ADJUSTING TO FRESHMAN YEAR

Beginning life at college can be both exciting and scary. Whether you are the type of student who feels intoxicated by the freedom and the novelty of the college experience, or the student at the opposite extreme who pines for the safety and familiarity of home, the critical transition from high school and home to college requires some major adjustments.

Here are some pointers to help you get started on the right foot.

- **View college as a fresh start.** Wipe your slate clean of previous successes, failures, disappointments and inadequacies. This is a time to create a new, stronger you. You can no longer rest on your laurels from high school, but neither are you shackled by a bad high school reputation. This is a brand new game.

- **Be patient with yourself.** If you are feeling lonely, disoriented, anxious, or scared, so are half of your classmates. Hang in there. Homesickness and unhappiness often ease up after a while. The roughest part may end by a few weeks into the semester.

- **Accept that it may take some time for you to feel as comfortable at school as you do at home.** You may feel a sense of loss and discomfort with all of the changes, but you are capable of surviving these feelings if you allow yourself to relax and explore.

- **Analyze your homesickness.** What experience/thing/person are you missing the most? Are you longing for someone to listen to you? Do you long to meet people to hang out with? Do you miss your role as a student leader? Have you had trouble finding students with similar values or life experiences? Ask yourself what things you can control.

- **Focus on things that relax you**—deep breathing, listening to music, going for a walk, exercising, or talking to a friend.

- **Keep in contact with the people you left behind** (including family) by phone, email, and/or IM, and plan trips home. Remember that a continuing psychological connection with home and loved ones exists even when you are here physically.

- **Begin to focus on what you can do now as a student at Campbell University.**

- **Make social connections at college right from the start.** Go to dinner with your roommate, visit the people you met at orientation, try to make new friends by talking with those on your floor, in classes, or those sitting in the Student Center. Try to build an early sense of belonging, though remember that new relationships should not be expected to develop overnight. It’s unrealistic to expect that roommates will be your best friends. Roommates may work out mutually satisfying living arrangements, but the reality is that each may tend to have his or her own circle of friends.
• **Create your own style on campus.** Organize your half of the room just the way you like it. Decide what you want to get involved with and to what degree.

• **Communicate and compromise with your roommate.** Living with roommates can present special, sometimes intense problems. Negotiating respect of personal property, personal space, sleep, and relaxation needs can be a complex task. The complexity can increase when roommates are of different ethnic/cultural backgrounds with very different values. Communicating your needs calmly, listening with respect to your roommate’s concerns, and being willing to compromise to meet each other’s most important needs can promote resolution of issues.

• **Take Action.** Structure your time and open up to Campbell University experiences that may replace those at home. Participate in events to learn about CU and to meet others.

• **Learn the campus and the resources available to students.** The sooner you know your way around the campus and the neighboring community, the sooner you’ll feel at home.

• **Settle into a comfortable routine.** Depending on your style, your schedule may be structured or somewhat loose. By establishing and following your routine each day, you will feel more effective and in control.

• **Get to know at least one adult on campus fairly well, starting with your advisor.** The campus will seem far less impersonal.

• **Expect surprises; take them in stride.** College can be thrilling and challenging, but it can also wear you down with personality clashes, financial setbacks, health setbacks, academic frustrations and relationship disappointments.

• **Focus on academics.** University classes are a great deal more difficult than high school classes. In order to survive, you must take responsibility for your actions. If a class is missed, it is up to you to borrow lecture notes. If you are having difficulty with course work, ask for help.

• **Remember to enjoy this new experience.**

• **Talk to someone if you are feeling blue or distressed.** If you haven't made a trusted friend yet, try an RA, RD, RC, professor, advisor, Campus Minister, or call Counseling Services to schedule an appointment for professional counseling (814-5709). If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts or have a plan to harm yourself, get help immediately. From campus, dial **x1911** for Campus Safety, or from elsewhere, dial **911** or present to the nearest hospital emergency room immediately for assistance.

** Information taken from Saint Joseph’s University website and from University of Minnesota’s website **