
A strong first-year transition is the foundation of a successful college experience. Students experience new environments, language, expectations, norms, and relationships while exploring their own identities and roles. Today, we will discuss college academics, how each student is unique, and ways we support and coach students as they transition to college academics and a new academic community. If you have questions regarding this presentation or at anytime throughout the upcoming year, please contact me via email at advisement@cortland.edu or lori.schlicht@cortland.edu. You are welcome to call Advisement and Transition at 607-753-4727. Best wishes during this exciting time!

Transition From High School to College

- Classes may be larger and will meet less frequently (2 or 3 times a week)
 - May blend in more and not as well known (individual with personal needs, skills, qualities) especially in first semester
 - Need to recreate a support system for academic planning, progress tracking, problem solving
 - Higher level of thinking involved: more critical thinking and meta-cognition (thinking about how we think)
 - More time required for mastery of topics and graded on quality of work more than effort
 - Student plays a large role in building rapport with faculty and communicating
 - Learning is more dependent on work outside of the class and is highly student directed
 - Student has responsibility for academic planning, decision making and learning
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Challenges for First-Year Students

Every student will have a unique experience and many students will face these common challenges:

1. Managing the transition to new academic, personal and social experiences
2. Setting realistic and meaningful goals
3. Managing their time and keeping up with the work
4. Being away from home and managing relationships (new and existing)
5. Learning about, and embracing, independence and accountability

Academic Indicators

In college, feedback and evaluation on academics will probably be less frequent. Students should actively work to understand how they are doing by checking:

1. Test, quiz, presentation and assignment grades
2. Syllabus: course outline on what will be covered over the course of the semester—includes grading rubric
3. Conversations with professors
4. Starfish online communication system: Feedback from your instructors
5. Checking Starfish and responding to Starfish emails
6. College Student Inventory (CSI): Self-assessment survey regarding motivation, coping and receptivity to support
7. Comparing their own perceptions to the other indicators: Do student perceptions match the grade given

Success Strategies

There is an entire field of research devoted to student transition and success. The outcomes of college will depend upon the qualities and background of the student, student goals and the ways that the student engages in the college experience. There are basic strategies that students should consider and implement in finding their own path to academic success.

For each area below, place a rating based on your student's ability or potential for each strategy. Share this with your student and see what they think!

Behavior	Place a checkmark under the heading that best reflects your student.			Ask your student to check what they think.		
	Mastered	Developing	Will ask for help	Mastered	Developing	Will ask for help
Go to class! It is important to attend all classes to get the most out of a college education. It's simple, it's easy, and it works.						
Utilize the syllabus. The syllabus includes instructor contact information, required texts, course objectives, assignment deadlines and details how grades will be computed.						
Arrive prepared for class. In addition to bringing along the essentials (a notebook, pen/pencil and textbook) being prepared for class means reading the assigned materials and having completed any homework.						
Turn in assignments on time!						
Take notes during class. Pay attention to what the instructor is saying. They can tell, even in lectures, who is not paying attention.						
Communicate with faculty, advisors, and peers. Take initiative to develop rapport. Use STARFISH!						
Monitor degree progress. Review your Degree Works audit often. Know what is expected and what courses/requirements are needed to complete your degree in a timely manner.						
Be knowledgeable about college policies and procedures.						
Get involved. Joining clubs, organizations, intermural sports or getting involved in residence hall activities all assist in making connections and finding a place at SUNY Cortland.						

Resources: *myRedDragon portal and Blackboard, Starfish, College Catalog, The Learning Center, Department websites, Degree and What If Audits, Career Services (What Can I Do With This Major), the Writing Center, Other:*

Motivation	Mastered	Developing	Will ask for help	Mastered	Developing	Will ask for help
Set goals that are meaningful, internalized and attainable.						
Ask questions if confused or having problems. Visiting professors during their established office hours is an excellent way to ask questions about courses assignments.						
Get organized and manage time. Everyone has their own organizational systems. Time management includes assessing workload, being realistic, planning, and facing procrastination and distractions.						
Assess and improve individual learning styles and preferences. How and where does the student learn and study best? Is it by listening, seeing, reading, talking, and experiencing? Utilize strengths and develop or refine strategies.						
Be open minded to new and different ideas, perspectives and people. Having an eagerness to learn!						
Think independently and critically						
Maintain a sense of balance in academic, social, and personal life. Become involved with college life, co-curricular activities. Make healthy choices and take care of yourself.						
Make connections						

Resources: *Student Planner, COR Reader – goal setting assistance and learning preferences, Student Development, The Learning Center, Other:*

Resilience	Mastered	Developing	Will ask for help	Mastered	Developing	Will ask for help
Get help as soon as there is a concern, no matter how small or simple. We can all use the support of others once in a while.						
Take responsibility. It is empowering to be in control and hold yourself accountable for your own successes.						
Self-awareness and reflection. Being aware of your natural tendencies help you make the best of any situation. Learning from mistakes are necessary stepping stones toward success.						
Locus of control. The degree to which you perceive that outcomes result from your own behaviors or from forces that are external.						
Independence						

Resources: *Faculty office hours, Counseling Center, Review the College Student Inventory (CSI), Other:*

“A sign of wisdom and maturity is when you come to terms with the realization that your decisions cause your rewards and consequences. You are responsible for your life, and your ultimate success depends on the choices you make.”

– Denis Waitley, author and coach

College Policies

An element of success is becoming aware of the policies/information that guide academics. Here are a few examples:

Degree Requirements: All courses and standards a student needs to complete in order to earn a degree in chosen area.

Drop/Add: The first five days of class when a student can adjust his or her schedule.

Withdrawal from Class: After drop/add, a student can withdraw from a course. It will reduce their overall credit hours and an X will appear on the academic transcript.

Grading System: A student's grade point average (GPA) is based upon a 4.0 scale.

Academic Standing: Depending upon a student's GPA, they may find themselves in good standing, on academic probation, or suspended.

Dean's List: Recognizes all students who have a 3.3 or higher in a particular semester.

Degree Requirements

Every degree is made up of the following elements:

General Education

Coursework that provides a breadth of skill and knowledge. Also allows students to complete the state mandated SUNY General Education program.

Major

Every student is required to have one major, an in-depth study in a discipline.

Liberal Arts Credit

Depending upon the degree pursued, a range of 60-90 credits in designated courses.

Electives

Any college coursework. Often used to fulfill total credits required.

Total Credits

A minimum of 120-124 credits is required, but may be higher for certain degrees.

Grade Point Average

A minimum 2.0 GPA is required, but higher GPAs are required in many majors.

Minor/Concentrations

Some majors require an additional area of study. Minors and concentrations have fewer credits than a major. Students may choose minors that are not required to compliment their major or explore interests.

The Advising Dynamic

Every student has an individual faculty or professional advisor. Once a student has declared a major, or if the student changes their major, a new faculty member will be assigned. The advising assignments are completed early in the fall semester and students can find their advisor's name on myRedDragon.

Advising is a partnership between students and faculty. The student is responsible for planning, actively discussing issues and decision making. The advisor is responsible for being accessible, providing information and insight, and helping the student process issues and concerns.

Advisors can be mentors, references, and offer help in career and graduate school exploration. Students are required to see their advisors every semester for advisement and registration.

Students should contact their advisors early and often, come prepared for meetings and fully participate in discussions to make the most of advising.

All students are also welcome to use Advisement and Transition for additional support.

cortland.edu/advisement
