

# Advice for New Freshmen from Successful EIU Juniors & Seniors: In Their Own Words

## Transition to College

**Be true to who you are.** If you are not a person who goes to parties or you are not a drinker (which you shouldn't be because you are freshmen) Don't be afraid to say no when people invite you. You are not alone. Find the people that have the same interests or the same non-interests because they are out there!

Understand what college is: Do not become distracted by living up to the preconceived ideas of college life, but instead focus and become dedicated to the education we are privileged to receive at EIU.

**Try new things:** College is the time to experiment and try new and exciting things. Figure out what interests you and have the best time you possibly can in college because the memories and friends you make in these four years will last you a lifetime. People always say you never know what you like until you have tried it and typically this is true.

**Have fun:** Yes, you are here for an education that will (hopefully) set you up for your future career, but you're also here to discover who you are. For many, this is their first experience away from their parents, so they don't really know who they are without them. Step outside your comfort zone and try new things. That's what college is all about. You're only here for 4 years so make the most of them.

**Prioritize** – If you're here to party, you better have a solid fallback lined up, because you won't be here after one semester. Grades have to come first, put in the work during the week so that you can have fun on the weekends. A lot of people waste too much time partying and end up being dismissed after one semester. Don't let that be you.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. We were all new to the whole "college thing" at some point, and we know that it can be intimidating! There are many friendly faces at EIU that are willing to help.



Don't forget to check in with your parents/guardians, this is a time of change for them too.

Don't be afraid to talk to people if you are struggling. Understand that most students know what you are going through. As a freshman, most of the other students are also being away from home for the first time. And upperclassmen also had to go through the same thing. Your R.A's also had to go through the same thing. If you are homesick or having trouble with friends or having any other struggles, talk to someone, even if that someone is a counselor in the counseling center or a priest or minister at one of the campus ministries.

**Become independent.** Learn to do things you want to do. You will never discover yourself if you only depend on others to make your choices.

**Expand your horizons:** Expand your social bubble, your experiences, and your opportunities. College is a very different atmosphere than high school. You are now an adult and off on your own, so do not be afraid to try new things that will increase the value of your college career!

## Roommates & Residence Halls

**Leave your door open** often in your residence hall if you aren't doing homework or don't need a quiet atmosphere for concentration. You'd be surprised the great times and friends you'll meet by people walking by and stopping in to talk.

Leave your door open on your floor: The people who live on your floor are some of the first people you will meet when starting your college career. Most of them will also be freshman and chances are they are experiencing the same things you are.

Get to know your RA!



Believe it or not, you can be more productive if the area you are in is clean or organized. Your room does not have to be perfect, but it helps to keep it clean. Having to constantly clean your room and keep it organized takes up so much time.

### Be Present in Class

**Go to class** and use all the resources possible. It might be hard to go to a class everyday that is boring or in which the professor doesn't even take attendance. But that freshman year is the one in which you form your routine for your future classes.

**Extra-credit:** In college extra-credit is not optional it is a must. Take advantage of every opportunity that is thrown at you. It can make a difference of a B or an A at the end of the semester!

**Go To Class!** This one seems obvious, but it will be tempting to stay in on a rainy day, or a nice day, or a Friday, or a Monday, but trust me- Going to class is about 75% of what it takes to pull the grades you need.

It's okay to not be the front row student. But make sure you speak up and participate in class and make the teacher remembers the student you are.

Never be afraid to ask questions; there is always someone who may have the same question as you.

**Go to class:** This is such a basic concept and really does determine your success in class. Even if your professor does not take attendance going to class reinforces the materials you are learning and reading on your own. It also gives you're the chance to get to know other people that might be able to help you in the class.

**Get to know your classmates:** Get to know the students in your classes. They may be your life savior when it comes to remembering assignments or in need of a study buddy. As you advance into



your major, your classmates will become very important.

### Faculty & Advisors

Talk to your teachers, get to know them, and genuinely be willing to listen; you earn your grade, but you should earn the respect of your teacher.

Read the syllabus before asking your professor a question.

You never get a second chance at a first impression. Always remember that you are a walking billboard and you must maintain the best representation of yourself at all times.

**Get to know your professors;** they're here to help you and would love to see you succeed.

Your professors are one of the best resources you have. They are your source to a good grade in the course, learning and possibly future letters of recommendation. Getting to know your professors helps you not only network for your future but know one knows the material you are trying to learn than your professors. You will be surprised to learn how many professors appreciate the open communication and are willing to give a little extra help when students need it.

**Go to office hours.** As intimidating as your professors can be, if you get to know them/go to their office hours, you are going to get so much more out of the classes you take. Whether you go to them for help in a class or need some advice about your major, they are generally more than willing to help.



Create professional relationships: Start with your peers and work your way towards professors and other faculty of EIU.

## Study

When it comes to homework, avoid waiting until the last minute.

**Study:** Go to class and make studying your priority! Remember freshman year is all about boosting your GPA.

Experiment with different ways to study—whether it's using flash cards, reading over notes, or making power points, everyone has a different study strategy.



**Apply yourself.** Can you imagine leaving school without remembering what you learned from your classes? Ultimately, we come to college to get a job. We *pay* to come here to apply what we learn to a job. Applying yourself means not only time and effort, but it means putting academic interests in your major (which you picked) over even just a little bit of social time or free time.

Do not put off assignments or studying until the last minute. Break it into manageable sections and work on it a little at a time.

## Build Good Habits

Make smart decisions.

Keep a planner and update it after every class to keep up on homework and dates for future tests and projects.

Time management is so important. Create a schedule for yourself that includes class time, work, RSOs, meetings with teachers, and advisors.

**Make a schedule:** During your freshman year in college it would be a great idea to make your own personal detailed schedule using excel or Microsoft Word. This will allow a visual representation of



what you should be doing throughout a typical school day.

Make a to do list at the beginning of every week and weekend, so you can keep track of everything you need to get done. You also will feel really accomplished every time you can cross something off your list.

**Work-out:** Utilize the Student Rec Center! It reduces your chances of gaining the freshman 15 and also decreases stress levels.

Always check your panthermail.

Get to sleep, it is crucial to succeeding to get enough sleep.

Always do what you **HAVE** to do, so that you may do what you **WANT** to do. School is always first. Time to socialize or events around campus will always exist, but cover the books first.

**Become cultured.** Try new things and leave your comfort zone. If you never try something, you never know if you are interested. Try to make yourself the most well-rounded person you know.

Be polite. Hold doors open for others and say thank you when someone opens one for you, say hello to your BSW and the dining hall workers, etc. *Respect is earned.*

## Friends and Fun

**Meet new people** – Don't be afraid to put yourself out there. If you would rather keep to yourself that is perfectly fine, but I guarantee you will have a better time if you make the effort to meet new people.

Don't be afraid to meet new people. Although you might feel like your roommate is the only person you need at the moment, you will regret it later on if you don't make other friends.

Make friends with the people on your floor. Those are the people that you will see almost daily. They are also the people that might see you first thing in the morning or late at night. Also, if you have a good relationship with them, you can ask them to be quiet at night if you are trying to sleep or for milk in the morning if you ran out.



I bet it's great to be away from home and out the house, but it is important to uphold the morals and values that family and life has instilled in you. Be mindful of the friends you involve yourself with.

Become friends with other people in your major and talk to them about their classes.

**Be true to who you are.** If you are not a person who goes to parties or you are not a drinker (which you shouldn't be because you are freshmen), don't be afraid to say "no" when people invite you. You are not alone. Find the people that have the same interests or the same non-interests because they are out there!

**Be yourself:** it is easy to get caught up in the wrong crowd when you are on your own in college for the first time. Be open to meeting new people and be sure to always be comfortable with who you are. If you accept yourself for who you are others will too!

### RSOs & Activities

Don't be afraid to get involved with new RSOs and activities. You will make some of the best friendships and connections of your life if you give different organizations a chance.

Join anything you might be interested in, that way you are sure to find something that interests you and then if you like one club or activity more than the others, you can focus more on those activities.

Also, you are more likely to find friends with the same interest as you.

**Get involved,** get together with friends, and go to an event or join a club that interests you. You'll learn time management much better if you properly involve yourself.

**Join RSOs/Greek Life/Club Sports:** By joining any of the organizations on campus early on, it will help with feeling homesick. It will also allow you to meet people outside of the people who live on your floor and are in your classes. This gives you the opportunity to discover new passions.

**Get involved –** No matter what your interests are we have clubs and organizations that will draw you in, all you have to do is look. Sports, hobbies, and numerous other fields are all options and every group/organization is welcoming to interested potential members.

**Get involved and meet new people.** Everyone comes to college in the same boat -- no one knows many people yet and everyone is eager to meet friends. Getting involved is a good way to do this but also just learning to talk to people you might not normally talk to is another way.

**Get involved:** I cannot stress enough how much getting involved on campus or in the community can change the outlook you have on campus. Eastern is suppose to become your home away from home but being connected is the first part. Once you try something you love, stick to it and get involved. It is a great way to meet new people who share your same interests.



Eastern has over 200 registered student organizations all you have to do is search them on Easterns home page and find one that fits your interest because there is something here for

everyone. Getting involved helps you have a purpose outside of the classroom, it also helps you network and build your resume.

Become involved: There are more than 200 clubs and organizations just on campus at Eastern Illinois University. Join one! Research shows that the busier a student becomes, the higher the student's grades!

### **Use Resources**

Don't be afraid to talk to people if you are struggling. Understand that most students know what you are going through. As a freshman, most of the other students are also being away from home for the first time. And upperclassmen also had to go through the same thing. Your R.A's also had to go through the same thing. If you are homesick or having trouble with friends or having any other struggles, talk to someone, even if that someone is a counselor in the counseling center or a priest or minister at one of the campus ministries.

Get to know your campus, visit halls and buildings that you do not have classes in. There are resources that can be very helpful for you, you just have to be able to find it.

Meet with Career Services and spend your time making yourself more marketable to future employers.

Start using Career Services now: It is never too early to get a head start on what you want to do with your life. You made it to college and that's the first step, but along the way, you may need some help. At Career Services, the counselors can help you with anything from choosing a major to writing cover letters and resumes. The earlier you start utilizing these services to their full potential, the better off you will be when graduation rolls around.

**ASK FOR HELP.** Your professors are here to help you, your RAs, your advisors. Use them as your resource to do the absolute best you can.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. – This is a big one. EIU offers tons of possibilities for assistance if you need it. The writing center, the library, your RA's, and so on are all viable options for help if you need it. Don't be embarrassed to ask, we all need it sometimes. Go to career services! It is never too early to start a resume and prep for interviews!

Go to class and use all the resources possible. It might be hard to go to a class every day that is boring or in which the professor doesn't even take attendance, but that freshman year is the one in which you form your routine for your future classes.

### **Contributors**

Liz Bailey, Special Education  
KC Campanano, Psychology, Women's Studies  
Selena Castillo, Business Management  
Gage Dailey, Communication Studies, Film Studies  
McKenzie Daniels, Communication Studies  
Maja Dinger, Music Performance, Spanish  
Kelsey Dougherty, Communication Disorders & Sciences, Psychology, Neuroscience  
Nathan Gayheart, Chemistry  
Jordan Hawkins, Special Education & Elementary Education  
Holland Hempten, English  
Brooke Kimball, Career and Technical Education—Family and Consumer Sciences  
Allison Koch, Kinesiology—Exercise Science  
Maralea Negron, Foreign Languages & Political Science  
Jordyn Reitz, Marketing, Advertising  
Isis Sims, Kinesiology—Athletic Training  
Jessica Stallworth, Health Studies—Community Health  
Mariah Weghorst, Elementary Education