

# HELPING YOUR STUDENT SUCCEED IN COLLEGE

## A MESSAGE TO PARENTS:

When a family member enters college, a journey begins for the whole family! Encouragement from parents, family and friends is a critical factor in student success.

## MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

Many students experience difficulties transitioning from high school to college.

- They are unaware of the expectations placed on them.
- They aren't equipped with strategies for success on campus

### High School vs. College

#### High School Classes

- Students proceed from one class directly to another.
- Students spend 6 hours each day (30 hours a week) in class
- Most classes are arranged for students
- Teachers carefully monitor class attendance
- Students are provided with textbooks at little or no expense

#### Personal Freedom in High School

- Students' time is usually structured by others.
- Students need permission to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Students can count on parents and teachers to remind them of their responsibilities and to guide them in setting priorities.

#### College Classes

- Students often have hours between classes and class times vary throughout the day and evening
- Students spend 12 to 16 hours each week in class.
- Students arrange their own schedule in consultation with their academic advisor
- Professors may not formally take attendance, but they are still likely to know whether or not students attend.
- Students need to budget substantial funds for textbooks, which will usually cost more than \$200 each semester

#### Personal Freedom in College

- Students manage their own time.
- Students must decide whether to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Students will be faced with a large number of moral and ethical decisions they have not had to face previously. Students must balance their responsibilities and set priorities.

## Studying in High School

- Students may study outside of class as little as 1-2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation.
- Students often need to read or hear presentations only once to learn all they need.
- Students will usually be told in class what they need to learn from assigned readings.

## Tests in High School

- Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.
- Makeup tests are often available.
- Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.

## Grades in High School

- Consistently good homework grades may help raise a student's overall grade when test grades are low.
- Extra credit projects are often available to help students raise grades.
- Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on a final grade. Students may graduate as long as they have passed all required courses with a grade of "D" or higher.

## Studying in College

- Students need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class. If they are taking 12 hours, that means 24-36 hours of study time.
- Students need to review class notes and text material REGULARLY.
- It's up to the student to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that the student has already done so.

## Tests in College

- Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. A particular course may have only 2 or 3 exams in a semester.
- Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, students need to request them.
- Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.

## Grades in College

- Grades on exams and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.
- Extra credit projects are generally not offered in college level courses.
- Students should watch out for first exams. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let them know what is expected - but they may account for a substantial part of the course grade. Students receiving a low grade on an early exam should seek assistance from the professor and/or the Academic Success Center.
- Students may graduate only if their average in classes meets the departmental standard - typically a 2.0 or "C."

## High School Teachers

- Teachers check completed homework.
- Teachers remind students of incomplete work.
- Teachers approach students if they believe they need assistance.
- Teachers are often available for conversation before, during or after class.
- Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.
- Teachers provide students with information missed during absences.
- Teachers present material to help students understand the material of the textbook.
- Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in students' notes.
- Teachers often take time to remind students of assignments and due dates.

## College Professors

- Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume students can perform the same tasks on exams.
- Professors may not remind students of incomplete work.
- Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect the student to initiate contact if they need assistance.
- Professors expect and want students to attend their scheduled office hours.
- Professors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research.
- Professors expect the student to get any notes from classmates when they miss a class.
- Professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic.
- Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting students to identify the important points. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Good notes are a must.
- Professors expect students to read, save, and consult the course syllabus. The syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of the student, when it is due, and how the student will be graded.

## Support Strategies

We hope the following strategies might be helpful for parents, family members, spouses and friends as they provide support for their student as they progress through their academic career at Wisconsin Lutheran College.

Prepare your student for the increased academic demands they will face in college:

- Share your own experiences or introduce them to others who have recently attended college.
- Discuss the importance of attending class regularly, reading before class, taking thorough notes, completing all class assignments even if they are not graded, and participating in study groups. Encourage your student to meet with their professors outside of class to follow-up on questions about course material.
- Encourage your student to use free services available on campus such as the Student Success Center.
- Stress the importance of effective time management. Encourage the use of their planner to keep track of due dates and tasks that need to be accomplished.
- Encourage your student to get involved on campus. Research shows that students involved on campus are more likely to be successful in college.