

THE ESSENTIALS TO SURVIVING COLLEGE

Take a Walk Through College

By: Curtis A. Snethen

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Foreword

College is a new, exciting, and wonderful journey that some kids will never experience. According to USA Today approximately %63 of high school graduates go directly to college. Consider yourself in the fortunate half that have an opportunity to experience the adventure that college has to offer. In this book I will give you step by step instructions, based on my own knowledge having graduated from a 4 year university and currently in graduate school, on how to *take walk through college*. By following my guide lines I can guarantee you'll have the GPA that you've always wanted. These are my own secrets that allowed me success not only inside the classroom but outside. My own personal knowledge has allowed me to graduate cum laude at one North Carolina's top universities and now I'm here to share it with you. Consider yourself warned, your about to indulge in some of college's biggest untold secrets.



Getting Your Mind Right



First off congratulations on your acceptance to college. This is a very important accomplishment in your life and what I believe is one of many success stories. So now lets get you prepared to your journey into college. The very first thing you must do as a "soon to be" college student is prepare yourself for the unexpected. You obviously don't know what to expect or how you will handle your new found adventure. College allows you the freedom that you've always been looking for. Away from home, no one to tell you what time your curfew is or what you can and can't do. Everything that your parents have done up until this point has been to get you ready for your own independence. College is part of this process. It is how you handle your newly found freedom that will determine whether or not you will have the time of your life and graduate from college or end up back at home proving to your parents that you could not handle the responsibility and freedom.

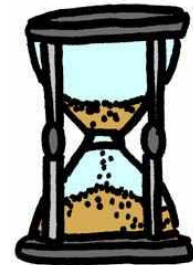
It's Your Responsibility

Handling all of your new responsibility can be a chore for some students. Simple tasks such a cooking, waking up in the morning, or even laundry can be difficult tasks if they are not

"Take the initiative to make the adjustment sooner rather than later."

prepared for. My advice is to take the last month or two of summer and prepare yourself with these new responsibilities. Pretend as if you have already moved into college just one month early. Start helping prepare dinner or doing your laundry on your own in order to help prepare yourself. These simple tasks can end up becoming impossible chores when you are on your own. Take the initiative to make the adjustment sooner rather than later. It will pay off in the long run.

Move quick because your time is running out. Not only will learning all of these chores help you in the long run but you can be sure that your parents will appreciate the break as well. College is just a step in life that teaches you a lot more than just what the text books have to offer. College is a way to ease you into the disciplines of independence.



While you are in this preparation step I recommend as soon as you get your schedule go ahead and get to know the

"Thirty percent of college and university students drop out after their first year. Half never graduate."

-According to usnews.com

campus. I recommend walking the campus not driving before classes get started. This way on your first day you will not be stressed about where each class is located and how long it will take to get there.

Rewards for Preparation

You will see a tremendous amount of students who drop out for a variety of different reasons. One of which is not being prepared for all of the extra responsibility that comes along with college. By allowing yourself to be mentally and physically prepared you will be able to accomplish your overall goals with out any distractions from your daily chores.

While in school you will be very busy, worrying about what class you should take next semester and what professor to register for. The last thing you should be worried about is the simple day to day tasks that you should've already prepared for. By making a few of these preparations you can insure yourself a very smooth introduction into college. Allowing you to feel as comfortable as possible in your new home.

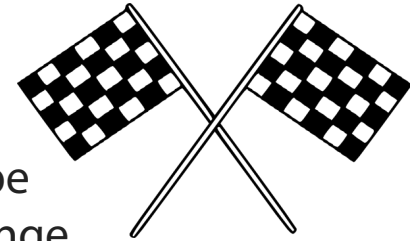


Home Away From Home



The 3 week Challenge

College is not only a challenge in the classroom but also outside of the classroom. Homesickness is one of the leading causes of the attrition rate associated with college dropouts. The first three weeks are the most critical in determining if you will be able to survive the college experience. I challenge you to stay at school for at least three weeks without going home. This will allow you time to make the needed adjustment in order to settle in. But some of you might be asking, how? What can I do to make myself that comfortable? My advice is to allow your college experience and surroundings to be your "home away from home."



Comfortable Surroundings

It never hurts to surround yourself with familiar objects or even decorate your room in a very similar fashion to your home. Furniture, pictures, and even scents can help bring back the feeling of home. After all it is your home and your work space so it needs to represent you. What motivates you? Family pictures set up around the house make your adjustment a little easier.

Once you have tried your hand at a few of these techniques and you still can't get comfortable try to remember why it was that you chose this college. Choosing a college can be because of many different reasons. The weather, the outdoors, the campus, the student body, and even the night life are all resources you can use to help make your adjustment. So grab a hold of that interest and embrace it while you are there.

"Furniture, pictures, and even scents can help bring back the feeling of home."

"Ambition is already one common ground that you share with all your college peers"

Building a Network

Build a support group of friends around you to make the transition a little smoother. The great thing about college is that every student there is looking for new opportunities and new friendships. Ambition is already one thing that you all have in common. Every student has left the comfort of their home in order to enrich their lives. By building this network of new and old friends around you not only are you establishing lifetime relationships, but you are also eliminating your chances of homesickness.

Homesickness is not a disease, it is curable. By following the guidelines above you can be insured that your college experience will be well worth the investment.

The T-Formation

"The night before you are going to be a little nervous and probably won't have the greatest night of sleep, but that's okay."

Congratulations! You've now built your network of friends and are slowly winning the bout against homesickness. Next thing on the list is your first day of class. The night before you are going to be a little nervous and probably won't have the greatest night of sleep, but that's okay. A lot of students go through it. The good news is that because of your early preparation you already know where each class is being held and how long it will take you to get to the classroom. My recommendation is to leave so that you can arrive at class about 10 minutes before it gets started. I know you might think this is too early, but on the first day it is imperative to insure that you make the right impression. This will allow you time to take your seat and get out the necessary materials for class. Once you've taken your seat and prepared you can go to the drink machine and do whatever else you need to before class, as long as you've prepared early.

The Early Bird Sits in the T

Once you arrive at your classroom, obviously a little early, take a seat in one of the well respected T formation desks. These desks are located anywhere on the front row and the row or two of desk up the middle. Forming the shape of a capital T. If these desks are already taken the second row is the next best option.

The T formation is a very concrete way to decrease a lot of distractions that come with a classroom, increase your visibility of the professor and increase your retention of the subject material. These three criteria are very critical to insure the greatest performance in the classroom.



Using the T to Solve Common Problems

Distractions can occur throughout the entire classroom especially with the increase of technology. Laptops, net books, iPods, and cell phones are very popular distraction tools spread throughout the room. It is imperative that as a student you find a way to eliminate these distractions. There is nothing wrong with bringing your laptop to class as long as you can be responsible enough not to be surfing the net during class.



The T formation will put you in the direct eye line of the professor to insure that not only will you not be distracted by your own technology, but not by anyone else's either. Never forget the cardinal rule of college classroom success today: DO NOT TEXT DURING CLASS! Professors are very intelligent people, they know when your texting now matter how discrete you are. This is defiantly a great way to get the professor to know your name, just not in the light that you would prefer. Not only does it create a bad name for you as a student but it will also decrease your retention of the material being lectured on.

Retention is the ability to remember the material that is being discussed in class. It is imperative that you take the time to retain all of the knowledge that the professor is giving in a lecture. If your already in the classroom why not go ahead and sacrifice an hour or so to the dedication of the material with no distractions. The above instructions will allow you to accomplish your goals with diminished hurdles from classroom distractions.

"Never forget the cardinal rule of college classroom success today: DO NOT TEXT DURING CLASS!"

The T formation has many positive results but it is ultimately up to the student to perform in a manner that is deserving of exemplary marks. Don't fall to the distractions of college classrooms and lose a great opportunity. So keep your nose in the books and put forth the effort it takes in order to succeed!





Communication Is Key



"Teachers, believe it or not, used to be students just a few years ago."

Communication is the key to success. No matter what you do in life you will need communication. It is part of one of the world's biggest fears, public speaking. Communicating can do so many great things for a college student. I personally don't think that the average college student knows exactly how important communication is between a professor and student.

Teachers used to be Taught

Teachers, believe it or not, used to be students just a few years ago. So they have been through all of the same pressures that you are going through. They know the feelings you get before they pass out an exam and how you didn't sleep well the night before along with all the peer pressures that come with freedom and college. Talking to your professors is not impossible to do. It just involves a little courage sometimes, especially with the really stern professors. Most of the time these are the ones that enjoy communicating with students the most.

Getting in the Communication Zone

Venture outside of your comfort zone and talk to the professor after class or set up an appointment to meet with him one on one in the beginning of the semester. Go out of your way to make an effort to get to know your professor. Most college professors will have approximately 100-250 students a semester and the following semester a whole new set. So it is impossible for them to get to know each and every one of their students. This is why as a student you must feel obligated to go the extra mile.

Don't get discouraged if the professor has no interest in getting to know their students. There are some professors that look at each year as a number or might possibly be a little introverted. But by reaching out you have made an impression that will last with the professor, even if you think it didn't mean anything.

Procrastination Communication

Do not wait until the nearing end of the semester to communicate with your professor. This is probably the worst thing you could possibly do. Especially if your asking about extra credit or grade replacements. These are topics that should have been discussed within the first two weeks when you were communicating with your professor.

By opening the door of communication with your professors you are showing them a degree of respect that they deserve. They also have colleagues who may one day have you as a student so the communication with one professor can result in a relationship with many. It is up to you to determine what kind of student you want to be and want to be known as.

***"The art of communication is the language of leadership."
— James Humes***



Building an Environment for Success



Truths of Organization

Organization, you hear it over and over again but the truth is, can make or break you, especially in college. Since middle school, teachers remind students over and over again about deadlines for projects, exam dates, and review sessions but college professors do not adhere to that mold. It is up to the student to retrieve and remember all of these dates and more as related to the class.

The Key to Classroom Organization

There are many different ways to stay organized throughout your college career. What follows are just a few of the means by which I was able to stay organized until graduation. In class you want to be prepared as possible with pens, pencils, a structured notebook, and in some cases lecture printouts.

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The importance of your notebook is critical. This is one item that will determine whether or not you obtain the right information from class. Here are a few pointers regarding your notebook.

- One class per notebook (maximum of two classes/notebook)
- Use dividers to separate notes, quizzes, tests, class-work, and home-work
- Place the syllabus in the cover so it is visible without opening the notebook or at least as soon as you open the notebook.
- The syllabus should be highlighted or underlined confirming due dates and test dates.
- Keep it clean, you should be opening it at least 5 times a week so make sure that it stays clean and contains only the work for that class. Everything else will be a distraction.

By utilizing the above tips you will be ready to handle anything your professor might have in store for you. Your notebook represents the class and what it means to you, so have some pride in it. Treat it as though it has some value. When the class is over I recommend buying a large office divider and placing all the materials from that class notebook into the office divider. This way you will always be able to look back at any work you've forgotten or need to review. It only takes a few minutes to make sure that your notebook is well organized but the results will last you a lifetime.



*"That's right guys,
their (planners)
not just for girls in
high school
anymore."*

Another special weapon for key organization in college is the monthly planner. That's right guys their not just for girls in high school any more. Students are finding the usefulness of a monthly planner more and more as they climb the ladder of graduating. The planner allows you to see everything that you have coming up whether it's a due date, exam, or extra credit seminar that the professor mentioned two weeks ago. Who knows, you may find yourself addicted to keeping it up to date to insure complete satisfaction and eliminating unwanted surprises.

Professors love to see organization, even if they themselves seem to be scattered. It not only shows that you care about the class but that you are doing everything in your power to create an environment for success.

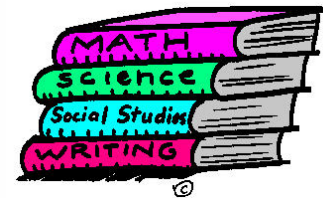


Reading Is No One's Enemy



Read! Read! Read! In case I was not clear enough you must read in order to obtain the full effect of your classes. I unfortunately did not figure this out until later in my college career. In order to succeed in the college curriculum you must read the text given to you by your professors. They can only teach so much in three hours a week. It is up to the student to gain the rest of the knowledge from the text.

"Your fountain of knowledge is only as abundant as the knowledge you supply it with"



High School vs College

Many student's believe that they can skate through a class without reading the text just like they did in high school, until they receive the grade on their first exam. Then the rest of the semester is playing catch up in order to gain that lost knowledge plus the new information being taught. Your fountain of knowledge is only as abundant as the knowledge you supply it with.



College is not high school, if it was everyone with a high school diploma or GED would have a bachelor's degree. It is a total different ball game this is why the importance of reading is so vital.

The Answers lie within the Words

Believe it or not the answer to all of the questions of the class lie within the words written in the text. Reading is not a favorite task for a lot of college students. It requires a lot of focus and self determination in order to read text materials. Although it is not fun for most, a little reading will not kill you. Reading as the course goes along will save you a tremendous amount of time in the future when studying for tests and will possibly be the difference in a 3.0 and a 3.6 GPA, which is drastic. You get out what you put in, plain and simple. College takes time and with a little determination and a little reading you can conquer and prevail as a college graduate.





PPPPPP (*the six p's*)



What?

The 6 P's are based off of an old military euphemism. *Proper planning prevents pretty poor performances.* This is a great saying for college as well. As we have learned earlier in the text, preparation can be a savior. The preparation that you went through in order to achieve a smooth transition from high school to college and your home to the dorm ended up becoming an ample reward. You went through the proper techniques and started early enough to see the results so that the transition would be rewarding. Although you might have thought that the preparation step was over, truth is it has only changed.

Now that you are an official college student, overcoming all the basic introduction hurdles, it is time to settle in for the semester. Part of this process involves proper planning for future success in the classroom. This is where your organization techniques will come in handy and be of great use to you.

*"Proper planning
prevents pretty
poor performan-
ces."
-U.S. Military*

Procrastination

Procrastination is the worst of the worst best friends in college. It is your best friend at the beginning, it allows you to go out with friends, watch movies, stay up late, eat out, and even go to sporting events. But in the end it always ends up becoming your worst enemy. You end up spending all night in the library typing out a research paper that you had 4 weeks to work on. Shunning any effort at all because you are in such a frenzy to complete the task. In the end your grades will fall and your reputation with professors goes with it. It is not worth it. But not to worry procrastination will be back to hang out again and again and again.

Just remember the 6 P's throughout your experience as a college student and they won't let you down. In the end you will still get to enjoy the finer things of college and see the rewards of a non-stressful environment. Remember proper planning prevents pretty poor performances.

Staying Positive

Through college you will experience many ups and downs, many hurdles to overcome, and problems to solve. The most important thing is to believe in yourself and know that you have what it takes to survive this trying time. When you start to get negative you will begin to lose sight of why you are here and what your goals are. Staying positive will allow you to conquer that 10 page midterm paper, or study an extra hour for the chemistry exam. The only person that can graduate from college is you!



Get Involved



Do Something Bigger than Yourself

College is all about the experience. It should be filled with some of the greatest times of your life. It is your first endeavor on your own so why not make it an experience that you will want to remember for the rest of your life. College is filled with so many different organizations; social groups, academic groups, special interest groups, greek life, student government and pre-professional groups just to mention a few. Get involved with at least one of the many groups. This will not only make you feel as though you are apart of something great, but also open doors to friendships with other students who have the same interest.

These groups can do more than just open you to friendships, they can also be used as great resume builders. While involved with the extra curricular group you can serve on many different chairs and executive positions. Dealing with other outside businesses and handling finances are just a

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few of the many things that you can do in one of these special interest groups. They are available to any and all students who are interested, so get involved.

Express Yourself

Special interest groups are also a great way express yourself. Student government will allow you to make a difference in the student body. Most every school has a school paper, this is another great way to express yourself through your writing. The great part about college is if they don't have a group that you're interested in, than start one. If you are one of those people who is very self motivated this would be perfect. Enjoy poetry? Start a poetry group with one of the english professors. Hold a poetry slam at the local coffee house and take donations for a local charity. It's all up to you and what you want your college experience to represent. Make it yours!



The Ultimate Stepping Stone



As a college student, whether community college or four year university, it is important to realize that this is just a stepping stone to the next chapter of your life. College more than anything else helps young mature adults, such as yourself, get a small taste of the real world without throwing you into the deep end. It is a small step that must be taken by a majority of high school graduates in order to accomplish your goals in life. Some of you maybe looking into graduate school, medical school, or even another doctorate program after your bachelors degree. In that case you already should understand that this is a small but extremely important stepping stone in your journey. If your not interested in continuing education after your bachelors degree than college is a stepping stone into your professional career. Companies are looking more and more into your college experience to see how you preformed and what you were involved in. Seeing that so many young adults are receiving college degrees you must be able to separate yourself from the rest. Through your GPA and even

extracurricular activities you can insure that you are separated from the rest.

The Aftermath

Following this book and using it in your everyday life as a college student can insure complete satisfaction as well as an experience that you will soon not forget. College is something every young adult should experience. It teaches you independence, self-motivation, and organization all in a very fun filled young world environment. You might find that you don't want to leave once you get the hang of it. I can insure you that if you survive college with flying colors another great opportunity will come along and you can begin your life as a full grown adult. Remember that college is a stepping stone on to bigger and better things in your life. It will be an exciting journey and I am positive that *The Essentials to Surviving College* will provide you with the tools to see you succeed.

About the Author



Curtis (CAS) Alexander Snethen is from Forest City, North Carolina. CAS is a recent *cum laude* BSBA graduate of Western Carolina University. He is currently working on his M.E. (Masters of Entrepreneurship) at WCU. He currently owns and operates a non-profit Christian based organization that helps local youth groups generate capital for mission trips. This is his first e-book publication. He enjoys outdoor activities and is very active in youth baseball in his home town. As an older brother of four he enjoys spending time with family and watching one of his younger brothers play college baseball at CVCC. CAS has also built two websites for local businesses in his area to help them extend their advertising mediums, www.bubbasfunpark.com & www.wearstronghold.com in his spare time. He is currently seeking employment as a recent graduate of WCU. Feel free to e-mail any questions or comments to c_snethen@yahoo.com.