



The Daily Deac

1 message

Parents & Families <noreply+feedproxy@google.com>

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Reply-To: Parents & Families <parents@wfu.edu>

To:

The Daily Deac



Wake Wednesday

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We've reached midweek, and you know what that means: today is Wake Wednesday, with info specifically for P'24s (though I hope this might be good fodder for conversations with '23s and even our '22s or '21s).

Hope all our P'24s are keeping track of the key dates/action items on the [Parents and Families section](#) of newstudents.wfu.edu. The due date for June 17th is to review the [Advice for Parents and Families](#).

Reminder that tonight at 7 pm Eastern is the Zoom Town Hall about the fall – **tonight is just for our P'24s and '24s** (tomorrow night will be for P'21s-'23s and their students). Registered guests should have received an email with the link to participate (check your spam/junk), or you can visit <http://go.wfu.edu/ourwayforward24> at 7 pm.

Last week, one of my very best friends from Wake asked me (and those in our circle) to share some advice for her daughter, who is getting ready to be a '24 at another institution. This is a [slightly edited] version of what I shared with her, which is based on the conversation I have with my academic advisees at our first group meeting during Orientation.

You may have different, other advice for your student – and I would encourage you to write your own letter, or have your own conversation with your '24 Deac. Summer is a great time to have some of these conversations.

Dear [NAME] – meeting your mom my first week of college was one of the great blessings of my life. We were fast friends from the beginning. I realize now what a rare stroke of luck that was.

Everyone romanticizes about their college memories, and will tell you how great college is – *and it is* – but there are a lot of adjustments and struggles people don't tell you about, and that can lead to moments of doubt and anxiety that somehow you picked the wrong school, or you don't fit in, or whatever. This is NORMAL and to be expected 😊

College is sort of like falling in love – very few of us have love at first sight; for most people, love grows slowly, over time. I've been an academic adviser for many years, and here is some of what I have learned.

Once school begins, most of my first-year advisees develop a great and pervasive fear that everyone else:

- Already found their friend group (and I will be left out)
- Knows their major already (and I don't)
- Fits in better/is more popular (and I am not accepted)
- Is happy (and I am not)
- Is 'doing college right' (and I am struggling)
- Is getting better grades (why?!?! I work so hard!)

Do not spend your time comparing and contrasting with your classmates. "*Comparison is the thief of joy*" is truer than I can say. Everyone – and I mean EVERYONE – struggles at the beginning. We all just put on our game face and don't show our anxieties. It may take time, but things WILL fall into place. Trust me.

It will take time to find your friends. You might feel lonely (normal!) The cure for that is to put yourself out there as much as you can. Go to Orientation events, sporting events, lectures, etc. Join some clubs. Leave your door open when you are home for the first week or two and sit so you can see people passing by. Talk to them, invite them in. When you see an open door, knock and say hello. Invite someone to lunch or breakfast (everyone is horrified of eating alone and will be grateful for the invitation).

You will have to work harder in college than you did in high school. The syllabus is the contract for your class. Read it, know your due dates and deadlines, and the faculty member's policies. Find a time management strategy that works for you and figure out where you study best (is it in your room? the library? an administrative building after hours?)

At the first sign of struggle in a class, talk to your professor in their office hours. Get tutoring (a lot of schools offer that for free). Do not suffer in silence because it only gets worse (ask your mom about how I was tanking Bio before she started tutoring me!)

Good nutrition, adequate sleep, and exercise are critical to your success. Also the quickest to get jettisoned during midterms and finals. Bad idea.

Ask for help in other things too. If you are feeling sad or anxious, talk about it. Talk to friends (they will be grateful for your honesty – they are homesick too!) or to a counselor on campus (also free at most schools). Colleges are staffed with tons of administrators whose job it is to help students – we just need you to tell us what you need 😊

Be very careful about alcohol and personal safety. Most of the serious issues first year students run into with alcohol happen in the first 6 weeks of school. Alcohol also muddles our ability to give consent with sex, so be careful. Always know where you are and how to get home.

You'll never be as free as you are in college. Enjoy every moment!

Love, Betsy

– by Betsy Chapman, Ph.D. ('92, MA '94)

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