Lessons from a Former Dean of Freshmen at Stanford University

Being a Parent, Mentor, and Coach
Preparing Your Child for Success

What we’ve taught our children

• Not to talk to strangers

What they must be able to do once they start college

• Talk to faculty, deans, and advisors
  • This skill will help them know how to approach college staff who can help, guide, and direct them.
Preparing Your Child for Success

What we’ve done for our children

- Drove them everywhere!

What they must be able to do once they start college

- Find their way around campus and their new city
Preparing Your Child for Success

What we’ve done for our children

• Reminded them of their homework deadlines
• Sometimes helped them with their assignments

What they must be able to do once they start college

• Manage assignments, workloads, and deadlines
Preparing Your Child for Success

What we’ve done for our children

• Stepped in when things got difficult and talked to the “adults” for them

What they must be able to do once they start college

• Cope with the ups and downs of college-level work, competition, and tough teachers
Preparing Your Child for Success

What we’ve done for our children

• Laid out their entire path and prevented stumbling blocks

What they must be able to do once they start college

• Must be able to take risks
Reference

The Rhythm of College Life

Issues that affect our students
SUMMER

Common Issues

• Questions on submitting health forms and housing applications, meeting administrative deadlines
• Getting the “perfect class schedule”
• Meeting roommate(s)
• What to bring to campus
• Last minute questions about paying for college

What to Expect

• Feeling overwhelmed, yet excited
• Worried about leaving high school friends

Tips

• Encourage your student to ask questions if he or she doesn’t understand or needs clarification

First Year Experience theme—Welcome
Common Issues
- Fitting in
- Transitioning from high school to college
- Homesickness
- Adjusting to administrative ‘red tape’
- Finding on-campus jobs

What to Expect
- Testing of limits, boundaries
- Experimentation
- Family Weekend and Homecoming (September 23-24)

Tips
- Help your student make good decisions
- Encourage your student to use campus resources
- Encourage your student to establish relationship with academic advisor
- Make a financial plan and discuss spending expectations

First Year Experience Theme-Get Involved
What classes are most interesting to you?

Have you found a good place to study? Where?
OCTOBER

Common Issues

• Midterm grades – reality has set in!
• Questions about belonging/values exploration
• Roommate conflicts
• Disenchantment with school

What to Expect

• Fall Break (no classes), October 8-11

Tips

• Suggest getting involved on campus
• Encourage your student to maintain a ‘healthy balance’, get a flu shot
• Time to schedule an appointment with an academic advisor
• Seek tutoring

First Year Experience Theme-Be Smart
OCTOBER

Conversation Starters

What can you do differently on your next test or paper to earn an even better grade?

When do you plan to meet with your professors during their office hours?

What events have you attended?
Common Issues

• Increased responsibilities and feeling overwhelmed
• Time management issues
• Money management (ex. Flex Points)
• Feeling comfortable on campus, trusting their neighbors. This is when students aren’t as aware of their surroundings.

What to Expect

• Registration for Spring 2017 classes
• Anxiety and/or excitement about Thanksgiving Break (November 23-27)

Tips

• Make plans for transportation home for Thanksgiving Break
• Discuss any expectations or rules that may have changed since high school

First Year Experience Theme-Take Responsibility
NOVEMBER

Conversation Starters

What classes are you thinking of taking in the spring?

Are you staying within your budget?

How are you managing stress?
DECEMBER

Common Issues
- Financial worries
- Health issues
- Questioning of major or career choice and whether they should return next semester

What to Expect
- Classes end (December 9)
- Final Exams (December 10-16)
- Visiting high school friends
- Extended holiday break; what it means to your family and your student

Tips
- Find study groups and get tutoring

First Year Experience Theme-Finish Strong
DECEMBER

Conversation Starters

- What are you doing to stay well during finals?
- Which exams are you most worried about?
- What could I send you to make you feel better?
- What do you want to do at home during break?
Common Issues

• A fresh start, new commitment to studying and setting new goals
• Possible change in living arrangements
• Major and career changes

What to Expect

• Classes begin (January 7)
• New Year’s resolutions
• Reincorporating social and academic life

Tips

• Discuss applying for financial aid by the February priority deadline

First Year Experience Theme-Reconnect
JANUARY

Conversation Starters

What are you doing differently with your studying this semester?

Tell me about your good friends on campus.
FEBRUARY-MARCH

Common Issues
- Cabin fever, feeling restless
- Staying healthy
- Valentine’s Day

What to Expect
- Early alert grades
- Roommate selection, signing of a lease for 2017
- Spring break (March 6-11)

Tips
- Encourage your student to see an academic advisor early
- Remind your student about return housing, if applicable

First Year Experience Themes-Go to Work and Healthy Choices
FEBRUARY-MARCH

**Conversation Starters**

- What are your plans for spring break?
- Have you learned of any new clubs or organizations that you’d like to join? Tell me about them.
- Tell me about your fitness and diet plans.
- Looking back, how do you think you’ve changed this year?
- What are you looking forward to in your sophomore year?
APRIL-MAY

Common Issues
• Class registration for Summer and/or Fall 2017
• Spring fever
• The pace of activities has increased and students feel bombarded with upcoming decisions
• Summer plans; leaving their college friends
• Financial concerns

What to Expect
• Classes end (April 24); Final Exams (April 26-May 3)
• Questions about majors and careers
• Questions about returning home, fitting in

Tips
• Talk to your student about managing stress
• Discuss summer options with your student

First Year Experience Themes-Be Global and Celebrate Success
SUMMER READING LIST

• You’re On Your Own (But I’m Here if You Need Me) by M. Savage
• Empty Nest...Full Heart: The Journey from Home to College by A. Van Steenhouse
• I’ll Miss You Too: An Off-To-College Guide for Parents and Students by M. Woodacre Bane and S. Bane
• Let the Journey Begin: A Parent’s Monthly Guide to the College Experience by J. Kiernan MacKay and W. Johnson Ingram
• When Kids Go to College: A Parents Guide to Changing Relationships by B. Newman and P. Newman
• Almost Grown: Launching Your Child from High School to College by P. Pasick
QUESTIONS?

• Your next session begins in a few minutes and features ODU from a Student Perspective.