TIPS FROM SUNY CORTLAND NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

Support

• It is okay to reach out for help especially when you begin to feel overwhelmed.

• You have more in common with traditional-aged students than differences so don’t let yourself dwell on the age/lifestyle gap. They respect you more than they will tell you. Your life experiences make you invaluable to this institution.

• Have a good support network on campus and at home.

• We are all nervous about “fitting in”. I have found most of my “outcast” moments so far have been more self-imposed.

• Most of my classes are interesting. I have made some close friendships that I think will go beyond my days at SUNY Cortland.

• Keep in constant contact with other non-trad students to hear their experiences.

• Talking with other non-traditional students, like myself, makes me feel less stressed. Other non-trads are willing to help you adjust.

Parking

• Purchase your parking permit as soon as you can. They have run out in the past.

• Parking can be difficult. Be prepared to park in the route 281 lot and take a bus to your classes. This will give you time to catch up on your readings as you wait for the bus. Get to campus early.

Academics

• Be flexible when it’s time to build your schedule.

• Schedule your classes so you have time on campus between them to do homework, if possible. I find it hard to get work done at home.

• Time management is important. Do not wait until the last minute to do assignments - start them as soon as possible.

• Get to know your instructors. Many are very understanding with the needs of an adult student with other responsibilities.

• Make sure you are looking at the current college catalog online to ensure your required classes match up.

• Don’t overdo it. If you get a bad grade and have to retake a class, financial aid may not pay for the retake. It’s better to take 12 credits and do well than 15 and fail a class.
• Stay ahead of the work load. If you know you don't have time to do the work, drop it immediately.

• Try to focus on the classes and education needed. The rest will follow.

• Getting an education at SUNY Cortland is worth all of the issues you may encounter.

• Try not to get too nervous about the first test/paper for a class. By comparison, life experience can be more helpful than one might think.

• Take advantage of the reserved study carrels in the library or the lockers on the top floor of Van Hoesen Hall. It's a chore to lug around a day's worth of stuff around.

• Get to know your advisor and professors.

• Don't hesitate to use the services at Academic Support and Achievement Program (ASAP). They offer tutoring and help with your papers. They are located in Van Hoesen B-205.

Meeting Others

• Meeting up with other non-traditional students can help. Ask them for advice and to show you around.

• Don't be afraid to come into the Non-Traditional Student Lounge (Cornish Hall, Room 1221). We are very welcoming.

• Get involved and network with other students! Making good grades is equally important, but non-trads tend to keep themselves so distracted form social interaction that they often times find themselves going nuts. Having a place in the student body builds a support network and allows you to have an outlet for your scholarly frustrations! It also looks better on a resume that you can play well with others.

• Stop by the Non-Traditional Student Lounge. Many people go there just to vent some of their frustrations and leave with a sense of relief. Keep your head up and keep trucking – you'll make it just fine.

• Don't feel like an outsider. Try to socialize with the other students, both non-trad and traditional.

• Do take more advantage of the Non-Traditional Student Organization. Time can be limited but I wish I could have done more and been more involved.

• Get involved in a club or activity on campus. (Hint: Join the Non-Traditional Student Club and help to plan events!)

• Take advantage of the Non-Traditional Student Lounge. You can microwave and eat your lunch there. You will be able to meet other non-traditional students and have adult conversation. The lounge is peaceful and quiet at night so you can get some homework done.

• Find the Non-Trad Lounge. (Best way to get there is to enter the doors of Cornish Hall that are across from Memorial Library’s Bookmark Café.) If you're lost or confused about life on campus, odds are someone there can help!
Miscellaneous

• Put money on your College ID card/Connections account. You can save 10% on costs at the dining halls.

• Be prepared for days when the local elementary schools have snow days and we don't. Be sure to have a back-up plan for daycare while you are in class.

• Give it your best and adjust.

• Save money. Bring your own coffee and keep a snack in your backpack.

• Save money by bringing in lunch from home. You can store it in the Non-Traditional Student Lounge.

• Have patience with yourself, your family and everyone around you.

• YOU can do this!

Source: SUNY Cortland Non-Traditional Students, June 2015