

We are excited that you have chosen to join us as a first year Salem State University student!

We know you are excited, nervous, and have lots of questions! Our job is to make sure you have access to the resources and support you will need to successfully transition from high school to university life. If you find yourself not knowing where to find the answer to a question, stop by our office! You can also send us a message on Facebook or shoot us an email!

Our main purpose is to help you achieve your academic goals. Want to learn more about our Student Success Series, have questions about your First Year Seminar or Learning Community? Or just want to get involved? Check out our website, where you will find up to date information regarding our programs and activities. We can help point you in the right direction and assist you in making your first year at Salem State a memorable one!



Welcome to the First Year Experience Office

Location: 100A Meier Hall; Phone: 978.542.2618; Email: firstyear@salemstate.edu

First Week of College Survival Guide

By Jingwen Yan, FYE Student Success Coach

You want your first week of college to go as smoothly as possible. You pack your backpack the night before, you wake up early, you dress to impress, but you get lost trying to find your classroom, you forget your classmates' names right after they tell you, and you get a coffee stain on your brand new t-shirt. You try so hard to focus during your first class, but your mind is floating elsewhere. You are worried because you are nervous, but everyone else looks so confident. Little do you know, the first week of college is chaotic and nerve-racking for everyone.

Surviving your first week of college is not too hard if you keep your expectations realistic. Instead of trying to be one hundred percent perfect, you should give yourself space and time to breathe.

First, do not expect that you are going to remember everything your professors say in class. It is okay if you forget something. That is what a syllabus is for. You are going to receive your syllabus during your first week, and I want you to guard it with your life. All of the important dates, assignments, exams, instructions, your professor's contact info and office hours are all on the syllabus. Keep your syllabus within reach throughout the entire semester because you will need it all of the time. Read the syllabus carefully and ask questions if you have any. If you worry that your professors may think your question is stupid, don't. The only stupid question is the one you never asked.

Secondly, do not have the expectation that you are going to make friends with everyone you meet during your first week of college. You will meet a lot of people on campus. I mean, A LOT. You will probably forget some of their names right after they introduce themselves, but that does not make you a terrible person. You will spend at least four years here. That's plenty of time for you to find your true friends. Instead of trying to leave the perfect first impression, you want to be yourself. However, this does not mean that you should not try to make friends at all. Talk to people in your class, get at least one or two people's phone number or email. That way, when you can't find the syllabus that I asked you to guard with your life, you can simply text your classmate and ask them to take a picture of the syllabus so you can know about the assignment that is due in two hours.

Thirdly, do not expect that you will learn everything about college in a week. That doesn't mean you shouldn't keep a positive attitude and put in the best effort to learn about college. You want to become familiar with the campus by walking around and searching through the Salem State website. In many instances, answers can be found by talking to a faculty or staff member, or it could be right on our website. You also want to make sure that you are checking your Navigator and Salem State email regularly, so you can stay up to date. If you have any questions, you can always contact the First Year Experience Office for help. We will either answer your questions based on our knowledge and experience, or direct you to the right office or people.

Remember, no one expects you to adapt to college in a heartbeat. Keep a positive attitude, pay attention to details, and do not be afraid to ask questions. Now, go ahead, enjoy your first week of college



Communication is Key!

By Sean Spellman, FYE Student Success Coach

Congratulations! You are about to join the Viking family and start the most amazing adventure of your life. The next four years are going to be some of the most exciting and fun you have ever had, but they will also be somewhat difficult and challenging. Luckily, you have a support system at your fingertips here at Salem State starting with your professors. That is why knowing how to communicate with them is so important. Lucky again is that there are so many ways for you to do it:

Checking your email: The number one rule of college is check your email every day! This is the main way you will be contacted by the university, professors and any organizations you sign up for. Therefore, making sure you check this on a regular basis is essential to being successful during your first year. I know it can be hard to remember every day, so some tricks include: setting an alarm on your phone, forwarding your other email accounts to your Salem State account, and connecting your cellphone to your account so you can receive notifications. With these helpful tricks you will be on your way to making this a regular habit that comes naturally.

Learning how to use Canvas: By regularly logging into Canvas you will stay up to date on all of your class assignments. Any time your professor has any new information, you will be the first to see it. If you ever have any questions on anything related to your assignments, Canvas is also a great place to

correspond with professors. Also, special features such as the calendar, notifications section and so many more are useful ways to make sure Canvas becomes part of your routine. You can access your Canvas through the main Salem State website under logins.

Attending Office Hours: Reach out to your professors outside of class. Don't make the mistake of thinking the classroom is the only place to talk to your professors. Each one will have office hours for you to discuss anything you would like to make sure you are getting the most out of each course you enroll in. Check your syllabus for your professor's office hours if you are unsure of when or where they are. Also, if you are unable to make the office hours listed, schedule another time to meet with your professor that works for you both!

Participating in Class: It is very important to remember that by actively participating in class you are also communicating with your professors. Participation comes in all shapes and forms. Asking questions, speaking up during group discussions, and actively listening are all ways that will improve how you are interacting with your classmates and professors.

As you can see communicating with your professors is easy! There is no reason to be stressed about reaching out or intimidated because they are here to help. They want you to succeed and learn as much as you can during your time at Salem State, and using them as resources will ensure that you not only get an A in the class but learn how to be the

One Stop Shopping: Student Navigation Center

person you want to become by graduation day.
By Jordan Thompson, FYE Student Success Coach

Stepping foot onto a new college campus can be intimidating. Don't worry, you aren't alone. There are other new students, faculty and professors that are feeling the same way. I'm sure you have come up with many questions and concerns regarding how Salem State University (SSU) operates and where to go if you need help with your various school related accounts. The Student Navigation Center is your one stop shopping on campus!

The office is located on Central Campus in the Bertolon School of Business. The Student Navigation Center holds the ClipperCard office, financial aid, student accounts, and registrar offices. If you have any questions regarding your Clippercard, your bill, your loans, etc., you can either stop by the Student Navigation Center or contact them via email or over the phone.

Once you arrive they take your student ID and ask for what you may need then direct

you to the resources that you need. The staff is friendly and welcoming and ready to assist you. If you have a quick question you can send them an email at navcenter@salemstate.edu. (Please make sure you use your Salem State email account, identify yourself in the email with your student ID number so they can access your student account, if necessary.) If you would rather talk to someone on the phone, their number is 978.524.8000. The office is open:

Monday-Thursday 8:30am-5pm

Friday 10am-5pm

Wednesday 5-6 pm for phone calls.

The Student Navigation Center makes it easier for students to access the resources and information they need. Make sure you contact them as soon as you have a question, don't wait till the deadline when everyone is trying to call them!

MAKE SURE TO STAY CONNECTED!

To stay up-to-date with all the amazing opportunities available to you, connect with us through one or more of our social media sites:



Facebook: Friend us at facebook.com/firstyear.success
Like us at facebook.com/FirstYearSuccessAtSalemState



Twitter: twitter.com/FYSuccess



Instagram: instagram.com/firstyearsuccess



Pinterest: pinterest.com/firstyear



Goodreads: goodreads.com/SSUFYE
Read the First Year Blog at firstyearsuccess.wordpress.com

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Five Tips to Better Manage Your Time

By Alexandra Kadell, FYE Student Success Coach

When there are only 24 hours in a day and much to accomplish in college, how do you plan to prioritize your time? With such a limited amount of time in your day, planning and managing your time is key to your success. College is no longer like high school where the bell rings, peers clutter the hallways, and teachers tell you what class you need to be in next; success in college is solely based on your ability to properly manage your time. Learning how to balance new factors such as advanced course work, commuting, playing a division sport, joining clubs, participating in volunteer work, or having a job all while being independent adults is a lot to handle as an incoming freshman. Don't fret, time management is a challenging skill to many incoming and current students. Here are some helpful hints to help you better manage your time.

First, use a planner. You will get a free planner from the FYE office after you attend your convocation on September 6. You can also use a digital planner if you want to. Whether it is a digital or paper planner, in fifteen minute intervals or day blocks, a planner will allow you to organize your time effectively. Write down your class times, when assignments are due, club meeting times, or even when you should eat. A planner allows you to plan ahead and stay on top of important tasks, like school work. Therefore, always write your syllabus in your planner. At the beginning of each semester, the professor will give you a syllabus outlining what assignments or test are due, take thirty minutes of your day to write down when each assignment is due. This helpful tip will avoid making you look back at your syllabus each week, keeping you ahead, and reminding you of certain assignments that are due. Personalize your planner by color coordinating or using abbreviations as long as you can efficiently coordinate your time. Using a planner in the beginning of the fall semester allows you to start organizing your time early.

Second, prioritize your tasks. College is all about learning how to make smart and independent choices. In one week alone you may have to complete several different assignments while balancing your extracurricular activities. Therefore, you must begin to organize and complete your tasks from most pertinent to least. You are here to gain an education; as a result you should be putting your academics first. Setting time to work and study is critical for your success at college. Creating a check list or writing task down in your planner at the beginning of each week will help you outline everything you need to do allowing to stay on top of you busy college life inside and outside of the classroom.

Third, do not procrastinate! Contrary to the conceptions, college life is not all about eating ramen noodles, pulling all-nighters, and waiting until the last minute to finish a project. Unlike high school where you sometimes could wait until the day before to begin studying for a test or finishing an assignment during a lunch period, in college by procrastinating on assignments you are not presenting your full value to your professors and peers. You are more effective when you plan ahead and work on something with full potential, rather than waiting until the last minute with minimal effort. Using some of the tips already addressed, such as using a planner and prioritizing tasks you can avoid procrastinating on assignments. For example, if you have a 10 page paper due in two weeks instead of cramming it all within two days break it apart and do research one day, one page another day, and two pages during a different day. By breaking up assignments you are putting in a better quality of work. Lastly, use your weekends to complete some of your assignments for the week. Although classes are not held on these days, you should still use that time to catch up and be ahead. Read assignments for the coming week, get your five page paper done, or meet with a group to study. By completing work during the weekend you will relieve some of your work load and feel more prepared for the week to come.

Fourth, get your tasks done, but don't forget to take time for yourself. This is one of the hardest things college students struggle with. We begin to get caught up with the rush of college life that we forget to take care of ourselves. Mentally and physically it is critical that you allow yourself to take a break in order to put your full potential into everything else you will be doing on campus. This tip is essential to your time management skills. Each day make sure that you set aside at least thirty minutes to do something you enjoy. If it is taking a nap, eating, working out, singing, crocheting, or playing Frisbee with your friends in the quad, make sure you allocate that time allowing you to perform better throughout college.

Lastly, my final tip for you is to learn to say no sometimes. There are going to be several different things throughout a day to distract you from reaching your goals. If you begin to say yes to everything you will no longer have time in the day to achieve all that you would like. For example, if you had plans to study for one hour of the day, but your friend asks you to get coffee so you push it to a later time, but then another person ask you to help set up for a club event and you say yes, when will you have time to study? It is okay to adjust your life and say yes sometimes so that you can hang out with your friends or go to an event, however when it begins to impede on accomplishing your work, you need to reflect on what you are spending your time on. The skill of saying no is challenging for many people, but in order to manage your time properly you have to learn to balance your time and sometimes say no.

These are just a few tips that helped me as an incoming freshman manage my time a little better. However, we are not cookie cutter students, everyone is different. Use these tips, improvise them, or create your own. Your time management will be different from mine or your peers, but do not worry! With time you will figure out your own time management tips. My last piece of advice for you is to become your own motivator. Use whatever motivated you to attend Salem State to continue your first semester and throughout your four years. If you are struggling with your time management remember these helpful tips and make sure to use your resources around campus to help you transition.



Stress Less during Freshman Year

By Patrick Braley, FYE Mentor

Now that you've been accepted to Salem State University you're ready to start your college journey! College is a one-of-a-kind experience filled with new friends, new knowledge, and new stresses. At first, you may feel overwhelmed or anxious about navigating your way through all of the academic and social aspects of college such as classes, assignments, sports, clubs, making friends and fitting in with the community here. However, it's perfectly normal to feel this way (especially during the first month or so). But, don't worry! There are lots of different resources and tips that can help make your transition from high school to college smooth sailing.

Firstly, let's address some common stressors that make being at college different from being in high school. Then, we'll break down what to do about them so that you can be calm, collected, and kick some serious butt during your first semester!

One of the major changes that you'll probably face is living on campus away from home for the first time. Although this can seem strange at first, it gives you the opportunity to make new friends with the people on your floor and in your building. The Resident Assistants are awesome at planning activities to help you get to know each other and have fun while doing it! So, if you are worried about being on your own, getting to know your RA and attending some of the events in your hall will help.

Another part of college life that is much different from its high school counterpart are the classes. College-level classes tend to be more challenging than ones in high school. There are several things you can do to conquer all your studies. One of the first major things is to make sure you're organized. This means having all of the textbooks, notebooks, syllabi, and any other materials you may need for the class. Something else you can do is to get to know your professor! I know this in itself may seem a little scary but, sending them an email or attending their designated office hours to introduce yourself will do the trick. Your professors want to get to know you and are here to help you succeed.

A final thing that may make you stressed out is figuring out how you're going to fit in and make friends here at Salem State. One of the great things about this university is that there are SO MANY ways to get involved here! Everything from the different clubs, sports and intramural teams, honor societies and the downtown Salem area all offer lots of ways for students to get involved. These are great ways for you to make friends, learn a new skill, and find where you fit in at Salem State by pursuing your interests.

To sum everything up, stress and anxiety are perfectly normal to feel and something that everyone experiences at least a little bit at first. However, if you feel you need some more assistance in making your transition to college or just need someone to talk with, the Counseling and Health Services center is a great place to go. They can be reached by calling 978.542.6410. In addition, the First-Year Experience office is another resource on campus. We're here to help make your first year totally awesome! The office can be reached by calling 978.542.2618 or by emailing firstyear@salemstate.edu. Here's hoping that you have an amazing first year!



Common Misconceptions about College

By Kaitlynn Bartley, FYE Mentor

As a first year student, you've probably heard a lot of different things about college life. As an incoming freshman, I had a distorted vision of what my college experience would be. I thought I would be staying up until 2 am every morning with friends, skipping classes and still getting A's. Don't ask me how I thought that was going to happen, but I was unpleasantly surprised when reality hit: I would actually need to put in effort to succeed.

Misconception 1 - "I can go to classes whenever I want!"

You have to go to class. Classes are not optional. Professors will take attendance; they will know if you are not in class. If you miss class and have an excuse (doctor's appointment, emergency, etc.) let your professor know ahead of time, if possible. If you can't let your professor know ahead of time, send them an email as soon as you know you will not be in class. Usually professors will allow a couple unexcused absences, but don't rely on that. They will tell you the first day what their attendance policy is. Some professors will even go as far as to say that each absence will result in your grade lowering anything from $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter to $\frac{1}{2}$ of a letter.

Misconception 2 - Professors don't care and are unapproachable.

For the most part, professors are really cool and want to be there. They care about students' success and love to talk to them--that's why they teach! They have open office hours and love when students drop by to say hello and have questions for them. In my experience, professors have gone above and beyond to help me succeed in not just classes, but life. A professor may seem intimidating, but I've never had a professor ask me to stop coming to him/her with questions. Often times when a professor seems unapproachable it's because they have high expectations. As soon as you show that you're putting in the effort to meet those expectations, you'll see an entirely new person!

Misconception 3 - "I have so much free time!"

Sure, you'll have free time, but don't be fooled. For every one hour you are in class every week, you are expected to spend an additional two hours outside of class preparing! So, say you are taking 15 credits in a semester. That means you are in class 15 hours a week, and you are expected to spend at least 30 hours a week outside of class working. Often times, students struggle in classes because they are not putting as much work in as they should. Studies show that students who put in the time and effort are more likely to succeed in college!

Misconception 4 - You have to drink and party to fit in.

In reality, the majority of college students will not drink while in school. Most people don't realize this because they already assume that everyone is drinking and partying, and that they need to do the same to fit in. Find some people who don't drink or party and hang out with them. Create a study group or join a club or team. There are plenty of other ways to make friends on campus!

Misconception 5 - You must choose a major as a first year student and stick with it.

This one hits close to home. As a senior in college, I have finally figured out what I might want to do with my major. Since I started attending Salem State, I have changed my major officially four times and unofficially an additional two. You have room to change your major and change your career path.

Now that I have clarified some of the college misconceptions, I hope you have a wonderful semester and achieve first year success.