus to help keep students healthy.

Counseling Center: Therapists and group support programs are available when school gets stressful or your student needs some support.

Intramural Sports: Fun, non-competitive sports leagues played against other teams on campus. From soccer to ping pong, intramural sports are a fun way to meet new people and stay healthy.

Recreation Center: Most colleges have a gym, fitness center and other programs to help students stay in shape.

FINANCIAL

Financial Aid Office: Questions about grants, loans, and scholarships? The financial aid office has people who are trained to help.

Career Center: If your student needs a job on-campus and/or is eligible for work study, the Career Center might be the place to look. They will also host job fairs, conduct resume writing workshops and other job-related services.