

# **Transition to College Program**

**Presented by the  
McQuaid Jesuit High School  
Counseling Department**

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## **Suggestions from Your McQuaid Jesuit High School Counseling Department...**

- As soon as you arrive on campus, find out how to drop and add a class. What is the deadline for dropping? Do you need an advisor's signature? This is critical information. Many students need to adjust their schedules first semester. If you wait too long, the drop/add period may have ended, and you'll be out the money in a class that could make your first semester miserable.
- Do not eat alone your first six weeks. Seek out those people who are sitting by themselves. Meeting new people can help you learn a lot...and you will feel less lonely.
- Establish rules or guidelines with your roommate before you get to know each other, within the first two days (i.e., non-smoking or smoking, quiet hours, boyfriend/girlfriends in the room).
- For 18 years, adults have been around to warn you of the consequences of any poor decisions you might make. No one will be in that role when you leave home. Play it safe academically the first six weeks. Make a daily schedule of what you plan to do all week and stick to it. Study two to three hours for every hour in class. If you have a plan, your chance of success increases. You can modify your schedule when you receive mid-semester grades.
- Find out about health services at the beginning of the semester – before you need them. Where is the health center? Hours? Any cost? Sometimes if you get sick first semester it can make you homesick, so if you're prepared, you'll have it all under control and can take care of yourself.
- Before you leave home make sure you know who is paying for what, i.e., books, weekend trips, personal items, etc. Discussion with your parents before you leave will prevent unwelcome surprises and arguments later, thereby keeping home sweet home...*sweet*.
- When you get to college, write your parents and whoever else, a letter thanking them for sending you to school. It will mean a great deal to them and it's easy for you to do. You can buy a card in the campus bookstore.
- When you go home on breaks, remember you are idolized by younger brothers, sisters, and neighbors. You are a role model for them...be a *positive* role model.
- Ask your parents to not change or remodel your bedroom your first year of college, if possible. This may seem hard for them to understand but it can be a comfort to you to feel your roots when you come home.
- You will be studying for many tests during the next 4+ years – but the greatest tests will be personal ones. You will make many personal choices – perhaps ones that will be new to you. Spend some time this summer in self-reflection, thinking about who you are and what you value. Don't be disillusioned. You are going to college with a community of scholars not a community of saints. Be careful, take good care of yourself and don't take chances with the only self you have.
- Let us hear from you to know how you are doing and how you like the college you are attending. Write with advice for underclassmen; advice from college freshmen is always appreciated.
- Open a checking account at a local bank. If your parents are contributing, give them deposit slips so they can send deposits to your account. Pay all your bills by check, writing the reason for the expenditure in your check register. This will help you keep a record of expenses and make budgeting for next year a little easier. Remember to deduct the amount of cash you take out of the ATM from your checking account.
- Credit cards are readily available to college students. It is important to remember that all items charged must be paid for. Don't overcharge and pay bills on time so that you can avoid a high interest rate on the balance.
- Sign all documents with your full legal name. Avoid nicknames on official business. Remember you are registered in your given name and use of any other will cause confusion.

- Before you leave home, identify your support systems. If you start to feel down, how do you pick yourself up? Playing the guitar? Jogging? Exercising? Listening to music? Writing poetry? Artwork? Church? Volunteer activities? Take your support system to college with you. Get involved in intramural sports, the school chapel, Habitat for Humanity. Sing in the shower. Wear your favorite baseball cap. Keep your favorite stuffed animal on your bed or in your suitcase.
- Do not take a car first term/semester, even if it is allowed. Popularity based on how many people you can take to where they want to go is not genuine. You could easily be used by others and feel guilty when you turn down someone who asks to borrow your car. You might be pressured into taking time away from studying to take others where they want to go. There are numerous complications, including parking, involved in having a car on campus. Weigh both sides before deciding to take a car your first year.
- Save \$200 this summer and put it away so no one knows about it, not even your parents or best friend. This is your emergency fund that can help cover a lost key deposit, an unexpected textbook purchase, etc.
- If you are receiving financial aid and your financial aid package includes work study, the best policy is to, immediately after you are paid, endorse the check for deposit only and give it to the business office to apply toward your account. This way you will not come up short when you register for second semester/term.
- On your first day of class write down in your course syllabus when your professor has office hours, the number of his/her office and where the office is located. Keep this information handy. Most professors are worth knowing, enjoy meeting students and are fine human beings dedicated to the role they play in your education.
- Find out where tutoring services are available to you. Do not be afraid (or too proud) to use them. If you find yourself falling behind or not understanding something your professor is covering, get help immediately. Do not procrastinate on this.
- Where is the library? What are the hours? Where are the quietest and most private places to get REAL studying done? Is there a service available to walk you home if you stay late?
- Watch for excess behavior. Examples: apathy, all work and no play, all play and no work, changes in sleep patterns such as insomnia or too much sleeping, eating too little or too much, etc. If you see excesses happening, seek out someone to talk to about your concern. Everyone who moves into a new adventure like college will have some feelings of self-doubt or fear of failing.

As you separate from each other and from your families to begin your college experiences, please keep the following thoughts in mind. Did you know that research studies indicate that 78% of all freshmen have feelings of anxiety, homesickness, and loneliness during the first six weeks of school? No matter how cool most of your fellow freshmen appear to be, remember this statistic. And remember, you are not alone.

# Preparing for the Empty Nest

## The Whirlwind of Senior Year

Have you caught your breath yet? Is your life a blur of senior events like dinners, awards ceremonies, proms, exams and graduation? Is your teen excited, scared, argumentative and tearful? Welcome to the whirlwind of senior year.

This is a time of significant change for you and your child as well as all the members of your family. There are days ahead that will feel like an emotional roller coaster. With a little bit of planning, patience and tears...you and your family will make it through the next few months.

## How do they leave?

Some older teens leave home well. They enjoy their last summer and stay close to their parents and siblings until it's time to say good-bye. Others need to "spoil the nest" in order to leave. Tearing away from a secure home is so hard that they create conflict in order to get angry. It is easier to leave if they are angry. Be prepared for your son or daughter to test the boundaries by staying out late, not calling home, or engaging in underage drinking. Some teens pick fights about anything that a parent says or requests.

## How do you let go?

This is one of your hardest jobs. It is what you have been preparing for during the last 17 or 18 years. You have given them all your best advice and strongest skills.

There are always things you will second-guess...did you instill enough caution and level headedness? Will they make all the mistakes you made and tried to steer them clear of? And the answer to both questions is...yes. You have done your best and they will need to make mistakes. It will help them become stronger adults.

This is not a time to nit pick. Give your teen some breathing room while keeping the boundaries clear. In other words, pick your battles. Overlook a messy room but stand clear about curfews.

Just as it is easier for a child to leave in anger, it can seem easier to let go in anger. Watch your own behavior because you could unconsciously be creating conflict in order to avoid saying good-bye. Let go of your child with an open hand not a clenched fist.

If you are part of a separated or divorced family, make sure your child gets enough time with his/her other parent and family members. Children of these situations often worry about the parent they are leaving. Assure them that you will be fine.

## What about the rest of the family?

Siblings and grandparents are also affected by a teen leaving home. Brothers and sisters may feel abandoned even by siblings they have fought with over the years. If a sibling has been the quiet one and lived in the shadow of the older teen, he or she may be apprehensive about being on the spot with parents. Younger children may get clingy or oppositional. It is important to talk to all your children about this passage and prepare ways for them to consistently communicate with their brother or sister after they leave.

Teens and grandparents often have special relationships and when a grandchild leaves for college, that relationship may be cut off by distance and changing lifestyles. Grandparents are less likely to use e-mail or texting. Help your parents continue to talk or write to your child. They will be a strong support during this transition for you and your child.

## **What to tell your child?**

Communication is vitally important as you begin this new relationship with your adult child. What you say now can instill confidence, love, and provide your child with a solid foundation.

Tell them:

- ◆ How much you love him.
- ◆ How confident you are that he will succeed in the next stage of his life.
- ◆ You will be there to support him when he needs you.
- ◆ You are proud of who he has become.
- ◆ You will miss him, but you will be ok.
- ◆ What you expect from him as he begins college (grades, money management, rules). Be clear and direct about what you will help with and what you won't.
- ◆ Have the direct conversation about date rape and respect.

## **What not to tell him?**

Over the next two months, there is no way you can get in everything you forgot to say in the last 18 years. It is best to keep your anxieties (and there will be many) to yourself.

Don't tell them:

- ◆ How nervous you are about letting him go.
- ◆ How lonely you will be without him.
- ◆ What he still has to learn about life.
- ◆ All the things to be careful about.
- ◆ That you are going to make his room into a den!

## **What if your child is not leaving home?**

If your son is attending a local college, taking a year off or staying home as he works at his first fulltime job, there are other issues to consider.

- ◆ This is still a time of transition.
- ◆ Old rules about curfews and friends and family involvement may need to be revised.
- ◆ Financial arrangements need to be revisited and made clear. What will you pay for? How will you expect your young adult to contribute?
- ◆ What chores will be expected around the house?

When a teen stays home while friends leave for college, he may experience loneliness and isolation. Making new friends may be difficult. It is important that you recognize some of these struggles and offer guidance as needed.

## **What changes can you expect for yourself?**

The first month after your child leaves home will probably be the hardest for you. Whether it is your first or last child leaving, the routine of your days will change, and your grief will be profound.

It's like putting him on the kindergarten school bus for the first time, only worse. You will be grieving not only the loss of your child's presence but an end to a stage in your life.

It may be time to explore what adjustments this means to your life. How will this affect your relationship to your other children? How will this affect you? What have you been putting off that you could do for yourself?

Much has been written about the impact of the “empty nest” on a mother, but as women are more present in the workplace and have traditionally flexed between many roles, they seem to adjust to this stage of life well. Dads, on the other hand, may be surprised about how strong they grieve this transition. It is always good to talk about your experience with family and friends.

### **Signs of Trouble**

When a child is away for the first time or perhaps at home but struggling through a transition, it is common to worry about his well-being. It is important to set up expectations of when your child will check in with you and always pay attention to these possible signs of trouble:

- ◆ Loss of contact
- ◆ Unwillingness to talk about how things are going
- ◆ Expressed feelings of isolation, hopelessness, or fear
- ◆ Calls of help from friends

Trust your instinct; know the number for the college counseling center. Encourage your child to reach out to a counselor or clergy. Visit within the first 3 months of school. There is often a parent’s weekend in the fall so take advantage of this planned time.

## Classroom Survival Tactics

**Warning:** Second-hand knowledge can result in second-class performance. If you miss class, you can read someone else's notes. But will they make sense? Students who skip class short-circuit the learning process.

Actively listening to a lecture and taking your own notes helps you learn the material. What's more, when you go to class, you can listen for the key concepts, themes, and words that indicate what the professor is stressing. And that's very helpful when studying for and taking exams.

### Tips to Get the Most Out of Class

- ◆ Sit toward the front of class. You'll stay alert and research shows you'll probably get better grades.
- ◆ Read the assigned material before class. If you do, the lectures will make a lot more sense. And you'll take better notes because you'll have a better grasp of the subject.
- ◆ Listen for and note key concepts and themes. Try to get the big picture. Avoid trying to write down everything the professor says.
- ◆ Listen for key words. Some professors emphasize the vocabulary (jargon) of their field. Those that do will probably test you on it.
- ◆ Take part in any discussions that develop. Let the professor or teaching assistant get to know you through discussions in class or at their office. When they know you're really trying, you may get the benefit of the doubt on papers and exams. It could mean the difference between a B and an A.

### Successful Study Tactics

No two people are alike, so there's no one best way to learn. It takes repetition and hours of study. But learning isn't just about how many hours you hit the books. It's important to study effectively. There are a variety of useful study tactics to consider. Once you discover which tactics work for you, make them a habit.

#### Study Tactic #1: When are you most alert?

Some students are early morning risers, others are late night people. While it's a good idea to study at several intervals during the day, plan to study most when you're most alert.

When are you most alert?

Morning - Afternoon - Evening - Late night

#### Study Tactic #2: What to study first?

What's your toughest course or the subject you like the least? Study that first because you're likely to be most alert at the beginning of a study session. You'll find it easier getting through the material when your mind is still fresh. In addition, it will be a relief to get that subject out of the way. Then the rest of your studies will seem less imposing because you're not dreading what's left to do.

#### Study Tactic #3: Best Places to Study

There's no "best" place for everyone. Whenever possible, study where you feel comfortable and where you can concentrate. Some people read in bed, others do best at a library. What's right for you? Checkmark your best place(s) below.

Best Place(s) for you to study:

Residence hall room - Residence Hall lounge - Desk - Chair - Library - Other

Don't study anywhere where there's a TV on.

You may find that you have several "favorite" places to study. In fact, changing the scenery now and then may help you refocus your study effort.

#### Study Tactic #4: Daily Study Goals

The next step is to set specific goals for each time period. Every day, look at what you must do. Plan to read "X" number of pages or chapters during each time period. Be realistic. Don't take on more than you can reasonably accomplish, or you may feel overwhelmed and give up.

### **Study Tactic #5: Spread Out Your Studying**

You have a lot of studying to do. Don't try doing it all at once during a marathon study session. You'll be more productive if you study for shorter periods several times a day. It's not as daunting a task, if you spread it out. And you'll learn more.

- ◆ The rule of thumb is you should study 2 to 3 hours a day for every credit hour of coursework. You may have to study more or less, depending on the course material and how well you absorb it. Fulltime students may need to study from 4 to 6 hours, maybe more, every day (7 days a week).

### **Study Tactic #6: Time Between Classes**

Make your study load more manageable by studying an hour or two between classes. One student who needed to learn a long vocabulary list put the words on index cards and memorized a few of them while walking to classes every day. This can work for just about any type of course.

### **Study Tactic #7: Underlining & Highlighting**

Many students underline or highlight key words and concepts when reading. Good idea. But it's easy to overdo it because everything seems important. Try skimming the chapter first, without the highlighter. Then go back and read it. You'll probably have a better grasp of what it's about, highlight less, and learn more.

- ◆ Too often, students underline with the thought that they'll come back and study it more carefully another day. That's a trap to avoid. Make every study session count!

### **Study Tactic #8: Writing in the Margins**

When you're reading a textbook, you're studying. Just as you take notes in class, make notes in the book. \* Write comments and questions in the margins. Use them as reminders to raise questions in class and when studying for exams. (\*See #9)

### **Study Tactic #9: Index Cards**

Instead of writing in the margins, you may prefer writing notes on index cards, citing the text and page number. Whatever works for you, just do it. (By using the index card technique and not writing in the margins, you increase the resale value of the book, which is important to some students.)

### **Study Tactic #10: Audio Recording**

After hours of reading, do you know what you've read? When you're reading, your brain is in one gear. Switching gears can improve reading comprehension. One way to switch gears is to periodically record your thoughts into a recording device. Verbalizing the subject matter can help you see whether you understood what you read. Making the recording is also part of the repetition process that helps you remember the material. If this works for you, make a habit of it.

### **Study Tactic #11: Classmates**

Studying with classmates and discussing the subject is another way to switch gears after silent reading. Verbalizing your own ideas and listening to the comments of others is another way to help you remember what you've studied.

### **Study Tactic #12: The Computer**

Re-write your class notes. You can do this the old-fashioned way – in long hand – or you can rewrite your notes into a computer. Either way, you're better off for several reasons:

- ◆ It's a form of study. The task of rewriting is another cycle of repetition necessary to help you learn the subject matter.
- ◆ The notes will be neater, better organized, and much easier to read.
- ◆ Notes that seemed to make perfect sense when you wrote them down often make no sense at all one month later because you've forgotten the context in which the notes were taken. So, the sooner you rewrite class notes, the better. (Within 24 hours is ideal.) This also helps you synthesize the material, making abstract ideas more concrete.

**Study Breaks**

If you're planning a 3 to 4-hour study session, you'll get the most out of it if you take a break every hour or so. How often you break may depend on the course material as much as your own ability to concentrate for long periods of time. But give it a rest for 10 to 15 minutes. Grab a cola, a coffee, or simply walk up and down a flight of stairs to get your blood moving again. Again, find what works for you and make a habit of it.

**The Shortcut to Good Grades**

Gotcha! There are no shortcuts. It will take a certain number of hours of study for you to learn the material. The sooner you hit the books, the better. You'll get more out of the lectures and future reading assignments will make more sense. So, study regularly during the semester (or quarter). If you don't, you'll have to cram later. And cramming leads to high anxiety and low grades.

**Putting It All Together**

Don't be surprised if you don't understand everything when you first finish a reading assignment. There's a lot to learn and it doesn't happen overnight. But you'll find that as you think about what you've read, as you discuss it in class, as you listen to the professor or teaching assistant give lectures and answer questions, the pieces start to fit together. If they don't, get help.

**Getting Help**

If you need help, don't delay. Don't wait until midterms. Make an appointment to see the professor or teaching assistant (TA). If you're having trouble with several courses, maybe you need to improve your study habits. Your school's academic counseling center is there to help you. Drop in or give them a call.

## Exam Preparation

Cramming and staying up all night doesn't work. Your mind isn't sharp. You're not alert. You run the risk of misreading questions on the test simply because you're tired. When you take an exam, you want to be at your best. So, get a good night's sleep before exams.

### The Magic Formula

There is no magic formula. The first step toward preparing for exams is to follow the suggestions listed below:

- ◆ There is a time to work and a time to play.
- ◆ Set up a study schedule and stick to it.
- ◆ Go to every class.
- ◆ Sit toward the front of the classroom.
- ◆ Do the required reading in advance of class.
- ◆ Underline or highlight the required reading.
- ◆ Make notes in the textbooks or on index cards.
- ◆ Take good class notes and rewrite them.
- ◆ Note what the professor stresses in class.
- ◆ Learn the course's technical vocabulary.
- ◆ Take part in any classroom discussions.

**Warning:** Never walk into a test "cold" with no idea of the test format or what the exam will cover. Even if you've been a perfect student, get the answers to these questions before the test:

### Questions for the Professor:

- ◆ What course material will the test cover? Will it be mostly from the lectures, the required readings or some combination?
- ◆ What form will the test take? Essay, multiple choice, problem solving?
- ◆ Is this exam specifically on the course material where you simply recite facts, figures and quotes?
- ◆ Or, is it an exam in which the question poses a hypothetical situation and the answer is not merely a recitation of course material but an application of it? This type of question is more challenging. It will require analysis, synthesis and interpretation.
- ◆ How many test questions? Does it give the student any options? For example, it may require you to answer two of the three essay questions. Basically, you want to know the format of the exam.
- ◆ If this is a final exam, is it a comprehensive test? In other words, will it cover all the material discussed in the course? Or will it only cover material since the mid-term or most recent exam?
- ◆ Will the professor or teaching assistant hold a review session in preparation for the test?

### The Action Plan

Don't immediately bury your head in books. First, make a plan. When are you going to study for this exam? Based on what the exam will cover, what do you need to study most? What don't you understand? Think first, then act.

- ◆ Review your class notes. Can you spot any trends in your notes? What did the professor emphasize? Did the professor seem to quote one reading source or author more than another? Did the professor consistently use technical vocabulary? If so, you'll probably be expected to know it and use it on the exam.
- ◆ Review the notes, the underlining and the highlights you made in the required reading.
- ◆ Review past tests, if available, to see the types of questions that were asked. Do you know the answers? Those same questions won't be on your exam but trying to answer them will give you a sense of whether you're grasping the course material.
- ◆ Time yourself on practice essay questions. Get used to writing answers under time constraints.

- ◆ Discuss the course with other members of the class. It helps to hear someone else's thoughts, *assuming they've studied*. In addition, as you explain certain themes and facts to them, it is an act of teaching that helps you remember the material.
- ◆ Professors appreciate any extra effort you bring to their course. So, if you cite relevant material from other sources – books, newspapers, magazines, even other courses – that can help boost your grade.

## **The Student Consumer**

You're more than a college student. You're also a consumer of educational services which may be costly. Like any consumer item you buy, you want what's right for you. There are important questions to ask about courses and professors. After you've been to all the classes and reviewed the syllabus from each one, figure out whether you want to drop a course and add another. Typically, it's a process called "Drop and Add." Don't delay. Most schools have strict Drop and Add deadlines.

### **Questions to Ask About the Course**

- ◆ Is this course what you thought it would be?
- ◆ Are reading assignments light, medium, heavy?
- ◆ Go to the bookstore and look at the required texts. Big type or small type? Lots of words on a page or quite a few charts and graphs?
- ◆ How many exams? How many papers?
- ◆ Is the final exam comprehensive, that is, does it cover material from the entire semester?

You aren't looking for easy courses, but you want to gauge just how heavy a load you have. It may be too heavy, in fact. Or you may find a course isn't really for you.

### **Professors: Get the Best**

No matter how serious a lecture, every time a professor steps up to the podium, he or she is giving a performance. Some are better at it than others. And some are more organized than others.

- ◆ Is the professor a good communicator?
- ◆ Is it clear what he or she expects from you?
- ◆ When can you meet with the professor? What are the office hours? Is the office on campus?

Talk to students who have already taken the course from the professor. What are their impressions? How did the professor deal with students and the course material? Also ask about the format of exams and the required reading.

At some schools you can review how students graded a particular professor and course. Find out where those evaluations are. They may be in the Student Union or at each individual department.

**Note:** If you think the ideal professor is one that's "easy," think again. An easy teacher is a waste of time and money. The fact is the best professors:

- ◆ Demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject
- ◆ Demand you know the material
- ◆ Challenge you to think
- ◆ Grade you fairly

### **What is your grade based on?**

Find out how much of your grade is based on exams, papers, lab work, field projects or other requirements? Then ask yourself, "Which do I do best?" You may be better at papers or lab work than exams. Where you have a choice, consider courses where you can utilize your strengths. You won't always find such courses, however. And when that's the case, at least you'll know in advance and can make an extra effort to succeed.

## **Before Signing Up for Classes...**

Before you sign up for classes, you'll look through the course catalogue. Sometimes you'll want to know more than the brief description given in the catalogue. When you want more details, contact the department which offers the course. Is there a more detailed description available? Can I look at the syllabus for the upcoming semester or quarter? If not, can I review a past syllabus?

### ***Stretch Courses***

Students are understandably concerned about their grade point average (GPA). And for that reason, some students avoid taking certain subjects simply because they're not familiar with them. They don't want to take the risk of getting a grade that could pull down their GPA. That's a legitimate concern. On the other hand, college is about sampling courses and ideas that are new to you. Take advantage of the opportunity to take courses that *stretch* you intellectually and take your thinking in new directions. You'll probably find such courses invigorating. And, if you do, good grades will follow.

### **Drop and Add Decisions**

You'll probably only drop and add a handful of courses during your college career. But they can be very important decisions. If you feel "stuck" in a course, you'll find it hard to get motivated to study. So, don't get stuck! Make good use of the first week of classes to evaluate the professors and the courses. Then, if you have to drop something, do it. Something else to do that first week of class: sit in on a course you may want to add. Just let the professor know what you're doing. Of course, you won't always have options. In some cases, you may have no choice but to take a particular required course from a certain professor.

## Facts on Alcohol Poisoning

### Did You Know...?

- An estimated 4,300 youths die annually in the U.S. from overdosing on alcohol, more than are killed in drunken driving crashes.
- All of us have absorbed thousands of ads and visual images pushing the joys of drinking without counter ads giving the downside of drinking. Warnings about alcohol poisoning are not on the labels of alcohol beverages, so most people don't know the real impact of binge drinking. *On average, 8 teens a day die from alcohol-related crashes.*
- Strict enforcement of the 21-drinking age law is based on the scientific theory that youths are physically in the process of maturing and that the myelin sheath that covers the nerves to the brain (addiction center) is thin for teens. It thickens with age and attains its thickest dimension at age 22. Teens that drink at 14 are at great risk of developing alcohol addiction in six months. It takes years of drinking, if ever, to become an alcoholic if drinking is postponed to 21. Teens can become addicted much more easily than adults due to their physical immaturity.
- One of the first things drinking alcohol will affect is the drinker's judgment.
- "Why would one beer at a party be so bad? It couldn't hurt you if you didn't drive." Most victims of alcohol poisoning start with one beer (or drink) which leads to two. Then since alcohol makes one thirstier, and relaxes one's judgment, caution is thrown to the wind and kids yield to peer pressure to over drink.
- Vomiting while chugging alcohol is much more dangerous than when one has a stomach virus. Alcohol relaxes the gag reflex muscle which ordinarily would close the windpipe when one is vomiting. A relaxed gag muscle leaves the windpipe open and vulnerable to inhaling vomit into the lungs, causing asphyxiation.

### Critical Signs for Alcohol Poisoning:

1. Mental confusion, stupor, coma, cannot be roused
2. No response to pinching the skin
3. Vomiting while sleeping
4. Seizures
5. Slow breathing, less than 8 breaths per minute or irregular, with 10 seconds or more between breaths
6. Hypothermia (low body temperature), bluish skin color, paleness

Do not wait for all the symptoms of alcohol poisoning to be present before calling 911 for an ambulance.

If a person passes out, or is speaking irrationally and seems disoriented, 911 should be called without waiting for the other symptoms to appear. Speed is very important in getting help for anyone overdosing on alcohol.

Someone who knows the victim and how much alcohol he or she has imbibed should go with the victim to the Emergency Room. Someone needs to tell the medics what and how much the victim has consumed so they don't waste time thinking the victim has overdosed on another drug or try to pump the victim's stomach. The emergency treatments for illicit drug overdoses do not work for alcohol poisoning and just waste valuable time.

We need to educate ourselves to the risks of alcohol poisoning. We cannot let our lack of knowledge about alcohol poisoning cause needless deaths. Alcohol is a poison; if you drink fast enough to get enough of it in your system before you pass out, it will kill you in a few hours.

## Stress

We all function with varying levels of stress every day. Stress provides the push that helps us reach our goals, do our jobs and provide for our basic needs. Without stress many problems would not be solved, nor victories won, nor careers begun.

Stress is frequently associated with the less pleasant parts of life. Because stress occurs when we worry, the very mention of the word stress brings bad news, loud or angry voices, headaches, stomach upset, anxiety and tension to mind. The fact is, however, that stress is neither positive nor negative; it is simply a response intended to return the mind and body to a state of balance and equilibrium.

Stressors themselves are neutral, neither good nor bad. The reactions or responses they bring about determine whether the resulting stress will be helpful or destructive. Moving from one city to another is a stressor. It is positive if we become excited and make appropriate plans for settling in and getting acquainted. However, it can become negative if we become afraid of being in a new town and this fear prevents us from seeking new friends and exploring a new environment.

A stressor can be internal or external. Internal stressors come from within you, such as attitudes, feelings, living habits and moral standards. If a friend wanted to shoplift something, that action may conflict with your sense of what is right (your moral standards) and cause you to feel stressed when considering the idea.

Seeing your boyfriend talking to another girl may cause you to feel a bit jealous. This anxiety is stress, again from an internal source – your feelings. What you do at this point will determine if the stress works to your advantage or disadvantage. If you say nothing and allow your feelings to boil inside you, the tension and anger that are your stress will build and may result in heated accusations and hostility at some later point. This ineffective method of handling stress may result in the termination of the relationship and loss of the friendship – a negative consequence of your inappropriate handling of stress. On the other hand, recognizing that the jealousy is causing stress may cause you to bring up for conversation the state of your relationship, where it has been and where it is going. Not only will this action reduce your current level of stress just by allowing you to get the subject into the open, but it may also eliminate many future possibilities of stress because you will come to a better understanding of yourself and your friend. Your feelings of jealousy may not disappear, but they will most likely be reduced and you will feel in greater control of what is going on in your life – a positive consequence of your handling stress in an appropriate manner.

External stressors are outside you and often not under your direct control. Normal everyday events such as the actions of others, rules and regulations, traffic and work are external stressors. If while driving to work you come upon an unusually large traffic tie-up, you may become very upset because you are already late for work and in a greater hurry than usual. If your stress causes you to become an obnoxious and dangerous driver (blowing your horn, weaving from lane to lane, speeding in the breakdown lane), the consequences of your inappropriate reaction to stress could be deadly for yourself and others. On the other hand, if your stress makes you decide to leave for work ten minutes earlier each day to avoid the hassle, you will have used the discomfort of your stress to bring about positive changes in your life.

A stressor can be pleasant, unpleasant or both. Developing a disease would be an unpleasant stressor. However, many stressors are things we really want to do but that still make us anxious in doing them. Going to college or moving away from home for the first time, getting married, having children, competing in a sports tournament are all pleasant experiences that bring stress with them.

Thus, even the most pleasant events cause stress because we are required to make changes and take risks – two things few people pursue willingly.

Whether the stressor is pleasant or not, stress energizes the body and mind and prepares them to do something. How successful or unsuccessful you will be in your personal and career life is often determined by how you handle the stress in your life. The important thing to remember is that stress is not necessarily bad, that it can be useful and valuable, and that its sole purpose is to return your body and mind to their normal state after a shock or disturbance in your normal routine.

## **Coping with Stress**

Experiencing stress is a regular and normal part of everyone's life. Getting dates, choosing a college, or changing jobs are all events which occur routinely and cause some level of stress. Handled in a positive and successful way each stressful event can help prepare you to successfully cope with the next stressful event.

Coping with the stress of asking for a first date can make future date requests easier to make because you have learned to handle the stress involved. Getting your first job as a young adult will better prepare you to use the stress in a positive way when you seek other more challenging jobs.

Learn to stop trying to find a way to eliminate stress because it cannot be done. You can, however, learn to manage your stress. By discovering the source of your stress, you can often use your insight to reach your goals or bring about needed changes to your life. If you have created the stressful conditions yourself, can you find a way to reduce or eliminate it? Many of us produce our own stress by setting unobtainable goals or by feeling guilty when we don't get something done, or by worrying unnecessarily about the appearance or impression we present. Changing these thoughts will change your level of stress. Is your stress external, perhaps coming from the workplace or as a result of a recent change in your living situation? Being able to understand what the stressors are can help you develop a method of coping with stress or even reducing it or eliminating it entirely.

The following is a list of methods you could adopt to help you cope with stress and begin to use your stress for positive purposes:

- **Exercise regularly.** Choose an exercise program that you can comfortably participate in and one you will enjoy. Some of the energy used to produce damaging stress responses will be diverted for use in positive exercise.
- **Pace major life changes.** Don't alter too many parts of your life over a short time span.
- **Balance work with play.** Be sure that your leisure time is not spent thinking about job-related problems.
- **Manage your time.** Do important things first and realize you cannot do everything.
- **Involve yourself with your family.** You can be yourself when you're home. Your family will understand your worries and concerns, and this can reduce stress. Talking to a trusted friend can also help.
- **Learn to relax.** Employing a relaxation technique that does not involve drugs or alcohol can be of significant value. Genuine relaxation is the best remedy for the distressed worker, parent, child, or retiree. The ability to relax can be developed with practice and many books are available at your local library which discuss relaxation techniques.

- **Investigate your attitudes.** Are you placing undue pressure on yourself because you feel you have to be on time, you must get it done today or you think others want you to conduct yourself in a particular fashion? Often thoughts like these have no basis in reality.
- **Change the environment.** If one particular place is always stressful, remove yourself from it.
- **Get enough rest.** This can involve arranging for quiet time or simply doing nothing. Resting is not always lying down.
- **Be positive.** Don't concentrate on failures; if you find yourself doing so, recall some recent successes as this will offset feelings of failure.
- **Stay within the problem.** Consider the possible solutions, take appropriate action and accept what cannot be changed.
- **Strive for achievement.** But remember, perfection is not a reasonable goal.
- **Use "could" phrases in place of "should" phrases.** Do you arrange your tasks in such a way that every one of them should be done now and only by you – or could you do some later or let someone else do them. The word "should" places the burden for accomplishment on you and you may then be responsible for producing added stress by creating an atmosphere where everything should be done rather than finishing what reasonably can be done.
- **Eat properly.**
- **Pursue a non-work hobby.**
- **Give in once in a while.**

There is no one technique that is best to handle stress. When choosing a technique that might be best for you, consider the following facts. You have three basic choices when choosing a method for dealing with stress. You can remove the stressor from your environment. You can remove yourself from a stressful environment. Or you can learn techniques that counter or offset the effects of a stressful environment.

## Credit Cards: What Every Student Should Know

They're everywhere – in the mail, at the mall, in the college student union – and they want you. They are credit card companies, and they are targeting college freshmen. "Everyone is bombarded with credit card offers," says Colleen O'Brien, Managing Director of the Institute for Higher Education Policy (Washington, DC). "It can be tempting."

College is when many students get their first credit card. In fact, a recent survey by Nellie Mae, a nonprofit lender, showed that 78% of college students have credit cards. But if students go overboard in using their new credit cards while they're in college, the consequences can haunt them long after they graduate. "Students can and do get into trouble," with credit cards, says Calvin Davis, Assistant Director of Financial Aid at Wesleyan University (CT).

Two aspects of credit cards can threaten your financial health: their convenience and their interest rates. It is easy and convenient to receive a credit card: just fill out a little form and send it in. Student groups often set up tables on campus and collect credit card applications as a fund-raiser. It is also easy to use a credit card: no trips to the bank or ATM, no checkbook to carry around, just a little card stuck in your wallet. But that convenience can also bring the temptation of spending more than you can afford. "Using credit cards for everyday expenses or for extravagances is not a good idea," says O'Brien. But you can always pay it back next month, right? That's where the danger comes in: high credit card interest rates. Although the initial rates offered by credit card companies seem good, the interest rates usually go up significantly – sometimes to double or triple the initial rate – after about six months. And that's when students can get into big-time debt.

"A credit card is a short-term loan with high interest," says Davis. And that interest can add up, even if you make the minimum payment every month. "A \$100 debt can turn into a \$200 debt over time if you just make the minimum payment," says Diane Stemper, Director of Financial Aid at Miami University (OH). As a result, students can get themselves into a bigger debt than they ever imagined and may even have trouble paying it back. According to Nellie Mae, students' average credit card balance – what they owe – is \$2,226. Nine percent of students have balances that are more than \$7,000. This kind of debt – especially if you are having trouble making the payments – can limit your options after you graduate from college.

"There are severe and significant consequences of not paying back debt," says Stemper. Bad credit reports can prevent you from getting a car loan, buying a house or renting an apartment. On the other hand, a good credit history can help you buy that car. "Credit cards are not in and of themselves a bad thing," says O'Brien. "It is important to start a pattern of good credit history during college."

So how can a student start building that good credit history without building up a big debt?

**First, limit the number of credit cards you have.** Don't rush into getting 15 cards just because you can. The more cards you have, the easier it is to lose track of your spending, not to mention the differences in the terms of each card. "We suggest that students limit it to one card with a low limit, about \$500," says Davis.

**Second, use credit cards only out of necessity** – travel, emergencies, and the like. Don't see credit cards as the first option, but as only one of many.

**Third and most important, pay off your balance every month.** This practice, more than any other, guarantees that you will remain debt-free, and it will establish the good credit history that is so important to your future financial plans.

If you can't pay off the balance of a credit card in each month, it's a good idea to take the card out of your wallet and put it away until you can afford to pay it off. That way, you won't be tempted to put more purchases on the card, which will only add to the total.

Finally, be informed about how credit cards work, and about managing your money in general. Sometime before your freshman year begins, sit down with your parents and talk about how you will manage your finances in college. Discuss checking and savings accounts, budgeting, and credit cards, including how you will pay for your everyday living expenses. This kind of planning will help you – and your wallet – be prepared for college.

**If a student goes overboard in using credit cards in college, the consequences can haunt them long after they graduate.**

## Laundry 101

(Otherwise known as the Mechanics of Washing Wearing Apparel)

### 1. Separating the soiled garments:

- Sort laundry into piles: whites/blends/darks/hand-washables  
(Blends are neither all white nor all dark but are somewhere in between or mixed white and dark.)

### 2. Washing your dirty clothes while still in school:

- Wash these piles separately in the washing machine, preferably in cold water, except for the hand-washables (the delicate clothes you don't want to ruin). Make sure to add the proper amount of laundry detergent. Read the detergent bottle or box to determine the proper amount to use. Add the laundry detergent to the water as it is filling up the washing machine. You can put the clothes in the washing machine before you turn on the machine on or after the detergent and water mix. Remember to turn the machine on and wait for it to finish all the cycles – wash, rinse, spin dry, etc.
- If there are any clothes that are stained put some laundry detergent full strength on the stains as soon as possible and before washing in the machine.

### 3. Dryer tips:

**Dry in the dryer any garment that:**

- Will not shrink – when in doubt call home.
- You don't care about – this category should not apply to you.
- Are too big and you want them to shrink.
- Dry shirts and khaki pants in the dryer for about 10 minutes and then hang dry. Jeans can be left in the dryer until completely dry.

**Machine dry:** underwear, boxers, towels, sheets, socks, undershirts, t-shirts, etc.

**Hang dry:** delicate clothes and nylon stuff (brine shorts) and any hand-washable items.

### 4. When in doubt or for special tutoring – call home!

5. If all else fails buy enough clothes to last from vacation to vacation and bring home the soiled garments for some private lessons from your parents. *Only kidding!!!*

## **Take Advantage of Your Orientation Program**

You, as a new college student, will be happy to learn that almost all colleges and universities offer some sort of orientation program. Let me tell you why they are offered, how they are typically set up, what happens there, and why it will be important for you to attend.

### **Why do colleges offer orientation programs to new students?**

For the most part, colleges realize the variety and extent of the changes new students go through as they make the transition from high school to college. Simply, there is much to be learned. Orientation programs are the college's way of helping you adjust to your new environment and cope with the changes you will experience. In general, most orientation programs are designed to help you adjust academically as well as personally and socially. They give you an advance look at the college experience, help you understand necessary policies and procedures, and provide you with opportunities to become familiar with faculty, staff, activities, services, and other students.

There are several different types of orientation programs. A particular college may use one or a variety of these types. Used most often on college campus is the summer orientation program. Summer orientation programs usually consist of a series of sessions ranging from one to three days in length. New students (and usually their parents) are invited to attend one of these sessions during which the orientation/registration process occurs. The second orientation type most often used is the pre-semester orientation program. Like summer programs, these programs are offered for one to five days immediately preceding the start of the fall semester. During these programs many activities are planned to give you a quick overview of campus life in addition to being advised on course selection and completing registration. These activities usually include campus tours, meetings with current students, and addresses from key administrators. Depending on the length of the programs, some campuses might offer programs on residence hall living, Greek life, campus safety, student activities, financial aid, and informational workshops such as career planning and time management.

Most often used in combination with one of the program types described above, many colleges offer an orientation course. These programs have become increasingly popular on college campuses in recent years. Depending on the college, these courses usually last throughout the first term or semester and may be taken for academic credit. This format allows students to investigate a greater variety of issues and some in more depth than might be possible during a summer or pre-semester orientation program.

### **Why should you go to an orientation program?**

Although orientation programs at some colleges are voluntary and some are mandatory, you should make it a point to attend if at all possible. There is some research which shows that students who attend orientation programs are more likely to be successful at college and less likely to drop out. Regardless, there are many advantages for students who attend orientation programs. Since summer and pre-semester programs are most prevalent, the following advantages pertain primarily to them:

- Advisement and registration in an environment less hectic than regular fall registration.
- An opportunity to familiarize yourself with the campus and find your way around before the first day of classes.
- An opportunity to live in a residence hall. With summer programs, this helps you plan what to bring to campus.
- An opportunity to interact with current students. They'll help you learn the ropes and inform you of campus life.
- An opportunity to meet other new students. You'll make new friends and learn that others share your expectations and concerns about starting college.
- An opportunity to get involved in campus organizations and activities.

- An opportunity to get answers to your questions before school begins.

### **Orientation is for parents, too.**

Most colleges design their orientation programs to include parents as well as new students. They recognize the important role parents play in the student's college career. Again, depending on the college, the parents' orientation program will be conducted in conjunction with the student program or separately. Either way, the overall purpose of these programs is to help educate the parents about campus life, inform them about campus resources, and address their concerns as parents.

You should look upon parent attendance at orientation as a definite plus. Not only will the orientation program inform them about the college you have chosen, but it will help them feel more secure in the fact that you're leaving home. After attending orientation, parents will be more aware of college life and better equipped to help you when you ask them for advice or share with them your college experiences.

So, when the opportunity arises for you to attend an orientation program at the college of your choice, be sure to go and take your parents. Your college career is a great investment. You owe it to yourself to take advantage of this opportunity. Remember, a great start in college is the first step to a successful college experience.

## The Roommate Agreement

You and your roommate(s) may agree on everything, or you may be a study in contrasts. Your politics may be different. You may have different tastes in music and clothes. You may be a “morning person.” They may like to stay up late. You may be a “neatnik” and they may be sloppy.

One source of freshman year tension is adjusting to the idiosyncrasies and preferences of a roommate. Occasionally, a roommate will get on your nerves. And you’ll get on theirs. When that happens, everyone will just have to make an extra effort to get along.

To get off on the right foot, read and sign the Roommate Agreement below. Ask your roommate(s) to do the same. Then post it in a prominent place as a reminder. Do this early in the semester before any disagreements arise. If severe conflicts develop, see your residential advisor (RA). Note: The agreement includes lines where you can add additional “Rules of Order.”

### The Roommate Agreement

All roommates have the right to a decent night’s sleep. Negotiate a “lights out” policy:  
Weekdays \_\_\_\_\_ Weekends \_\_\_\_\_

Establish quiet times for study in the room.

Roommates may socialize with other friends in the room until “lights out.”

While school policy may allow for visits by the opposite sex, he or she must leave at “lights out.”

Respect your roommates’ possessions. Don’t use or borrow them unless given permission.

Whoever brings food into the room is responsible for cleaning up later.

Lock the door whenever leaving the room to protect everyone’s possessions.

The room is both a bedroom and a living room. All roommates pledge to make good faith efforts to keep their part of the room in reasonable order.

Additional “Rules of Order”

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**Please sign below:**

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## Reminder List for College

### Arriving

- Don't bring your whole wardrobe to college. You can always add stuff.
- Bring a small reading lamp (bedside, clip-on, etc.) and fan. Lighting and air conditioning vary from hall to hall.
- Alert the Health Center and hall staff of any medical conditions. Bring any prescribed medications.
- Read all the mail the college sends you. Bring any necessary papers, forms, etc. the college/university instructed you to bring.
- Bring a positive attitude and sense of humor with you (laughing through some of the community living issues is a must!).
- Your RA (Residential Advisor) usually has some good information on college life. Attend hall meetings and seek him/her out to speak one-on-one.

### Adjusting

- Keys to getting along with your roommate: The 3 Cs – Communicate, Compromise, Consideration
- Being homesick is natural. It can mean missing a family member, pet, friend, neighborhood, or room of your own.
- Stay in touch with friends and family. Write, call, and e-mail. They need to hear from you as much as you need to hear from them.
- Your high school friends who are in college will also be going through an adjustment. Be patient and supportive.
- Understand thoroughly the distinction between a good friend and an acquaintance. Quality friendship takes time.
- Browse the college handbook, the rules, regulations, ethics code. You are responsible for adhering to college policies. "Ignorance is no excuse."
- Ask questions rather than wasting precious time. When speaking with college staff, make sure you get the name of the person you spoke with.

### Scheduling

- Write all exams and paper/project due dates on a monthly calendar. This will give you an overview of the semester.
- Try creating a daily schedule. Write down everything: classes, study time, meetings, exercise, meals, etc.
- Lists are an effective way to remember and prioritize items.

- Find your own ways to relax and reduce stress: music, nature, sports, reading, etc. Take a few moments each day to unwind in healthy ways.

### **Attending Classes**

- Get to know your faculty advisor early in the semester. He or she can answer many academic questions and help point you in the right direction.
- Make sure you get a complete syllabus. Know exactly what is required for each course.
- Introduce yourself to your professors.
- Make the effort to go to class. Don't show up late and try not to sleep. You won't make points with the professor, and you aren't getting your tuition's worth.

### **Exploring**

- Be creative. There are many free and inexpensive things on campus. Expand your horizons by attending new and different events.
- Bulletin boards are a great way to find or post information. Also visit the student center. Some schools post on the Internet, so check it out.
- This is the perfect time in your life to try something new, whether it is a course, a club, an athletic event, a skill, or a hobby.
- Pace yourself. Don't get too involved with organizations, clubs, and social commitments your first semester.
- It is a relatively simple task to party your way out of school and a relatively difficult problem to correct. Self-awareness is the key.
- Don't panic if you haven't the slightest idea what you want to major in after the first semester. Take classes in interesting and new disciplines. Enjoy the exploration period.
- Read the college and local newspapers. Stay informed about your community and world.

### **Studying**

- Find a place (other than your room) that is the most conducive to your style of studying. Take occasional breaks during studying.
- It is helpful to review your notes at the end of the day. Write down anything ambiguous and clear it up.
- Read the assignments before class discussions.
- Studying for college courses can be very different from studying in high school. Self-discipline is key.
- Volunteer/participate in some type of research for at least one of your courses.
- The key to a good paper: good research skills, good outline. Write, revise, write, revise, write, revise (repeat as necessary).

- If you need academic help, you can discuss it with your professors and academic advisor, and/or seek out tutors. Some tutors are free; some charge a small fee. It is well worth it.
- Learn as much as you can about the library's resources. Not only will knowing it save you precious time but also, it is essential for serious academic pursuits.
- Although you will probably do it at least once, cramming for tests is unhealthy and counterproductive.

### **Spending \$\$\$**

- Tuition does not include any other expenses. Learn to live within your budget (Hint: First define your budget; it requires a little planning and discipline).
- Learn how to use a checkbook. Consider setting up a local checking account for convenience.
- Pay bills on time to establish a good credit standing. Use a credit card for emergencies and essentials only.
- Limit your off-campus dining. Watch out for hidden expenses, especially pizza.
- If you need or want part-time work, try to start off with as few hours as possible (between five to ten hours per week). And more if you can handle it.

### **Taking Care of Yourself**

- Whenever you get the chance eat healthy food - especially snacks. Consider taking a multi-vitamin.
- Try to get 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. This pays off in the long run.
- Do laundry on a regular basis and remember to separate the colors!
- Safety on campus = simple common sense. Go in groups; leave a situation if you feel it is getting out of control; don't feel the need to continue in an uncomfortable situation; use the buddy system; and trust your gut instinct.
- If you bring expensive things with you, make sure you and your roommate lock the door. Find a good hiding place to keep valuables or lock your desk drawer if you can. You are the most precious valuable in the room so also lock your door while sleeping.
- Investigate available health care services. Find out if you are still covered under your parents' medical insurance policy. Some universities offer inexpensive or free health care service.
- Don't put problems off. (It is the single worst thing you can do.) Don't be above using the counseling services. It is a sign of strength. We all need help occasionally, even beyond friends. At most schools it is free.

### **Have Fun**

Look at the BIG picture and try not to sweat the small stuff because...most of it is the small stuff. Good luck and best wishes on your first semester!

## Words of Wisdom from Your McQuaid Jesuit Counseling Department

It has been a privilege to see your growth through McQuaid and I wish you the best as you move onto wonderful opportunities in the next phase of your life! My advice includes looking for opportunities to continue to grow out of your comfort zone, whether it be in work, in life or in college, whichever path you choose. Seek ways to learn more about how you can pursue what you are passionate about in life and potentially a career. Don't forget that you are not expected to experience and navigate the twists and turns of your beautiful life without help. Just as we have been a part of helping you through McQuaid, reach out to others and let others support you as well! And remember you are always welcome home to McQuaid Jesuit!

*Mrs. Margaret Gorton*

Even though you are entering adulthood, you will always be your parents' child; try to call home at least once a week.

*Ms. AnnMarie Galletto*

Mahatma Gandhi said "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." In this next chapter of your life, you will be presented with tremendous opportunities and challenging trials, embrace them, and grow into the person you always wanted to become.

*Mr. Chris Pierri*

It is okay if you aren't completely sure about the journey ahead of you, and where college will ultimately take you. Trust the process, work hard, ask for help when you need it, and take care of yourself... you will be pulled in the direction you are meant to go when the time is right.

*Mrs. Amy Sheffer*

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." - - - Eleanor Roosevelt

*Mrs. Sara Snyder*

"Every person you meet knows something you don't; learn from them." – H. Jackson Brown Jr.

*Mr. Jeff Grifa*

Listen more often than you speak. Act when others choose not to.

It's cliché, but be humble in victory, gracious in defeat.

Honesty, no matter how small, will pay repeated dividends when you need it most.

Real men tell their family members they love them, so call home once in a while to do that.

The greatest compliment in life is to be considered a Good Man or Woman but be that when other people aren't watching you. That's way more important than a compliment.

Above all else, be on the lookout for the moments in life where you can truly be a Man for Others.

*Mr. Scott Allan*

College is a time for exploration, a time to define yourself. Take the opportunity to grow and learn. The most important thing that you will learn about in college is yourself. It's invaluable to know who you are and what you love to do.

*Mr. John Serafine*