

## **First Year Tips**

### **I wish someone had told me:**

- Go to class. Class attendance really does correlate with your grade.
- Read and keep your course syllabus.
- Respond to your emails.
- Communication is key: especially when dealing with professors and roommates.
- Be on time to class. Walking in late distracts both the professor and other students.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- College is not a contest. You don't have to compete with anyone for your grade.
- Don't be intimidated by faculty and staff. Stay calm, ask questions, and know the name of the person you are talking with.
- Support systems are essential for survival. Make friends, talk to everyone. Use appropriate campus offices for support also.
- Expect to feel lonely, frightened, and isolated. Remember, other people are experiencing the same emotions. If you continue to feel isolated, go to the Counseling Center or tell someone like your RA, teacher, etc.
- Read everything. Don't take policy advice from other students- check with offices on campus.
- Use your college catalog. Familiarize yourself with college policies and procedures.
- Learn and use [blackboard.syr.edu](http://blackboard.syr.edu) and [myslice.syr.edu](http://myslice.syr.edu) to check on your grades, financial status and program requirements.
- Maintain a positive attitude. Be a good listener, stick to your own convictions and follow your dreams.

### **Registration and Advisement**

- Academic advisement is critical. Visit your advisor 1-2 times a month to make sure you are on track with your academic program, courses, etc.
- Pay attention to deadlines.
- Be sure to have college representatives sign every form related to selecting courses, dropping classes, etc.
- Save every grade report. Computers have been known to lose information.
- Use [myslice.syr.edu](http://myslice.syr.edu) to periodically check your transcript to make sure your records match the registrar's.
- Select classes based on your own academic capabilities as well as your interests and vocational plan.
- Plan an alternate schedule prior to registration. Typically first-years are the last to register so it is good to be prepared with a backup plan (or several).

### **Staying Healthy**

- Beware of fast food and candy bars. Avoid extra weight gain in the first semester.
- Drink plenty of water and stay hydrated. Coffee and cola are not the way to survive exams.
- Study in small shifts. Avoid marathon and all night study sessions.
- Get plenty of rest. Keep a regular sleep schedule.
- Exercise often, especially during exam weeks.

- Eat healthy foods. Whole grain pasta, natural peanut butter, non-sugared cereals, yogurt, and fresh fruit and veggies will provide natural and sustained energy.
- Appreciate music. Music helps everyone relax.

### **Adjusting to College Life**

- Realize that every college has its own culture which includes language, traditions, and taboos.
- 5 phases of college adjustment (you may experience them at any time, in any order, and some may repeat or overlap):
  1. Fascination with the new environment
  2. Severe homesickness
  3. Finding fault with new surroundings; building stereotypes
  4. Finding humor in your adjustment
  5. Embracing the new culture
- In order to become more comfortable with the college environment:
  - Learn the jargon of higher education
  - Realize your own preconceptions and perceptions
  - Actively try to make friends
  - Look for common ground
  - Look for individuals, not stereotypes