Suggestions for Parents of First-Year Students

There are many suggestions for how to best support first-year students during their transition to college. These suggestions are from experienced Student Affairs professionals, alumni and parents at NJIT.

Discuss the transition. First-year students frequently make new friends quickly, but be prepared for the sadness of separation. The sadness and sometimes homesickness they may feel initially is a normal and important part of the transition process. Usually it will pass quicker for those who get involved. Encourage your first year student to stay on campus for NJIT’s many evening and weekend programs designed to ease the transition and make friends.

Support from home is important. Students find calls, emails, packages, etc. critical in helping them stay in touch with family and friends. Your openness, as a parent, talking with them about ups and downs of college life will help their transition. Keep younger siblings in contact too - or bring them to campus for a visit!

Encourage communication with roommates. Making choices and living with the consequences, whether good or bad, can be empowering. Mistakes can be one of our greatest learning tools. NJIT’s Residence Life staff are trained to help facilitate roommate discussions and help students learn to communicate effectively.

Encourage your student to find healthy ways to deal with change at college. Exercise, volunteerism and talking with friends are all ways to lessen the stress in a healthy way. NJIT offers an excellent athletic facility and many ways for students to volunteer their talents, make a difference and friends.

Encourage your student to balance their social and academic life. College is harder for most students than high school. Many students need to spend extra time studying for academic success.

Less attention paid initially to academics can create a crisis mid-semester. NJIT’s Center for Academic & Professional Enrichment (CAPE) can help students with tutoring, test taking skills and time management.

Encourage your student to get involved with something outside of class. NJIT’s many clubs and organizations can offer great opportunities to meet new friends with similar interests. Encourage your student to work with faculty on research projects or other academic based initiatives. Additionally, some commitments often help students balance their time more efficiently.

Be aware that it is normal for your student to straddle their old life and their new life for awhile. Change is complicated because many feel that home is less comfortable than it used to be. Many students feel that life back home goes on without them. Leave their room as is for at least the first semester.

Set clear and realistic expectations regarding academic performance. Studies show that most GPA’s drop slightly while making the transition to college. If students know their parents expect sound academic work, they are likely to devote the time necessary. It is not realistic to expect the same grades as in high school.

Know the alcohol scene on campus and talk to your student about it. Students often exaggerate the use of alcohol and other drugs by their peers. Studies have shown that students generally believe that their peers frequently drink large quantities of alcohol. Surveys show that most students drink much less; almost 40% of NJIT students don’t drink at all!

Encourage Seeking Academic Support. With a vigorous course load, many students will need additional support for some courses. Make sure that your student visits CAPE to find study groups, tutoring, and other support designed for many first-year courses including common exams.

Commuter Student Expectations. For those who live at home and commute to classes, both parents and student need to redefine their expectations. Everyone needs to realize this is a different experience from being in high school. College expectations are more varied and require more study and flexibility. Their home responsibilities may need to be redefined and renegotiated. An important part of college life is to become involved in extra curricular activities to feel part of things, particularly during the start of the new semester. NJIT’s Commuter Assistance Resource Services (CARS) can help. If a student falls into the habit of just coming onto campus, eating lunch, and going straight home, they will miss an important component of the college experience. They do need to be formulating new independent definitions of themselves just as those living in the residence halls will learn their new adjustments.

Help your student balance job and academic responsibilities. Many students work during their time enrolled in classes. Studies have shown that students who work 10 or more hours off campus find they have lower GPAs; also students who work 10 or more hours off campus find they have lower GPAs. Studies have shown that students who work 10 or more hours off campus find they have lower GPAs.

Remind your student to take charge of their health, sleep, and nutrition. Students who set limits avoid the risk of exhaustion and illness often resulting in poor grades. If illness does occur, NJIT’s Health Services is available to help.
Welcome to the Highlander

As a parent of an NJIT student, you are part of a wonderful community that we call the Highlander Family. We want your son or daughter to have an enriching and successful college experience.

NJIT believes that parental support aids student success. With that in mind, NJIT is committed to educating parents on how to support their son or daughter’s NJIT experience. Whether it is inspiring your daughter to take on a leadership position in a campus organization or sending your son a reminder of his financial aid deadline, studies show that parental involvement increases the chances that a college student will graduate and be successful.

We hope you’ll take full advantage of the services and resources that we provide. We are a one-stop resource for Highlander parents, with services that include responding to inquiries and producing informative publications.

Our goals are to:
• Foster parent relationships with the university
• Provide opportunities for parent involvement in the Highlander Family
• Distribute information on college student development and trends
• Communicate regularly with parents through responses to inquiries, email, newsletters and invitations to NJIT family events.

Our vision is to fully integrate Highlander parents into the university community. We are excited about this initiative and hope to provide much needed college parenting resources to assist you, enriching the NJIT experience while your son or daughter is a student here.

Office of the Dean of Students

The Office of the Dean of Students supports the academic mission of the university by assisting students in their academic, social, cultural and professional development through the delivery of programs and services. The office works with students, staff and faculty to enhance the quality of campus life and promote out of class learning.

The following offices report to the Dean of Students:

Campus Center & Student Activities
(973) 596–3601

Center for Academic & Professional Enrichment (CAPE)
(973) 596–2992

Center for First Year Students
(973) 596–2981

Commuter Assistance Resource Services (CARS)
(973) 596-3693

Counseling Center
(973) 596-3414

Health Services
(973) 596-3621

International Students Office
(973) 596-2451

Residence Life
(973) 596-3039

Online Resources

College Parents of America
http://www.collegeparents.org/cpa/index.html

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New Jersey Institute of Technology
Campus Center 255
Newark NJ 07102
Phone: 973-596-3470
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