

While recently visiting some colleges, a school family was given a handout entitled “The Freshman 15 Keys to Success”. Based on this list, feedback received from graduates who have attended college, and my own observations here is a list of things that can contribute to making the college experience both successful and rewarding.

- **Attend Every Class:** Sounds like an obvious concept, but there is no substitute for showing up. Secure notes and instructions if you miss class.
- **Establish a Relationship with Faculty:** A relationship with your professors can enrich your academic experience as well as establish a relationship that can extend well beyond graduation.
- **Live in a Dormitory the First Year:** Besides the advantages of social networking and not having to concentrate on such things as purchasing and preparing meal, transportation, etc., research has shown that students who live in campus housing the first year have higher GPAs, complete more credits, and graduate sooner.
- **Establish a Schedule for Studying:** I was given the invaluable suggestion to “regard college as a job”. What was meant by this advice was to leave the house for school every day at the same time, stay on campus all day attending classes and studying, return home the same time in the late afternoon, and after having had dedicated a full day of attending class and studying, enjoy the evening.
- **Take advantage of Academic Support Services:** Support services can differ from school to school, but explore very early what your school has to offer and do not hesitate to take advantage of those services when required. Also remember that your fellow students can be a great resource of support by forming study groups for different courses.
- **Meet Regularly with Your Academic Advisor:** As with most things in life, it is just as easy to receive misguided advice as it is to secure good advice. Academic advisors will consistently be a source of good advice in navigating college.
- **Become Involved in the Life of the School:** Make sure to schedule time to attend events on campus such as plays, sporting events, and guest lectures.
- **Live a Healthy Life Style:** Being away from home for an extended period of time for the first time can be challenging. Make sure to get enough sleep, eat healthy, and get regular exercise.
- **Participate in an Internship or Service Learning Activity:** These types of activities can be very rewarding, introduce you to new experiences, and broaden your social network.
- **Broaden Your World:** If possible, take advantage of study abroad programs and opportunities to study at other institutions.

- **Monitor Distractions:** While college offers numerous rewarding and interesting activities and opportunities keep the notion in the forefront of your mind that your studies are your number one priority.

While there are numerous factors that combine to make the college experience successful and enriching, this list will hopefully increase your chances of having a successful and rewarding experience that most people remember as some of the best years of their life.