



**Play Collegiate Golf**

"creating academic and athletic success"

**W. J. Bruce Fleming, EdD**

Founder/Consultant

1725 Babington Way

Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

**T:** 843.609.6201

**E:** bruce@playcollegiategolf.com

**W:** playcollegiategolf.com

## ***Five Tips for Success in the First Year of College***

*Avoiding the Traditional Pitfalls of the Transitional Year from High School to College*

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During the transition into college many challenges will occur and you, as a first year student, will notice differences in your new academic, social, and personal environments as compared to what you experienced during high school. With these changes come personal responsibility: to manage your own time, to get to class and be actively engaged, to meet with professors outside of class time, and to become involved on campus. It will be up to you to work through these various settings and progress towards a successful first semester and beyond. Research indicates that the first six weeks of the fall semester for freshmen are critical in attaining a successful start to their post-secondary career. There are several things that students can do during their first semester to help achieve success in and out of the classroom. The following five tips for success can be utilized during the all important first semester and, in reality, can be used during your entire collegiate career so keep them in mind!

***TIME MANAGEMENT:*** On the first day of classes, closely look over the syllabus handed out by the professor. This document includes course objectives, course topics, assigned readings, exam dates, due dates for projects and papers, and contact information for your professor. The syllabus will help you in planning for your semester so use it to get organized! Use a weekly planner or daily "To Do" list to stay current with your academic work and personal obligations for all of your classes as well as personal time. Keep your important dates for tests, projects and papers, and exams in your planner. Refer to your planner often; the planner doesn't help you if never referred to during the day, week, or month. Set aside daily study time for each class so that you are preparing for, and reviewing after, each class. This will help you with exams as you will have already pre-studied the materials.

***ATTEND CLASS:*** Sounds like a simple thing, but you would be surprised how many students neglect to show up to the three requisite hours of class per week at college. Perhaps the freedom of being on their own or the difficulty of a less structured academic schedule are at fault, but many students are academically unsuccessful because they don't attend their classes regularly. Learning is much easier when you attend class regularly, arrive on time, and do some form of daily review. Also, by attending class you may be able to find a study partner who can help you with difficult concepts, prepare for tests together, and provide important lecture notes when you miss class. FYI: Athletes miss classes and golf is an extremely time intensive sport (most intensive of all sports, actually) with normal travel being Saturday through Tuesday night (tournaments are played 36 holes Monday and 18 Tuesday with practice rounds on Sundays). And, another tip: Save absences for emergencies only and, when an absence is necessary, let your professor know beforehand - your coach tells you in advance when you will be traveling. Professors welcome students who let them know they will miss a class or two and recognize this as a sign of maturity as well as that you are serious about the class.

***TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CLASS:*** Most professors see their teaching as an opportunity to help you develop into a critical thinker who can exchange ideas and look for new ways to interpret information. They expect students to ask questions in class, explore ideas, seek clarification, and challenge traditional ways of thinking. Ready yourself for this learning environment by preparing for class. Read the materials prior to class, write down notes about passages or ideas that you found difficult or intriguing and bring them to the professor's attention. This will help you become an engaged learner who demonstrates an interest and enthusiasm for the course materials. Sit near the front of class, take notes, and speak up during class to develop skills that help you become an engaged learner.

**GET TO KNOW YOUR PROFESSOR:** Making the effort to know your professor means that they get to know you which can be very beneficial. Think of it this way: perhaps your professor receives a large grant and needs a few student lab workers, or, perhaps, your professor has an undergraduate grant for overseas travel and needs student research support. By getting to know your professors you have already established a relationship that may lead to mentoring and networking opportunities such as these which may in turn lead to further exciting adventures. Look for the professor's office hours on the syllabus and make it a point to visit during the first week. Find something in class to ask a question about and the conversation will flow from there. Though this is far from the first year student's thoughts, the relationship between you and your professors will be especially important for graduate schools or career beginnings. Graduate schools expect several recommendation letters from past professors who can speak to the value and level of your potential work. Employees require professional references and a professor is an excellent choice. Take the time to meet each professor you have every semester.

**GET INVOLVED ON CAMPUS:** All colleges and universities provide an array of opportunities to get involved and just because you will be participating in a sport does not mean you cannot be a part of a student organization, club, or program. Look for the Student Life Department (or something with a similar title) for such things as student activities, Greek life, and student government. Many of these options provide excellent leadership opportunities. Most campuses have some sort of Student Media providing opportunities to write for the school newspaper, maybe produce a radio show, or be involved in broadcasts at the student television station. Expand your mind and try something new!

The first year at college is full of exciting and daunting tasks associated with academic, social, and personal development. Following the five steps laid out in this article will only enhance your collegiate experience. Remember, you are lucky because you will be instantly surrounded by a group of peers on your golf team. Use this as a basis for your success during your four years at the institution.

Good Luck.

*Dr. Fleming*

*Dr. Bruce Fleming is the founder of Play Collegiate Golf, created to mentor young women and men interested in continuing their competitive golf careers at institutions that support their academic, athletic, and personal goals.*

*For more information please visit [playcollegiategolf.com](http://playcollegiategolf.com)*

## Living With a Roommate During the First Year

### College Survival Tip



You're about to be living with someone you may meet for the first time on move-in day! You may find you've come from different neighborhoods, different parts of the country, or even different parts of the world. Here are a few tips for a successful and enjoyable living situation.

- Introduce yourself to your roommate right away upon finding out your housing assignment. Use a social networking site such as "FaceBook" to contact them.
- Before you move-on campus, talk to your roommate to determine who will be responsible for bringing what (TV, couch, cooking utensils, etc.)
- Don't rely on your roommate to be your whole social life. Find additional people to hang with!
- Collaborate with your roommate on strategies that will help you respect each other's rights and needs. Complete a "Roommate Contract" which many Residence Life departments will provide.