



Top 10 List of “Do’s” and “Don’ts” for Parents of First Year College Students

Help your college student succeed during the all important first year and set a foundation for future success!

This month’s article aims to provide a list of suggestions for parents to follow as they send their sons and daughters off to college for the first time. Read through and if you have questions, please email!!!

- 1. DO** discuss how much contact you and your student will have, or is expected, each week. Parents and students should determine a communication plan that is comfortable for both parties. Avoid calling just to keep tabs on your student and incorporate the use of text messaging and/or social media. Be mindful that you don’t go overboard with the texting and Facebooking, keeping your messages to brief words of encouragement. And, remember, just because you don’t get an immediate response to your message it was not ignored or unappreciated. Your student is now entering a whole new phase of his or her academic, social, and personal development. Students are very busy organizing themselves!
- 2. DON’T** insist that your son or daughter take certain courses or major in a specific area because you think it is best for them. It is important that students make their own decision about the courses they want to take and when to take these courses. Students should choose a major based on what they feel passionate about, what they want to learn about, and what they want to study! Academic advisors are available to help guide your student in the right direction regarding their academic plans and selecting a major. Trust that your son or daughter will follow their recommendations and make wise choices.
- 3. DO** make sure that your student is aware of important academic and financial deadlines. Information from professors, academic deadlines, financial aid notifications, and semester bills are often *ONLY* emailed to the student campus email account. Students are responsible for checking their campus email and meeting deadlines as required. Most university email systems *DO* allow email to be forwarded to a personal account. Make sure your student investigates this option!
- 4. DON’T** complete technical or academic tasks for your student such as making password changes, reading and replying to campus emails, or logging into their campus billing accounts. It is important that your student complete technical tasks and course assignments on their own!
- 5. DO** refer your student to resources available on campus. Explain to him or her that they should locate the necessary offices on campus (Financial Aid, New Student Programs, Learning Center, Academic Advising, Counseling for example) *BEFORE* any potential problems may occur. Perhaps help them locate these offices over the brief period you will be on campus during move-in. Encourage your student to contact professor’s to discuss issues in a particular course. However, refrain from calling the professor on your student’s behalf to inquire about academic progress, explain course assignments, or debate a grade your student received.
- 6. DON’T** rescue your student to resolve problems when things are difficult. A strong communication plan as discussed in #1 on this list will help the student to seek you out for support. Ask your son or daughter to provide solutions to the situation. Do not provide the solution, help communicate towards an answer that makes the most sense for the situation. It is good to support, encourage, and guide, but limit intervening on behalf of your student unless his or her safety, health, or mental well-being is in danger.

7. *DO* become familiar with the inner workings of the institution. As a result, when your student calls home for help, you will be able to counsel them through the system as opposed to having to tackle administrative or academic issues.

8. *DON'T* assume that the story you hear from your student is totally complete and accurate. Always listen carefully, ask specific questions, hear all sides of the story and inquire with all parties involved before calling an administrator, faculty member, or another student. Remember every student has parents or guardians concerned about the transition from high school to the college environment. Although some situations may require parents to intervene, don't rush to judge another student or parent without knowing the facts.

9. *DO* talk with your student about grades. Communicate clear expectations about academic progress and how you expect to be informed of mid-term and final grades. Grades can be viewed on student accounts so ask your student to forward those grades when they come available. Most "Registrar Office" links will include academic calendars so you will KNOW when grades will be available on-line.

10. *DON'T* drive or fly down to campus, encourage your student to come home, or suggest transferring somewhere else at the first sign of unhappiness. Your student will go through many emotions, especially during their first year. Students may experience difficulty in finding a peer support group and feeling like they fit into their collegiate environment. Support them in this by offering advice for an "on-campus" solution!

This list of "Do's" and "Don'ts" is here to help guide your support and care for your son or daughter as they meet the many new challenging environments they will experience as they move into the college setting. Many students experience anxiety and feel unsure about the choice they made to attend a particular college. Continue to encourage your student to think about campus employment, clubs and organizations, or intramural sports to meet others with similar interests. Using the fitness center, eating in the dining hall, and attending residence hall events are also good opportunities to meet other students. The anxiety about their decision will pass in time as they begin to adjust to their surroundings and establish a campus support system. The goal with this list is to avoid the normal pitfalls of the college environment; hopefully, some of the tips and suggestions here will help you formulate a successful plan between you and your student!

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

**College
Survival
Tip**

Learn from your Peers - Your peers will be your teammates on the golf team. Older students will be able to answer questions on studying for the first Biology test, where the Career Center is on campus, and even who makes the best pizza in town. Take the time to talk with your teammates from the beginning; these students will be your support base during your four years at college and many will become lifelong friends.