Freshman Year for Dummies

Some hints on how to survive the first year of college

By Kate Rose
Staff Writer

Open houses, applications, SAT’s, orientation, move-in day and first college classes are just some of things that freshmen encounter on the road to higher education. Sizing alongside other freshmen, sometimes excited and sometimes nervous, either way not knowing completely what to expect. Advice is often given by friends and family, but can be overwhelming.

It is now that freshmen get a chance to sit back and enjoy their first reading of *The Rider News* and get a little advice from Rider students who survived their freshman year and lived to tell the tale. It all starts with the residence hall, a second home to many Rider students, or the car, if you are commuting.

When it comes to living on campus, many incoming students worry about sharing a room with a stranger and living away from friends and family. “Get to know your roommate as best you can,” said senior Rebecca Soffen. “Be honest with each other about your likes and dislikes.”

Residence hall staff suggests roommate contracts and often run programs that help hall members to create friendships. Roommate conflicts do occur, but open minds and patience are a key to keeping the peace.

There are a lot of changes that one must adapt to freshman year and students find different ways to help them cope with these changes.

“My friends helped me the most,” said Anthony Trevean, a senior. “School was stressful and they were always there to help take the load off and keep me laughing.”

The stress of college can really get to students but there are many people to turn to, from friends to professors, to residence hall staff, administration and the counseling center.

“There are times you may feel down and overwhelmed, but there’s always someone you can turn to for help,” junior Casey Kocis said. After spending a year as a resident advisor, she is fully aware of the resources available to students who are feeling stressed.

Sometimes simple comfort foods like Easy Mac and Cap of Noodles can do the job, while other students may look towards Daly’s or the Bronc Diner.

“Chicken fingers and mozzarella sticks,” is what junior Melissa Andus said helped her survive freshman year. Late night visits to what was then called the C-Store gave her energy to finish midnight study sessions.

Currently studying abroad in Australia, Andus misses the snacks that helped her through her first year at Rider.

When it comes to classes many students have the same advice. Keep up on the work or it will get out of control later.

“I went to all my classes and kept up on the reading,” said senior Brian Harden. Though it seems simple, reading the textbook is sometimes the easiest way to do well in a class. It is also easy to give in to the temptation to sleep in and skip class, but it is also the easiest way to fall behind.

“Always use a planner,” Soffen urged. With a full load of classes and extracurricular activities a planner helps to keep important dates and deadlines in order.

Senior Nick Ciampolillo was enthusiastic about all the opportunity freshmen have.

“The best advice I could give to incoming freshmen is to just get involved in something,” he said.

“We are here to study and do well in classes, but that is only half of what college is about. Just as important to college success is networking and socializing, because doing so helps you grow and develop as a person just as much as getting an A in a class,” he added.

Getting involved has made all the difference to many students at Rider. There is so much more to Rider University than simply going to class.

A member of the lacrosse team, fraternity Sigma Phi Epsilon, the Finance Board and DJ at the student pub, senior Tynish Halibey has taken full advantage of Rider’s opportunities outside the classroom. He suggests that students, both residents and commuters, get involved on campus at evenings, nights and weekends to check out all the different things to do.

“Check out the clubs, meet the Greeks, run for office and get to know all the people you can,” Halibey suggested. “Go out and experience all that Rider has to offer!”