

THE TUNE UP THAT EVERY FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENT NEEDS

- 1.** Get familiar with what a course syllabus is, its purpose and how to effectively make use of it. It usually provides all the answers you need.
- 2.** Decide what sort of organizing tool you will use to keep track of appointments, meetings, due dates, exam dates, and other commitments.
- 3.** Some advice about e-mail. Be sure to use your school e-mail when e-mailing your professors. Think of e-mailing your professors the way you would e-mail a prospective boss or current boss. After all, they are. School is your new job for the next four years.
- 4.** Be professional and courteous in your communication. Include a salutation and not “Hey Prof.” And when e-mailing women faculty, don’t be sexist and type “Mrs. Blank.” They earned their doctorates also.
- 5.** Attend all classes unless you’re sick. It’s a strong predictor for success. And if the class involves participation, get engaged in discussions. This will enrich your learning.
- 6.** Be sure to attend student organization fairs that usually take place in the first few weeks of the new semester.
- 7.** Go online and get acquainted with the myriad resources that the college provides to students. Find the counseling service, health service, sexual assault prevention office, office for students who identify as LGBTQ, the writing center, tutoring, cultural centers, the office for students with disabilities, religious services, Greek life, etc.
- 8.** Faculty usually post office hours on their doors and on the syllabus. It is a time when you can sit down one on one with your professors about your classes, your life, your future, your hopes, fears and dreams.
- 9.** Amazing relationships can be cultivated with faculty—these people might become your mentors from whom you’ll eventually seek reference letters, and they might become your thesis advisers, collaborators for research, and possibly even your friends for years to come.
- 10.** At the earliest sign of trouble, seek help. This applies to needing tutoring as well as help for your mental health and wellbeing. Admitting you need help is a great start.