YOUR FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE
FIRST SEMESTER

Much of your success is within your control. Practicing these habits throughout the year will help you stay on track during college:

- Routinely check college portal and email
- Review student account
- Acknowledge and understand your financial responsibilities
- Read and review the college catalog
- Develop a degree plan
- Review course schedule
- Read all course syllabuses and understand deadlines and assignments
- Put key dates from the school’s academic calendar into your personal calendar
- Use a planner or calendar to note all deadlines. If digital, set reminders.
- Explore purchasing textbooks online before buying them from the bookstore
- Buy used books or rent
- Visit professors during office hours
- Monitor your grades throughout the semester
- Visit and access student support systems (tutoring center, professor hours, health clinic, writing center)
- Apply for financial aid October 1
- Routinely meet with academic advisor and student support systems
- Stay disciplined, but have fun!!

Whether it’s an item listed here, or you have something else on your mind, please reach out. Your happiness and success are important to us.

Contact Information:
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Alumni Support Manager
dromero@striveprep.org
303-618-2603
Visit striveprep.org/alumni for more information.

KEEP ON TOP OF YOUR SCHOLARSHIP RENEWALS

You earned that money so make sure you take a few simple steps to keep it each semester. Put key deadlines in your calendar and give yourself enough time to meet them.

Denver Scholarship Foundation recipients can visit denverscholarship.org for deadlines and renewals.

STRIVE Prep Alumni Support is here for you
- Financial aid
- Tutoring
- Mentoring and advice
- Switching degree programs
- Adjusting to your new life
- Time management
- Homework techniques
- Feeling overwhelmed and stressed
- Resources and support beyond the classroom
- Overcoming failing grades
BEGINNING COLLEGE

College transition is significant and extreme because you are leaving behind an established support system. But have no fear! There are plenty of offices, departments and resources tailored to meet your needs. Familiarize yourself with all these offices as they will help you in your moments of need and will be there for your entire time in college.

Help Is Out There - Go Get It!
Beginning college is one of the bravest things you'll do during your life. You are now in charge of so many decisions and paths, and it's up to you to step up and make positive choices.

■ No matter your academic ability, if you have more questions than answers, ask for help!
■ You are your biggest advocate so it's up to you reach out and connect with college resources to get what you need.
■ Sometimes we think we can do it all on our own and don't want to ask for help. That is a mistake! There are resources out there, go find them.
■ What do you know about tutoring, counseling or study groups? Maybe what you know isn't true, so go find out for yourself!
■ Homework, classes, grades, money, food, friends and relationships, health, schedules, deadlines, exams - it's all so much and can make you feel overwhelmed and nutty! There are resources and services to help you with all of these things. Go find them.

Always remember:
You are not alone, other students are struggling too
There is help for whatever you need
Be brave, be brave, be brave.

YOU’VE GOT THIS.

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS
■ Utilize a day planner or digital calendar
■ Form study groups
■ Break projects into smaller steps
■ Set realistic goals with an action plan
■ Reward your study time
■ Study when you are at your best
■ Keep your eyes on the prize
■ Talk with an advisor
STEPS TO OWNING YOUR CLASSES LIKE A BOSS

Step 1
Attend class
DUH.

Step 2
Actively engage and pay attention.
Those internet memes aren’t going anywhere.

Step 3
Take notes
Yes, what the professor is saying is actually important.

Step 4
Stay organized
Use a system that works for you. Just make sure it’s better than how you organize your closet.

Step 5
Study
Are you studying right now? No? Then go start studying right now! Don’t wait until right before an exam.

Step 6
Twerk
Or take whatever, healthy breaks you need outside of class. Your brain needs it.

Step 7
Repeat Steps 1 - 5
You’ve got to be BOSS of your classes ALL of the time.

If you’ve practiced Steps 1-7 and are still struggling, don’t worry. Ask your professor or student services about tutoring options and then follow through with their advice. Buddy up with a classmate, join a study group and take advantage of other resources your professor gives you. Just don’t allow yourself to struggle for too long.
**YOUR GAME PLAN FOR GETTING A’S (AND SOMETIMES B’S)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Game</th>
<th>Pull Out That Special Text</th>
<th>Recall and Reframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before you start an assignment, make sure you understand what you’re supposed to do. Take a moment to write down the key items required. If you’re still not sure, ask a classmate, professor or teacher’s aide.</td>
<td>If the content is bolded, italicized, graphed, illustrated or somehow seems special, pay attention! And if you’ve “Pre-Gamed” then you should know what you’re looking for. Put these specific points into your notes or highlight them for reference for studying.</td>
<td>Once you’ve completed an assignment: think about what you’ve learned; summarize the important ideas in a format that works for you; now pretend you have to explain these ideas to a complete stranger so they understand. Are you able to do that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Know Your W’s</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reflect and Revisit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before each assignment, think about...</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do you understand the materials and accomplish the work? What are the areas you’re still struggling with? Go back to the difficult parts and give them more attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What am I supposed to learn?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Why is this important for my class?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When is it due?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who needs to be part of the assignment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How am I going to get it done?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Where do I submit the completed assignment?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

You did it - your first semester is over! Make sure to take some time and celebrate in a healthy way. You should be proud of what you’ve done so far.
Now it’s time to evaluate where you are and make sure you’re prepared for all the semesters ahead.

Keep following the checklist from page 1 and follow these items in your remaining semesters.

- Check your college portal for accuracy on your semester grades and continuously monitor your grades
- Meet with an academic advisor to discuss your degree plan and progress
- Declare major and minor
- Add/Drop classes, as needed, to fine-tune your schedule. Be aware, doing this too much is not good.
- Self reflect on challenge areas during your first semester. What do you need to overcome these challenges and be successful?
- Complete financial aid file and renew scholarships
- Look into study abroad opportunities
- Explore and visit the career center
- Explore housing options for the next academic year: on-campus or off-campus
- Routinely check-in with your academic advisor and student support systems
- Meet all the deadlines for each semester’s registration
STUDY ABROAD—SEE THE WORLD AND ENRICH YOUR LIFE

Study Abroad programs are opportunities for students to complete a semester/year on a different campus, usually in a foreign country.

HOW TO SIGN UP TO STUDY ABROAD

- Contact your school’s study abroad office
- Seek more info through sessions or an advisor
- Decide the best next steps that work best for you:
  - Good fit
  - Approvals
- Costs and finances (financial aid applies!)
- Scholarship opportunities
- Satisfy degree requirements
- Schedule
Start Planning for Your Real, Grown-Up Job Now, Way Before You Graduate from College!

What is an Internship Program?
An internship is an official program offered by an employer to potential employees. Internships are most popular with undergraduates or graduate students who work between one to four months and have a goal to gain practical work experience.

Benefits of Internships
- Gain valuable work experience
- Explore a career path
- Give yourself an edge in the job market
- Develop and refine work skills
- Receive financial compensation
- Network with professionals in the field
- Gain confidence
- Transition into a career

Get the Most From Your Internship
To get the most from your internship experience is one of the essential pieces of the foundation you are laying for a successful career. Use these tips to help you make the most of this valuable experience:

- Clarify expectations about your internship with your supervisor
- Take advantage of the transition time at the beginning of your internship and ask lots of questions. You are not expected to know what is going on right away, but the faster you learn the ins and outs, the better off you will be.
- First impressions are essential, as is maintaining good ones
- Establish good relationships with your coworkers. Be friendly, polite, helpful, and sensitive
- Listen carefully to instructions and ask for clarification.
- Learn to work as a team
- Ask your supervisor for a letter of recommendation and if they will be a professional reference

College’s career center offers a variety of services to help you find a job in your field of interest as well as to help you grow in your chosen career. Many colleges provide employment assistance to alumni years after graduation as well.

Career services helps with:
- Figuring out what careers are good fits for you
- Aligning your school work and degree to your future career
- Providing details, like salary and skills, for different careers
- Preparing for landing your first job with resumes, cover letters, and interviewing skills
- Job and internship placement
- Peer mentorship
- Continuing education and workshops
- Networking resources including job fairs, LinkedIn and events
TIPS FOR FINISHING COLLEGE STRONG

BE EXTRA

- Take it to the next level by setting some extra goals.
- Develop a four-year plan
- Visit a new resource or student service on campus each week
- Get at least one professor each semester to remember your name when you meet them during office hours. They all know you’re name? Then you’re crushing it!
- If available, attend 100% of your classes/lectures on campus
- Join a club or other student group, take a leadership position in one of them!
- Apply to become a resident assistant or orientation leader to help establish identity, learn about their institutions and network with faculty and students with similar interests
- Participate in peer counseling programs offered through an institution’s mental-health counseling center
- Consider spending a semester studying abroad
- Go to career services to complete interest inventories, explore internship possibilities, or get a part-time job
- Do not schedule a heavy load when scheduling classes. Consider taking a class purely for fun or self-expression such as music, art or dance
- Stay motivated. Reward yourself with study breaks and some of your favorite snacks.

DON’T S

- Cram
- Pull all-nighters
- Get distracted
- Don’t give up! You’ve worked super hard to get to this point, so don’t stop now. Finish strong.
- Use problem-focused coping strategies
- Look at your syllabus.
- Figure out what needs to get done and how long it will take.
- Schedule time to work and put it on your smartphone or other electronic calendars. Set email or pop-up reminders.
- Do you have important or challenging things to do that you’re likely to avoid? Can you work on those things first?
- Identify obstacles. What might get in the way of achieving your goals? What can you do about it?
- Reach out to your instructors. Let them know you’d like to finish strong and that you’d appreciate their advice. Take advantage of office hours to get their help.
- Whether it is playing a game of volleyball, going to get coffee with friends, or having something to look forward to when done with homework, make sure to plan something fun!
Each college sets its SAP policies; please make sure to review their policies to understand your responsibilities as a student receiving financial aid. The office of financial aid is there to help you through the SAP process; they want all of their students to have the financial resources to be successful in college. College will work with you to develop a plan to get you back in good standing.
TO AVOID WHILE IN COLLEGE

OVER DOING IT
Know your limits. While the purpose of a college education is to learn as much as you can, that doesn’t mean studying all the time. It is important to schedule a time for fun and to take breaks to keep your mind fresh and clear.

DEBT
Student loans are relatively easy to get. Many students, however, don’t know how repayment works and how many years they may spend paying off their loans. Sit down with a financial advisor to get a firm grasp on the debt you’re taking on.

DEPRESSION
If stress and depression are an issue, seek professional support. Many campuses have free counseling programs for students. Counselors are trained to listen and help students get back on track.

COMMON PITFALLS IN TRANSFERRING
The credit transfer process can be confusing. Avoid two of the most common pitfalls students fall victim to when transferring credit.

ASSUMING
Assuming the credits will be applied

RANDOMLY SELECTING COURSES
Choosing random courses that won’t transfer

CAN YOU STILL APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS WHILE IN COLLEGE?

YES. One of the biggest mistakes that many college students make is that they stop applying for scholarships once they graduate from high school. There are thousands of scholarships for students in college and even graduate students. Some of these awards are only open to students who are already in college.

Search for opportunities online. But be careful. Make sure scholarship information and offers you receive are legitimate, and remember that you do not have to pay to find scholarships or other financial aid. There are scholarship opportunities right on your college campus. Connect with the financial aid office, campus programs, and academic departments. Some colleges have a general application that you complete yearly to be considered for multiple scholarship opportunities.

There are other places that you can search for scholarship opportunities:

- Foundations, religious or community organizations, local businesses, or civic groups
- Organizations related to your field of interest or major
- Ethnicity-based organizations
- Your employer or your parents’ employers

The Best Free Legitimate Scholarship Search Platforms:

- Fastweb
- Cappex
- Unigo
- U.S. Department of Labor’s Scholarship Search