

Many students adjust without problems to living with roommates and sharing living facilities. For those students that find the adjustment to be overwhelming or that are not able to interact with the roommates in a constructive manner, there are ways to improve the living conditions. Every dormitory has a Residence Hall Director or Residence Assistant (RA) that is on site or available 24/7. The role of the Residence Hall Director is to maintain order and peace in the dormitory. When issues arise such as altercations with roommates, lock outs, or any other residential problems the Residence Hall Director or RA will attempt to resolve the matter in a manner that is beneficial to everyone involved. The best course of action when problems arise is to contact the Residence Hall Director or RA immediately and not try to resolve the matter yourself. College is not like high school and violent activities can result in expulsion and even criminal charges which can follow the student for a long time.

Social Activities

College presents the student with the opportunity to participate in social activities both on campus and off campus. On campus activities can include dorm parties and campus sponsored events (meet and greets, ice cream socials, movie nights, etc.). Off campus activities can include local bars, skating parties, mall trips, and other non-academic related activities. The new found freedom can encourage students to take advantage of the many on/off campus activities of which some can involve alcohol and drugs. First year students need to be aware of the implications of illegal activities both on/off campus and how they can impact the student's education. While many of the activities may be legitimate and utilized for the purpose of student entertainment, students need to be aware of the circumstance of the activities and how to respond if the events become out-of-hand or dangerous.

First year students may interact with upperclassmen at many of the events. Remember that this is a seasoned student that may have mastered the art of "getting by" at college. First year students should be cautious of their behavior at events since he or she is more in jeopardy of facing disciplinary action than an upperclassman. When attending events where drinking and drugs are visible remember that typically students under the legal drinking age should be present or at least not be actively participating in the drinking and drugs. Some upperclassmen like to involve the first year students in the festivities so that they can take advantage of the lack of knowledge about campus policies.

If a student is uncomfortable at an event for whatever reason, leave immediately. Call a cab if you do not have a ride back to the residence hall or call the campus police. Many will provide a ride back to a safe place for the student. Students can also anonymously report threatening situations without repercussions.

The postsecondary education institution will receive an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) electronically once the student completes the FAFSA. The institution will process the ISIR and send the student an award letter indicating the financial aid that the student qualifies for. The student must accept the award for the student to continue processing the financial aid.

Some students may receive an asterisk following the EFC code which indicates a student has been selected for a process called verification. The SAR will have the following type of code in the top right hand corner "EFC 0*". When a student is selected for verification, he or she will be required to provide the college, university, or trade/technical school with the tax information for the student (if they have worked during the previous year), tax information for the parent (if a dependent student), and income documentation of all individuals that live in the household. If a student does not complete the verification process, he or she will not be eligible for financial aid.

Based on the EFC, some students may qualify for college work study which is part time employment typically located on campus. Students that are eligible for college work study can work up to 20 hours per week. This is a good opportunity for students to develop work skills that can be used in their career choices. To maintain eligibility for college work study students need to maintain an appropriate grade point average. Each year the student will need to re-qualify for college work study based on his or her EFC. Students do not have to work in the same position each year which can provide the student the opportunity to obtain different work skills.

Types of Financial Aid

Often students (and their parents) are not able to pay for his or her college education out of pocket. Financial aid maybe available to finance a college education based on the EFC on the SAR. There are three types of financial aid that can be used to finance a college education, scholarships, grants, and loans.

Scholarships. Scholarships are free money that the student can receive based on different criteria. Students should begin looking for scholarships while in high school. Scholarships can be offered by postsecondary education institutions, high schools, churches, organizations, and government agencies. The most common scholarships are:

Need based – Based on the student's EFC from the FAFSA. The need based scholarship can be from a private donor or from the postsecondary education institution.

Student specific – Based on qualifications such as gender, religion, family and medical history, or race.

Merit based – Based on academic, artistic, athletic, community service, or other extracurricular activities.

Career specific – Awarded by the college, university, or trade/technical school based on specific programs of study, especially in high need areas such as nursing or education.

College specific – Offered by individual colleges, universities, or trade/technical schools to highly qualified students which can result in full tuition payment or a reduced tuition rate.

Athletic – Based on exceptional athletic abilities in a sport provided by the college.

Scholarships can be paid directly to the college, university, or trade/technical school or to the student depending on the scholarship criteria. Scholarships may require students to work for the donor for a specific period of time or the student will be required to repay the scholarship. Students need to obtain as much information about the scholarship as possible prior to accepting the monies to ensure that they will be able to meet the obligations of the scholarship once received.

Grants. Grants are also free monies that the student can use to pay for their education. The Pell Grant is based on the EFC from the information processed on the FAFSA. The most common form of grant is the Federal Pell Grant. Pell Grants are based on the student's financial need, cost of attendance, enrollment status, and yearly attendance. Typically, only undergraduate students are eligible to receive Pell Grants. Students will receive Pell Grants based on the level of attendance, half time (6-8 credits), three quarter time (9-11 credits), or full time (12+) per semester or quarter. If the maximum amount of Pell Grant is \$5500, the student would receive \$2750 for half time, \$3630 for three quarter time, and the full \$5500 for 12+ credits.

In 2012, legislation was passed that restricts students to receive 12 semesters or 6 years of Federal Pell Grant monies which equates to 600% Pell grant eligibility. For students that attend a community college for 2 years and receive an Associate's Degree, the student will only be allotted 4 more years of Pell Grant to complete their Bachelor's Degree at a college or university. Therefore, it is important for students to ensure that they are planning to attend a college or university that will accept most or all of their community college transfer credits. Otherwise, the student may not have enough Pell Grant monies to finance their Bachelor's Degree program.

This is a drastic change which for the new college student can be the make-it-or-break-it in his or her college education. For some students, the newfound freedom can change the student's perspective on learning whereby the student might be more excited about learning and perform better than in high school. However, for the students that are not able to handle the new responsibilities, college can become a playground for fun and freewheeling where many students find that when given the "choice" on learning, they are more apt to choose other activities rather than attend their classes and complete their school work.

Freshmanitis

While in high school, students were expected to abide by the rules of their parents and school that focused on ensuring the student completed their education. Now the student will be responsible for when they sleep, eat, and how they balance their time between school, home, and even work. During the admission process and the first week of classes, many students are so excited about their new education experience and want to "absorb" as much college life as possible. This exhilaration can be short-lived as the sense of freedom begins to become more prevalent. Students will need to be able to refocus on the many rules set by the parents that provided the guidance needed to achieve their education goals.

High school students often visit campuses to find out more about the differences in postsecondary education institution environments. College, university, and trade school life varies depending on the type of institutions attended, location, size, and curriculums. Students will find some of the major academic differences between high school and postsecondary education institutions can be the class size, professors, courses, and grading systems. Students that attend large postsecondary education institutions may find that classes can have 100 to 200 students in an auditorium for a lecture. Small institutions may have class sizes of 5 to 10 students.

Living On Campus

Many campuses require first year students to live on campus rather than off campus housing. This is to improve student attendance in classes and to be able to assist in any transitional problems the student might encounter. Living on campus is a new experience for first year students because it opens the student to a whole new world of relationships and social activities. The first year student typically lives in a dormitory setting with 1-3 roommates. This can be exciting to build new relationships with other students. However, at the same time there is the mix of different personalities, beliefs, cultures, and attitudes in close proximity that can be an adjustment period for the student who had their own bedroom at home or was the oldest child with seniority rights in the choices concerning the bedroom.