

COLLEGE SUCCESS

1 and 2 Year Programs

by Alan Farber, Ph.D.



Dear Student,

Congratulations on making the decision to further your education! You have a lot to look forward to and a lot of work to do. But if you've made it this far that means you have the tools to succeed. You just have to put those tools to use.

This book will help you set your priorities, succeed in your classes, and prepare for your future. This is an exciting time for you...so turn the page and let's get started.

Alan Farber, PhD

For the sake of simplicity, the term "college" refers to community colleges, technical colleges, institutes, and other post-secondary institutions.

College Success

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PART I

Succeed Academically

Academic success involves more than attending class and reading assignments. To be successful in college, you need to be organized, “study smart,” and know how to get the most out of your classes. You also need to make wise academic decisions.



Be Organized

Successful students typically have two things in common: they are organized, and they manage their time effectively.

In college, no one will contact you when you miss a class, and no one will remind you when your assignments are due. Even if you’re still living at home and receiving guidance and advice from parents or family members, you are responsible for managing your own time, classes, and school work.

Use an Academic Planner or Homework App

To help you stay organized, use an academic planner (available at the campus bookstore) or a cell phone homework app (such as iHomework).

Here are some items you need to record and keep updated.

- ▶ Assignment due dates and exam schedules
- ▶ Class times, professors’ office hours, and extra help sessions
- ▶ Course registration dates and deadlines
- ▶ Course withdrawal deadlines
- ▶ Application deadlines (student employment, scholarships, loans)

Don’t rely on your memory. Write down (or enter) everything that needs to be done today, this week, and throughout the semester.

Keep records and archive important messages

Keep documentation of all important school-related information in a file that won't get lost or destroyed. Maintain an additional file of non-academic records including receipts for purchases over \$10, car insurance, prescriptions, cell phone bills, and so forth. Don't rely strictly on online statements. You want a "paper trail" in the event that online records become unavailable.

Similarly, save all messages you receive regarding academic issues, either in your school's Learning Management System, or in email subfolders by category (e.g., Financial Aid, Career Services, Entrepreneur's Club).

Make efficient use of your time

- ▶ Create To Do lists. Determine which tasks are the most pressing and which can be put off until later.
- ▶ Look for ways to streamline and combine tasks. Study while you're doing laundry, listen to podcasts and audiobooks while you work out, or go over your notes while you're waiting for a friend.
- ▶ Use the time you have between classes to study, read, do research, or complete assignments.
- ▶ Look for chunks of time that are wasted and figure out how to use these times more effectively.
- ▶ Learn to say "no." In college, there is so much to do and so much going on that it's easy to get sidetracked.

Know what you need to do, and don't let anything get in the way of your academic success.



"Trust me—you can't just wing it in college. You need to create lists and plan out your days. I'd be lost without my planner and To Do lists."

Michael, business major



Succeed in the Classroom

During one year of full-time college you will occupy a classroom, lab, or lecture hall for approximately 500 hours. Here are some recommendations to help you get the most out of those hours.

Register as early as possible

Colleges publish a registration schedule, and all students are given a date (or range of dates) to register. Some classes fill up quickly, so always register at the earliest possible date.

Attend every class

When you miss or arrive late for class, you miss assignments, discussions, lectures, and information about upcoming assignments and tests. In some classes, grades may be partially based on attendance. *Don't expect an instructor to cut you any slack on your grade if you regularly miss class.*

Sit in the front of the class

On the first day of class, arrive early and sit in one of the first three rows. The closer to the center, the better. That may become your permanent seat.

When you sit in the front, you're able to see what is written, hear what is spoken, and you send a positive message to your instructor. Also, students in the front seldom talk to one another, text, chat, tweet, doze off, or walk in late, so there are fewer distractions.

Come prepared

If you're covering Chapter 4 on Wednesday, read Chapter 4 in advance. You'll get more out of the lecture, you will know what's going on in class, and you'll be able to answer questions. Regularly refer to your course syllabus.

Participate in classes

Unless the class is 100% lecture with no opportunity to participate, get involved by asking and answering questions. The material will be more interesting, time will pass more quickly, and your instructors will get to know you. Engaged and active learners have a better understanding of the course material, and they generally perform better on quizzes and exams.

Mute your cell phone

This includes disabling the vibrating function. There is no better way to alienate an instructor than to disrupt a class with a ringing or vibrating phone, or with the sight and sound of texting.

In class, use your laptop or tablet for classroom purposes only

If you use a device to take notes, avoid the temptation to email, text, chat, tweet, search the web, etc. Stay focused on taking notes, and participate in class discussions.



Make presentations early

If a classroom presentation is required, volunteer to make your presentation as early as possible in the semester. You'll get it out of the way, and you won't stress out watching the presentations that precede yours.

Have contact information for two students in each class

If you miss a class, you'll want to contact a classmate to get a copy of the notes and/or handouts, and to learn if any new assignments were made.

If an assignment is due on a day you can't attend class, check to see if it can be emailed to the instructor or delivered by a classmate.

"If I could tell new students only one thing, it would be to go to every class. It seems like every time I miss a class something is covered that I need for an exam or an assignment." Lana, communications major



Study Smart

It's time to hit the books. If your study or test-taking skills aren't up to par, check to see if your college offers classes, workshops, or individual assistance with study skills and test taking.

As a general rule, 2 to 3 hours of studying and assignment completion is required for every hour of enrolled coursework. So if you're taking 15 hours, prepare to work 30 to 45 hours per week outside the classroom.

Study in a quiet place

Locate an isolated, well-lit space where all you can do is study. Avoid friends, social networking, TV, texting, etc. By eliminating all distractions, you force yourself to do one thing only—study.



Find a quiet section of the library or an unoccupied classroom. Also consider off campus locations such as bookstores, public libraries, or quiet cafés.

Complete all assignments early

When you complete your assignments several days prior to the due date, you have time for editing and improvements. And if you're uncertain whether you did a project correctly, you have time to discuss it with your instructor and make revisions. Some instructors may even be willing to review a first draft.

Study the “worst first”

Students naturally avoid that which they find unpleasant, so they often study their least favorite subject last (if at all). This is a mistake. The end of a study session is when you are the most fatigued, and if you wait until the last minute, you may be rushed or run out of study time. Study your least favorite subject when you are the most alert and unrushed—at the beginning of your study session.

Study between classes

Time is your most precious commodity. Make use of the time you have between classes to study, review your notes, talk to an instructor, or do research in the library. This will free up your time in the evenings, and give you more time for social activities on the weekends.

Study according to your body clock

Are you a morning person or a night person? You want to study during your body's most alert state.

Space your studying

A good rule is 30 to 45 minutes of studying followed by a 5 to 10 minute break (e.g., stretch, get a snack, take a short walk). During your study sessions, don't do anything but study. If you can stay focused, you'll be able to get a great deal accomplished.

Temporarily disconnect

Turn off the TV and the music. Silence your phone, and don't check for text or phone messages until you're finished studying.

Know your software

Learn the shortcuts and features of MS Word. You will save yourself hundreds of hours over the course of your college career. If you need to improve your skills, review free online tutorials.



Review old tests

Check on the availability of old tests at the library or from students who previously took the course. Although you can't assume the items will be identical, you will gain some insight as to the way in which questions are asked, and the subject matter of interest to the instructor.

"One of the smartest things I did was to start hanging out with people who actually cared about their grades. We don't just play together—we study and play together." Christie, sophomore marketing major

Back up computer files and save often

Every student's nightmare is lost or corrupted assignments, papers, and projects. Computers crash, get stolen, or lost. Save your files on a free cloud system like Google Drive, Media File, or Drop Box, or purchase an online backup system like Carbonite or iDrive. External hard drives and USB sticks are fine, but they too can get lost or corrupted.

At the very least—email all documents to yourself as attachments so they exist in the cloud.

Socialize with students who care about school

Your circle of friends will influence your success in college. Avoid those whose priorities are ditching classes and partying. There is certainly a place for fun and games during college, but the successful completion of your program must be your top priority.





Make Wise Academic Decisions

A sound academic plan will help ensure that you achieve your academic and career goals.

You may be enrolled in a “terminal” or “non-transfer” program with the intention of getting a job right after college, or you may be planning to transfer to a four-year college at some point in the future. Whatever your situation, *you need to have a sound academic plan.*

Review your college catalog

Read through the online catalog and familiarize yourself with your college’s registration deadlines, add/withdrawal deadlines, academic regulations, program requirements, probation guidelines, etc.



Visit Career Services

If you haven’t already done so, make an appointment at Career Services. A career counselor can help you clarify your career options and goals, and plan for the future—whether it be getting a job or going on for a bachelor’s degree.

Meet with your academic advisor

Meet with your advisor early in the term. He/she may be booked for several weeks, so schedule your appointments well in advance. During the busier registration periods, your advisor may offer walk-in times on a first-come, first-served basis. If this is the case, arrive early.

Prior to your appointment, review the academic requirements listed in your college’s print or online catalog, and create a list of questions for your advisor.

Questions to ask your advisor

Here are some questions you may want to ask your advisor.

- ▶ Do I have to take any remedial or prerequisite courses?
- ▶ What is a reasonable course load? (This is especially important if you have a job.)
- ▶ How do I use the online registration program? When do I need to register for courses? What's the best way to ensure that I get into my classes?
- ▶ If I can't get into a required class, is there a nearby college that offers an equivalent, transferable class?
- ▶ Do you have an Honors Program? What does the program involve? Am I eligible? How do I apply?
- ▶ Who do I see about services and accommodations if I have a learning (or physical) disability?

During your appointment, your advisor will likely give you a list of required courses in the order in which they must be taken—often called a Major, Pattern, or Program Sheet. A lot of information will be covered during your appointment. *Write everything down.* If you've attended a previous college, be sure to have your transcript available.

If you are confused or have additional questions after the appointment, schedule a return visit or ask to speak to the director of academic advising.



Know course withdrawal procedures and ramifications

At some point you may find that you need to withdraw from a course mid-semester. Reasons to withdraw from a course include:

- ▶ You realize you've taken too heavy a course load.
- ▶ Despite your best efforts, you're getting a poor or failing grade.
- ▶ You have a legitimate medical or personal reason for lightening your course load.
- ▶ You've registered for the wrong class, or have learned that you don't need the class to fulfill your program's requirements.

If you think you may need to withdraw from a class, check the college catalog for guidelines. Before you begin the withdrawal process, be sure to speak to your academic advisor and the course instructor.

Questions to ask before withdrawing from a course

Consult your college catalog and meet with your academic advisor to get answers to the following questions:

- ▶ Are there limits to the number of classes I can withdraw from?
- ▶ How will a withdrawal be reflected on my transcript? Will it impact my GPA?
- ▶ Is the class one of a required sequence of classes? If so, when can I retake it?
- ▶ If I withdraw, will I get a full or partial tuition reimbursement?
- ▶ If I withdraw, will I still maintain satisfactory academic progress? (Most colleges have mandatory GPA requirements and "completion rates" for all attempted credits.)
- ▶ If I drop below full-time status, will this affect my eligibility for financial aid (grants, work-study, scholarships)?

Withdrawing from a class is a formal procedure with specific guidelines. If you simply stop attending a class, you will still be registered, responsible for any tuition or fees associated with the class, and you may receive a grade of "F."



Know Your Instructors

Developing positive relationships with faculty is one important way you can improve your educational experience.

College instructors come in many shapes and sizes. They may be young or old, novices or veterans, entertaining and inspirational, or just plain dull. Whatever the case, these are the people who will impact the quality of your education. Developing positive relationships with faculty is one way that you can directly influence the quality of your education.

Develop relationships with instructors

Sit up front, ask questions, and get to know your instructors. Most instructors genuinely enjoy sharing their wisdom and knowledge with motivated students. In addition to providing academic guidance, instructors may provide valuable career information, and serve as references for jobs and four-year college applications.

If you're struggling in a class, talk to your instructor. Meet during office hours rather than trying to catch your instructor before or after class. If you are enjoying the class and value the knowledge you are gaining, let your instructor know.

Investigate the courses you're considering

If you're considering a course for next semester or next year, review the course description and the requirements. To learn more about the course, go to the college bookstore and leaf through the required textbook.

If you want a feel for the instructor's temperament and teaching style, visit the instructor during office hours and ask about the course, the assignments, and the availability of extra help. Better yet, sit in on a course you're considering taking in the future. Before or after class, ask a few students what they think of the course and the instructor.

PART II

The College Experience

Every student has a different college experience. You may be living at home and commuting, or you may be living in an apartment and attending a college far from home. Situations vary, but most college students have a great deal in common. In Part II of this book, you will learn what you can do to get the most out of your college experience.



Campus Services

Your college most likely offers a variety of services. These services are voluntary, so it's up to you to contact or visit them. Check your college's website for a full list of student services. Here are some examples of the kinds of services often available at two-year colleges.

Career Services

A career counselor can provide assistance with selecting your program of studies, obtaining an internship, and getting a job.

Child Development Center

Affordable, on-campus day care is sometimes provided for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Computer Lab/Information Technology Help Desk

They offer assistance with online, software, and hardware concerns.

Counseling Center

Helping professionals are available to address any personal concern you may have. The information you share will be kept in strict confidence.

Financial Aid and Bursar

The Financial Aid office may provide financial assistance in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, and/or on-campus jobs. The Bursar does the billing and collection of tuition, fees, and other college charges.

Learning Centers

These centers provide academic support programs to promote student achievement. Their staff assist students with class assignments, textbook reading, and notetaking. Learning Centers offer tutoring, and often conduct workshops on study skills and test preparation.

Library

College libraries have it all—books, journals, reference materials, government documents, online databases, and much more. Libraries are good places to study, and reference librarians are experts at locating hard-to-find resources and materials.

Recreation Center/Intramural Office

Be healthy, get in shape, have fun, and meet people. Join an intramural team, register for a yoga class, go swimming, or lift weights. Many colleges also plan excursions and rent outdoor equipment for camping, hiking, kayaking, rock climbing, and more.

Registration and Records

The Office of Registration and Records provides and maintains student records. See them with questions or concerns about graduation, changing your contact information, requesting a transcript, or transferring credit.

Service Learning

Colleges often offer community service programs. Volunteer opportunities may include assisting the elderly or homeless, cleaning/protecting the environment, tutoring, staffing crisis lines, and more. *Service should be a part of every student's college experience.*

Disability Services

They provide assistance, support, and services for students with physical or learning disabilities.

Religious Organizations or Campus Ministry

In addition to providing religious and spiritual support, many religious organizations provide social activities and opportunities for community service.

Health Services

Doctors, nurses, nutritionists, and other health personnel are available for your health-related questions and concerns. Visit them to learn about required inoculations, vaccines, health insurance, and more.

Support Services for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds

Many colleges have programs such as TRIO to motivate and support first-generation students, low-income students, and students with disabilities.



“When I started here I didn’t know what was available to me besides the library. Once I made the effort, I found out that there are all kinds of services—and now I use almost all of them.” Josh, engineering technology major



Student Organizations

Many colleges provide students with the opportunity to get involved in student organizations and clubs.

Colleges offer a variety of on-campus activities

One of the most enjoyable and rewarding aspects of college is the opportunity to get involved in student activities and organizations. There's no better way to meet new people who share your interests and to have some fun. College clubs and organizations may be academic, social, athletic, political, spiritual, international, or cultural. Check your college's website for a list of student organizations.

Why participate in student organizations

Involvement in student organizations suggests that you are the kind of person who takes initiative, manages time effectively, and has a wide range of interests. Whether your interest is martial arts, the environment, salsa dancing, or politics, student organizations are a great way to learn more about a topic, meet other students, and get involved in activities that you enjoy.



Many student organizations offer valuable networking opportunities. An organization may have guest speakers, arrange visits to local companies, or work on projects with community organizations. This often gives you the opportunity to meet people in your community who are doing the same work that you are preparing to do. The contacts you make through these experiences can be invaluable when you start applying for jobs.

Student organizations give you the opportunity to develop the same skills employers seek in new employees. Through student organizations you can get involved in organizing, scheduling, and publicizing events; create a business plan; or participate in fundraising activities. Organizations also require planning and teamwork, and members must work cooperatively to generate ideas, solve problems, and accomplish goals. *Participating in student organizations is a great way to accrue valuable work-related skills.*



Health Tips

To succeed in college, you need to take care of both mind and body.

Eat sensibly and keep fit

Eat a balanced diet that includes lots of fruits and vegetables. Drink plenty of water, and avoid caffeine, nicotine, and artificial stimulants. Also develop an exercise regimen you enjoy.

Get enough sleep

For many students, fatigue (and the inevitable illness that accompanies it) is directly responsible for failure or poor performance at college. You simply will not be able to concentrate in class, complete assignments, memorize facts, and perform at your best if you are severely sleep deprived.

"It took me a whole semester to figure out that if I didn't start getting enough sleep, I was going to flunk out." Jeremy, computer science

Learn to relax

Check with counseling, health, and recreation centers about relaxation training, yoga, or meditation classes. Take some time each day to breathe deeply, kick back, and "smell the roses." If you feel overwhelmed or think that maybe you have taken on too much, create a list of everything going on in your life and determine what can be dropped, delayed, or modified.

Don't use drugs or alcohol to "self-medicate" or improve your mood. *Find healthy solutions to alleviate stress.*

Seek help if you're having problems or feeling stressed out

There is no need to go it alone in college. Talk to friends and family members about any problems or concerns you have. You can also drop in or schedule an appointment at the Counseling Center.

Talk to your instructor or academic advisor about academic concerns or problems. For medical concerns, visit the Health Center.



Crime and Safety

College is a microcosm of the real world. Crime occurs on college campuses, just as it does everywhere else.

Exercise caution

When you arrive at college, take a daytime walk. Explore the campus and the nearby neighborhood. Note the locations of emergency phones and the Campus Security office. If you're concerned about walking across campus alone at night, walk among trusted friends, call Campus Security, or contact your college's shuttle or escort service (if available).

Thefts occur at all colleges. Lock your car doors, put electronics and other valuables out of sight, and don't ride an expensive bicycle on campus. Never leave textbooks or laptops unattended in a dining area, classroom, library, or elsewhere on campus.

Rules and regulations

When you attend college, you agree to abide by the institution's rules and regulations. All colleges have policies regarding sexual harassment, the destruction of property, drugs, alcohol, and smoking. Colleges also have rules regarding academic integrity. These rules cover cheating, plagiarism, and false citations in papers and essays. Visit your college's website and familiarize yourself with their Code of Conduct.

Some students mistakenly believe that they are not subject to city, state, or federal laws if they commit a crime on campus. Not true. If you break the law on campus, you can wind up in a city or county jail cell. Students who have experienced this report it to be one of the most disagreeable, costly, and regrettable experiences of their lives. A criminal record can also jeopardize your career prospects.

Colleges have a zero tolerance policy on illegal drug use. Get caught and you will face sanctions or be expelled from school. Get caught selling drugs and the campus or community police will be called in.



Money and Finances

Attending any college can be expensive; however, there are ways to keep college costs to a minimum.

In addition to paying for tuition, college students must pay for textbooks, lab fees, computer costs, commuting/parking expenses, and so forth. Many students also run up outrageous credit card bills on non-educational spending. Your goal should be to avoid incurring unreasonable debt by living frugally during your college years. Here are some tips.

Make a budget

Establish a weekly budget and stick to it. You're much more likely to avoid wasteful spending when you track every purchase. Create an Excel or Google Sheets spreadsheet, or use a cell phone budget (or "expense tracking") app such as Mint, Moneyfy, or Good Budget. Or just keep a ledger in a notebook. This will encourage you to carefully evaluate your spending habits.

Be especially cautious of your spending when you go out with your friends. Leave your credit/debit card at home. Whether you're going to a club, concert, the movies, or out to dinner, it's important to stick to your budget and not get caught up in the moment.

If your daily routine involves buying a \$1.00 bottle of water and a \$2.00 cup of coffee, that's \$240 per semester, or almost \$500 a year.

Limit credit card use

While it's okay to have a credit card for emergencies, you should limit its use. If you do make occasional credit card purchases, always pay off the monthly balance in full, and on time.

Instead of using a credit card, use a debit card or your college's cash card. Get a free checking account that does not incur ATM fees, and withdraw cash in small increments. Using cash is a good idea because you'll invariably spend less when using cash vs. a card.

Many schools partner with local banks and offer an all-purpose card that serves as a student ID, a library card, ATM/debit card, meal plan card, and a swipe card for campus events. This is a good deal if there are no minimum balances, no monthly maintenance fees, and no ATM fees.

“Our college cash card is convenient because you can charge pretty much anything, but I think students sometimes forget that it’s real money they’re spending.” David, business major

Look for free and inexpensive entertainment

Before shelling out \$15 or more for a movie ticket and a bag of popcorn, check out free campus events. Many colleges offer free sporting events, concerts, films, café entertainment, theater productions, and comedy shows. College and local libraries also have free movie rentals.

Be smart buying textbooks

Get a list of required books as early as possible, and consider buying used books at the college bookstore, online, or from fellow students.

Check on the availability of eBooks and textbook rentals at your college bookstore, and know the store’s buy-back dates so you can sell your books back at the end of the semester.



Tip: If you are receiving financial aid, you may be eligible for a book voucher.

Learn about financial aid

A great deal of financial aid is available; however, the process of obtaining financial aid can be very confusing. If you need help paying for college, go to your college’s Financial Aid office and ask for assistance. They can help you. *Learn as much as you can about the financial aid process and about the kinds of aid you may be eligible to receive.*

On the following page, you will find some basic information on financial aid. For additional information, talk to a college financial aid counselor or visit the following websites:

studentaid.ed.gov finaid.org fastweb.com

Financial aid overview

Financial aid is money that is given, earned, or lent to help students pay for their education. The four categories of financial aid are grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study. Grants and scholarships are considered “free money.” Loans and work-study are considered “self-help” programs.

- ▶ **Grant** – money given, usually because of financial need.
- ▶ **Scholarship** – money awarded for exceptional academic achievement, outstanding talent, and/or financial need.
- ▶ **Loan** – money borrowed, either from a bank, the government, or a college. Student loans must be repaid, but repayment doesn’t start until a student has either left school or graduated.
- ▶ **Work-Study** – money earned by working at a part-time job. “Student Employment” often refers to positions on campus for those ineligible for Federal Work-Study.

Most college students are *dependent students*. This means that their parents are expected to assume the primary role in paying for their college education. To be an *independent student*, a student must generally meet one of the following criteria: 1) be 24 or older; 2) an orphan; 3) homeless or emancipated; 4) married; 5) on active military duty; 6) have dependents other than a spouse.

Except for scholarships, financial aid is usually awarded on the basis of financial need. *Financial need is the difference between the cost of attending a college and the amount a family can afford.* For example, if a family can afford \$4,000 and the cost of attending a college is \$12,000, the student has a financial need of \$8,000. The greater the difference, the greater the need, and the more aid the student is eligible to receive.

Because need-based financial aid is awarded to students whose families need help paying for college, having a fair and objective way to determine how much a family can afford is very important. The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the form that’s used to determine the amount a family should be able to pay for one year of college.

For information and to complete a FAFSA online, go to fafsa.gov. **Any student hoping to receive financial aid needs to complete a FAFSA!**

If you need help paying for college, go to your college’s Financial Aid office and ask for assistance.

PART III

Transferring to a Four-Year College

If you are attending a community, technical, or junior college and want to transfer to a four-year college, there are many things you need to know and do to ensure a successful transition.

If you plan to transfer to a four-year college, congratulations on your decision to continue your education. Additional education will allow you to grow and develop as a person. A bachelor's degree is also likely to provide you with increased career opportunities.

Transferring to a four-year college, however, is often not as simple and straightforward as students might think. Four-year colleges have their own rules and requirements, and students are often surprised to find that one or more of their courses will not transfer. *This is why it is so important for you to meet with your academic advisor early, and to develop an academic plan.*

When researching the transfer process, carefully examine the academic requirements of the four-year colleges you're considering. If at all possible, arrange a visit to these colleges. Schedule appointments with the Admissions Department Transfer Counselor and with an Academic Advisor in your major of interest. *This takes time, effort, and planning—but failure to plan ahead may cost you far more in terms of time, money, and frustration.*



Consider Maria, who decided to select courses and plan her transfer strictly on her own.

Maria: A Cautionary Tale

Maria completed an Associate in Arts (AA) degree at City Community College with the intention of transferring into the teacher education program at State University. Included in her coursework were two semesters of World History, an online course, and a course taken pass/fail.

Upon transferring to State University, Maria learned that the College of Education requires two semesters of American History. So even though the two World History courses met the university's general education requirements, they did not meet the Education department's major requirements. To make matters worse, she also learned that State University does not accept online courses or pass/fail courses.

These oversights cost Maria an additional semester at State University and many thousands of dollars!

What is articulation?

Articulation refers to the courses offered at your college that a four-year college or university will accept. The four-year college has agreed to accept these courses because it has determined that the content is sufficiently similar to courses it offers. Articulation agreements primarily focus on general education requirements.

Never assume that a course will “articulate” simply because the course title or content is similar to one offered at a four-year school. A course only articulates if the four-year college's Admissions Department officially approves it. And as we learned from Maria, it is possible for a course that is approved by the college's Admissions Department to be unacceptable toward the fulfillment of a requirement in a specific major.

Tip: When talking to an Admissions Transfer Counselor at a four-year college, check to make sure that the courses you're planning to take at your two-year college will transfer. Also make sure they'll count toward the courses and credits you need for your four-year degree. If possible, also talk to an Academic Counselor in your intended academic department.

Articulation can be challenging

Articulation from a community college to a four-year state university *within the same state* is typically a rather straightforward process. This is because there are articulation agreements between the schools. These articulation agreements have different names in different states. They may be called 2 Plus 2 Programs, Comprehensive Articulation Agreements, Transfer Articulation Agreements, etc.

Many states have partnerships between their community and four-year colleges that guarantee admission and course transfer. In these states, students are guaranteed admission to at least one, but not necessarily all, of the state's four-year colleges.

Articulation is less clear-cut if you're planning to transfer to a college in a different state or to a private college. Check to see if your community college has an articulation agreement with the schools you are considering. Many will not, so you will need to meet with the Admissions Transfer Counselor at the four-year college to carefully determine which courses will transfer and count towards your major. These meetings are best done in person, but they can be done over the phone or via email.



Learn the requirements of any four-year college you are interested in BEFORE or immediately upon beginning classes at a community college.

PART IV

Prepare for the Future

One of the primary reasons you attend college is to have a rewarding career and comfortable lifestyle in the future. Getting some “real world” work experience is a great way to benefit today while preparing for your future.



Working While in College

Many students work while enrolled in college. They work to pay the bills, have extra spending money, help out their families, and gain valuable work experience.

Working while attending college requires a great deal of self-discipline and time management. Recruiters, however, are impressed when they see work experience on the application or resume of a recent college graduate.

If you want to work while in college, you have several options. You can work on-campus, off-campus, or you can get an internship/co-op position.

Working on-campus

Students may be awarded “work study” as part of their financial aid award. Check with the Financial Aid office regarding your eligibility. Other student employment positions may be available on campus as well. One advantage of on-campus employment is convenience. Hours are flexible and jobs are available throughout the campus. Typically, students work 10 to 20 hours per week.

It is ideal to get a job that provides you with practical skills that relate to your future career. On the following page are some examples of career related on-campus jobs.

Your Career Interest Area

Computer Science /IT
Hospitality, Management
Early Childhood Education
English, Journalism, Education
Accounting, Bookkeeping, Banking
Law Enforcement
Landscaping, Property Management
Library and Information Science
Nursing, Med Tech, Pre-Med
Sports Management, Phys Ed
Web Design, Graphic Arts
Retail Management
Office Administration

College Department

Computer Lab, IT Help Desk
Food Service, Catering
Campus Child Care Center
Writing, Tutoring Center
Financial Aid, Bursar
Campus Security, Parking
Facilities Management
Library
Health or Wellness Center
Athletic Department
Media Services
Campus Bookstore
Departmental Offices

Working off-campus

Off-campus jobs are often in the service sector – restaurants, child care, retail stores, hotels, banks, business offices, YMCAs, and park districts. Unlike students who work on-campus and schedule their jobs around their classes, students who work off-campus typically arrange their class schedules around their jobs. This can be a real challenge. Getting to and from the job may be a hassle and the hours may not be as flexible as on-campus jobs (but the pay may be better). The longer your commute, the greater the car maintenance and gas costs, and the less time available for your studies.

Seek employment as close to campus as possible. Again, it is ideal to get a job that relates to your major and eventual career path.

Internships

Another option is an off-campus paid (or unpaid) internship during the summer or school year. An internship is a part-time or full-time position offered to college students. This is the ideal way to “test drive” a tentative career while obtaining real-world work experience. Organizations often use their internship programs to groom talented students for full-time positions.

Not all internships are created equal, however. Some organizations use internships as a way to hire “cheap labor” in order to get mundane tasks completed. Avoid these. Seek organizations that have a well-developed internship program that provides training, supervision, and challenging work.

Paid vs. unpaid internship

Of course you'd rather be paid than not paid, but remember that the primary benefits of an internship are the responsibilities you are given, the quality of the work you perform, the skills you obtain, the contacts you make, and the opportunities it provides for your future career.

Many college programs integrate internships into the course curriculum, so you may be able to get college credit for an internship. Check with your academic department to see if they offer an internship course and/or grant academic credit.

How to get an internship

Career counselors can help you create a resume, instruct you on how to interview, show you where internships are posted, and offer suggestions for locating additional summer opportunities. Career Services may also conduct an Internship Fair and post internships on their online job site. But no one will get an internship for you—it's entirely up to you.





Develop Work-Related Skills

In a competitive job market, it is important that you gain and demonstrate out-of-classroom skills to complement your college education.

Get involved in community service

Nothing says more about the content of your character than active involvement in community service. Some colleges have Community Service programs, and many student organizations offer their time and energy to local causes and philanthropies. Select activities that speak to your heart.

Strengthen communication skills

When recruiters are surveyed about the qualities they seek in graduating college students, the results are always the same: communication skills tops the list. We live in an information age, and it is crucial to demonstrate your ability to convey verbal and written information effectively. Your college years are the ideal time to hone your writing, listening, and public speaking skills.



Develop leadership skills

As you become increasingly involved in an activity, take on a leadership role. Recruiters will be impressed, and you'll gain confidence in your ability to organize events, delegate tasks, and supervise others.

Develop foreign language skills and cultural competence

An increasing number of organizations and industries are becoming internationalized through expansion into new worldwide marketplaces. We live in an increasingly diverse society, and you are at a distinct advantage when you speak another language, and/or can demonstrate your knowledge of, and sensitivity to, diverse people, cultures, and values.

Closing Words

Your college years are among the most formative and challenging years of your life. College offers many opportunities for personal, intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth. It is a period of self-discovery and a time for taking charge of your life. You will assume new responsibilities and overcome new obstacles. And you will develop lifelong friendships and many fond memories. Enjoy the journey.



"What lies behind us, and what lies before us, are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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