

# Quest Alumni Newsletter

November, Freshman Year

## To Rush or Not to Rush? That is the Question.

For some people, joining a fraternity or a sorority is the right decision. Others may feel like they wouldn't have time or that it's just not their scene. It is completely up to you to decide if you want to be a part of a Greek family or not, but here are a few questions to think about to help you make a decision.

**Do you want to enlarge your social crowd?** The Greek system is a great way to meet new people and make friendships that can last a lifetime. If you are going to a school where none of your friends are going, then you may want to consider joining a sorority or fraternity. Even if you and your high school friends are going to the same college, you may want to expand your inner circle in order to obtain new perspectives. However, if you feel you can meet people without the help of a club, then you may be content to bypass the Greek life altogether.

**Do you want to develop leadership skills?** Fraternities and sororities can help strengthen member's teamwork, time management, motivation, public speaking and organization skills. Greeks are also highly involved in leadership positions on various campuses. This may be a plus for you to join a sorority or fraternity but keep in mind that you can also develop leadership skills through other college organizations, such as student government or key club.

**How much free time do you want?** At some schools, the Greek life can be very time consuming, almost a lifestyle, while at other schools, it can be just another extracurricular activity. If you are the kind of person who doesn't like to give up copious free time, then going Greek may not be for you. On the other hand, if you thrive off of a busy schedule, then you may want to consider rushing. Just remember that by joining a fraternity or sorority, you are making a commitment to participate in their activities, such as community service and social activities.

**Can you afford it?** If you decide to join a sorority or fraternity, you will have to pay dues. Annual membership dues vary depending on where you go to school and which sorority or fraternity you join. Membership dues can range from \$100 to \$1,000 per semester. If you decide to rush, make sure you ask questions about how much dues will be. Some fraternities or sororities may even be able to sponsor you if you decide that you can't afford to join.

Greek life is not for everyone. What some students view as advantages of going Greek, others view as disadvantages. Keep in mind that you do not have to be a freshman to rush a sorority or fraternity. Many students wait until they are sophomores or juniors before they rush. If you are still unsure about whether or not you want to join, there is no harm in rushing a fraternity or sorority to find out more information. Just be sure to take your time checking out your options and making your decision.

- eCampusTours.com

### Greek Terms Defined

- **Active**—A person who has been initiated into a Greek organization.
- **Bid**—An invitation to join a fraternity or sorority.
- **Dues**—Money paid to a sorority or fraternity to cover expenses, such as socials, insurance, leadership programs, and member recruitment.
- **Initiation**—Ceremony during which new members take their vows for full membership into the chapter.
- **Legacy**—A student whose parent, grandparent, or sibling is a member of a particular fraternity or sorority.
- **Panhellenic**—The governing body of sororities.
- **Philanthropy**—Community service.
- **Pledge**—Name given to new members after an initiation program but before they become full members.
- **Rush**—Membership recruitment. Offers a time for potential members to ask questions and get to know other members.
- **Swap/Mixer**—A theme party between a sorority and a fraternity.

- eCampusTours.com

### Not all Greek organizations are alike!

Rush week is when you and the Greek organizations check each other out. Are they right for you, are you right for them? Will you have to conform to a narrow set of values? College is supposed to broaden your perspective. Some Greek houses narrow it.

Before you get bombarded by the sales pitches during rush week, speak with an unbiased source: an officer on the Interfraternity or Panhellenic Council or the college sponsor. These people often have lots of information on each house (for example, grade point average, the number of complaints lodged against it, how much it raised for charity).

Don't evaluate a house based on a party. Visit the house on a typical weeknight and weekend day. Ask questions such as:

- How is your fraternity or sorority different from others?
- Describe your pledging process. What will you expect from me?
- What can I expect from your chapter?
- After I'm a member, in a typical week, how much time will I be asked to devote to Greek activities?
- How much should I budget for a year? What "extra" costs generally come up (e.g., buying presents, trips, events, etc.)?
- How big a role does sports play in your fraternity? Charity work?

Most important: Be yourself when you rush. If a fraternity or sorority doesn't want the real you, you don't want it.

- Adapted from *You're Gonna Love This College Guide*,  
by Marty Nemko, Ph.D.

## The “Freshman 15”

Gaining weight is common in college. Free of their parents’ monitoring, students often chow down at all-you-can-eat dining facilities and grab pizza and other fast foods as they rush through studying and classes. Parties heavy with alcohol expand the waistline, too.

Researchers at Cornell University reported in 2003 that a sample of college freshmen had gained an average 4.2 pounds during their first 12 weeks on campus. The weight gain was 0.3 pounds per week, almost 11 times more than the weekly weight gain expected in 17- and 18-year-olds and nearly 20 times more than the average weight gain of an American adult.

www.dailyrecord.com

## Avoid Putting On Pounds



How to avoid gaining weight in college:

- Be aware of times when it’s easy to overeat or eat unhealthy food. These times include studying for tests and writing papers, tailgating and sports events, parties and other gatherings, watching television and late-night talks.
- Take your weight in pounds and drink half that amount in ounces of water every day. A 150-pound person, for example, should drink about 75 ounces of water daily, the equivalent of about 10 small bottles of water.
- Count to your age before you “cheat” on eating.
- Be creative in finding more healthy ways to indulge in foods you crave. Need chocolate? Try melting it and dipping some fruit in it.
- Approach alcohol with moderation.
- Always eat breakfast.
- Exercise.
- Keep healthy snacks such as fruit, almonds, baby carrots, rice cakes and soy crisps around. Try eating snacks every few hours.
- Take advantage of the healthy foods a college cafeteria has to offer. Go for grilled lean meat and fish, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat cheese and milk.
- When eating something bad, at least make sure it’s something meaningful, like homemade brownies or cookies, or dessert after a nice dinner with friends or family.
- Seek methods to de-stress, such as massage, aromatherapy and meditation.

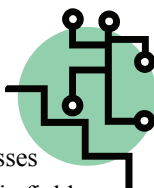
- Source: Daphne Oz, author of

*The Dorm Room Diet: The 8-Step Program for Creating a Healthy Lifestyle Plan That Really Works.*



## Fitness for Free

- Join an intramural team
- Take the stairs *every time*
- Walk the campus between classes
- Jog the track around the athletic fields



## Homesickness

If you’re living away from home for the first time in your life and if your home situation is any good at all, it would be unusual—in fact, it would be downright strange and insulting to your family—if you didn’t feel minor or even major homesickness. This is natural. Don’t worry about it. You are not an oddball. Be glad you come from a home that’s good enough to miss. Know that, like most things, this will get better over time as you adjust to your new surroundings.

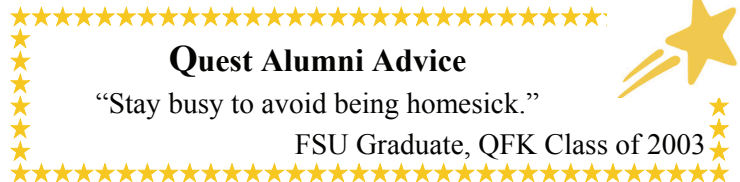
How long your homesickness and/or nostalgia lasts depends on you and how determined you are to plunge into your new life at college. One good way to do this—to put down new roots and make new memories—is to pretend that you’re going to be on campus for the rest of your life. Forget that you’ll be leaving college in a few years. For now, this *is* your home. So learn about it. Adopt the campus and community as your own. You’ve made the physical move to college, now make the intellectual and emotional move as well.

This doesn’t mean you won’t miss your old friends or that you should cut them out of your life. *Au contraire!* From now on, some of the best times you’ll ever have will be on visits home, when you see your friends again, catch up with them, and talk for hours about the new lives you’re beginning to make for yourselves. Your friends are growing and changing, too—you hope! - and it will be fascinating for you to watch and see how they turn out.



But in the meantime, you’ve got your own new world to adjust to. Don’t let it pass you by!

- *The Ultimate College Survival Guide*  
Janet Farrar Worthington and Ronald Farrar



## Quest Alumni Advice

“Stay busy to avoid being homesick.”

FSU Graduate, QFK Class of 2003



**A word to the wise: Whatever your financial situation in college, learn early on how to manage your money wisely. You can use your college years to establish credit by getting *one* credit card with a low credit limit and paying it off monthly. Don’t spend what you don’t have. Live within your means, not for instant gratification. If you begin college by using a credit card judiciously, you will probably continue to do so throughout your college career and beyond. We know that this is easier said than done. And as with most things, you’ll need to use self-control. Credit card companies want you to spend beyond your means (that’s how they stay in business), but don’t fall for it.**

*College Rules!*

*How to Study, Survive, and Succeed in College*  
Sherrie Nist, Ph.D. and Jodi Patrick Holschuh, Ph.D.

# Studying Tips: When, How, Where?

## Study When?

### Planning

- Plan for at least three study hours for every hour you spend in class—your regimen should include previewing, critical reading, and reviewing of materials.
- Avoid scheduling marathon study sessions; shorter sessions will improve your focus and attention. Divide your work into short-range goals—create a checklist of tasks to cross off those you have finished.
- Study in chunks: 30-50 minute time periods, depending upon the subject followed by a brief break (5 minutes) is the most effective way to study. Spend time on your most challenging courses daily.

### Timing

- Be aware of your best time of day. Studies show that students who study late tend to be tired, work inefficiently, and forget much of the material they cover.
- Many students think they are better motivated to study late in the evening because of the pressures of time; though this might be a schedule selected by default. What options can you have when time is running out?
- Best Advice: Use daylight hours—an hour of studying during the day is worth two at night! Do work that requires the most concentration (reading) early in the day.

### Breaks

- Use waiting time—your “breaks” between classes—as an opportunity to review material or preview work.
- Make sure to take breaks while studying for nutrition, exercise, and clearing your mind between subjects.
- Try not to rely on sugar, caffeine, or other substances to keep you motivated or awake—they often have other effects once the initial ones have worn off.

## Study How?

### Organization

- Allow longer, “massed” time periods for organizing concepts, outlining, and writing papers. Use shorter, “spaced” time intervals for rote memorization, review, and self-testing. Use odd moments for recall/review.
- If you get tired or bored, switch your task, activity, subject, or environment. Stop studying when you are no longer being productive. Do rote memory tasks and review, especially details, just before you fall asleep.
- Make use of study resources on campus: find out about labs, tutors, help rooms, and alternate texts.

## Goal Setting

- Use the block of time you have scheduled for study carefully and set reachable study goals. (for example: read chapter in Psych., complete five math problems, and write rough draft of paper, etc.)
- Study actively: ask yourself questions, review your notes regularly, discuss key concepts with peers.
- Study difficult (or boring) subjects first; this will help you to get closer to the end of your “to do” list.
- Manage your study time by using a calendar system to plan and prioritize; use your syllabi to mark overall due dates, then create periodic deadlines to prepare for writing papers and reviewing material for exams.

## Concentration

- Pay attention to your attention; know your habits, learning style, and reliable methods of staying on task.
- Make an agreement with roommates about study time and social time; notice how others misuse your time.
- Find at least one or two students in each class to study or share notes with. Teaching a concept or new idea to someone else is a sure way for you to understand it.

## Study Where?

### Setting the Stage

- Ultimately, the decision of where to study depends on two factors: the environment in which you are best able to concentrate and the type of work you are doing.
- Find a specific place (or places—not your residence hall room!) that you can use for studying and build a habit of only studying when you are in this place. Don’t use your study space for socializing or sleeping.
- Ensure that your study area has the following: good lighting, ventilation, a comfortable chair, but not too comfortable, a desk or table large enough to spread out your materials.

### Minimizing Distractions

- Choose a place that minimizes visual and auditory distractions.
- Ensure that your study area does not have the following: your cell phone, a loud stereo (some can effectively study with background noise, though loud volume may be a diversion), a TV, a friend who wants to talk a lot, a stocked refrigerator with too many goodies.

# Making the Grades: What Professors Look For in Your Papers

First, your professor will examine your work all by itself, and then look beyond it, seeking out comparative differences between your work and somebody else's. Paper X is fairly strong. Paper Y is somewhat weaker. Paper Z is clearly the best of the lot. Paper Z gets an A, Paper X a B, and Paper Y a C.

This is much easier said than done; professors may spend hefty chunks of time arriving at those distinctions. And what do such phrases as "weaker" and "fairly strong" really mean? They're judgment calls, arrived at in unique and highly personal ways.

Some professors look at grading as a positive thing. "Nice paragraph," they may mutter as they pore over an essay exam. "This was a key point...seemed to get the essence of the argument here...showed some understanding of this concept...fairly strong conclusion." Profs with this point of view tend to start the student out with zero, then award points for the admirable things they discover in the paper.

Other teachers take the opposite approach. They spot the student a full 100 points at the outset, then take away points for the faults they find. "This argument is only half-made...unpersuasive reasoning...lousy punctuation...three misspelled words in one paragraph!...the entire second page rambles...careless sense of organization...fairly weak conclusion." In each case, the grade on the paper may come out the same; it's just that the graders got there by different routes.

Beyond that, some teachers are favorably impressed or put off by some things more than others. Many professors are notorious pushovers for good writing. It doesn't seem to matter so much what you write, just as long as you write gracefully. Other professors are impressed when students correctly use technical terms that are a part of the vocabulary of the course; this suggests that they are immersing themselves in the subject matter. Still others place an unusually high premium on organization; students who carefully and emphatically outline their answers, listing and supporting key points one by one, invariably do well with these profs.

Shrewd students learn from what their professors say and write, and then prepare and present their work accordingly. Look for important clues early in the semester: The typical professor will assign a short paper or hour-long exam that seems important at the time but probably won't count for much in determining the final grade for the course. Carefully analyze the professor's comments on this paper and try to figure out what the professor's looking for.

*The Ultimate College Survival Guide*, by Janet Farrar Worthington and Ronald Farrar

## Why Try to Get Good Grades? All I Need Is That Piece of Paper

Some students enter college caring only about getting the diploma. They figure that grades don't really matter. All they have to do is pass their courses. For them, college is about killing time till they can dress up in their cap and gown and pick up their ticket to those high-paying jobs. Why worry about grades when you can become president of the USA (or candidate for president) with a gentleman's C?

Here's why. Nowadays there are more people out there with a piece of paper than ever before. Not to mention highly skilled workers in places like India to which jobs can be outsourced. So for plenty of employers, a college diploma isn't enough. They want to know your GPA. They want to know that you have good skills and work habits. They want to hire someone who stands out from the pack.

Just aiming for the diploma will take you out of the running for internships, merit-based scholarships, and honors that could dress up your resume. It will take you out of the running for many postgraduate educational opportunities. More important, you could end up with a diploma and no real skills or knowledge needed for the next step.

But most important, not aiming for good grades—and the success and achievement they reflect—can suck the life out of your college experience. You slog through the courses, never really trying, never really investing the effort that could actually be the enjoyment of taking all those courses. You never find your passion, you never engage in much of anything—for all you care about is the end, the piece of paper.

*How to Become a Straight-A Student*, by Cal Newport

## Criteria For Evaluations

Despite the differences in grading styles—and there are as many of these as there are professors—each teacher will most likely evaluate your work according to three broad criteria:

**Knowledge:** your familiarity with the material. In other words, are you spewing total B.S. that you hope sounds good, or can you back it up with an impressive array of relevant facts?

**Judgment:** your ability to separate the important from the unimportant. Can you cut to the chase? Can you grasp the main points and convey them? If your thinking is muddled, it will show.

**Skill:** your ability to present your arguments with clarity, polish, and conviction. This is an area where there may be some leeway, and you can pick up some points; students who can write well always have the advantage.

# Climb To Your Career In Four Years!

No matter where you stand on your future—decided or unsure—if you're planning to graduate in four years and find your spot in the work force, you should start taking steps now to reach your goals. It's never too early (or too late) to start, however the earlier you start, the easier it will be to prepare!

The first thing you should do is develop the habit of stopping by the career services office on a regular basis. You need to check in a few times during your freshman year, more often during your sophomore year, frequently during your junior year, and weekly during your senior year.

Here's a timeline to guide your progress:

## ... Every Fall

- Make an appointment to talk with a career services counselor to review your status in the career development process.
- Check your career center's web site for a calendar of dates and times of career development and job-search workshops and seminars, career and job fairs, and company information sessions.
- Update your resume and have it critiqued and proofread.
- Join professional associations and become an active member to build a network of colleagues in your field. Find a student version of your professional association and take leadership roles.
- Subscribe to and read professional journals in your chosen field.

## Freshman Year

### Asking Questions, Exploring Your Options (up to 30 hours)

- Schedule an appointment at the career services center to familiarize yourself with the services and resources available.
- Take interest and career inventory tests at the career services office.
- Start a career information file or notebook that will include records of your career development and job-search activities for the next four years.
- Identify at least four skills employers want and plan how you will acquire these skills before graduation.
- Scan the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, a book filled with information on hundreds of occupations. Find a copy of *Job Choices* in your career services office and leaf through other career-search books in the career library.
- Familiarize yourself with your college's career center home page and with [www.JobWeb.com](http://www.JobWeb.com). Both will be excellent sources of tips and full-length articles to help you with your job search.
- Take a resume writing class and explore other career planning workshops. Write your first resume.

- Attend on-campus career and job fairs to gather information on potential careers and employers.
- Explore your interests, abilities, and skills through required academics.
- Talk to faculty, alumni, advisers, and career counselors about possible majors and careers.
- Join university organizations that will offer you leadership roles in the future.
- Collect information on cooperative education programs, internships, and summer jobs that are available through the career services office.
- Consider volunteer positions to help build your resume.
- If you're working on your associate's degree and plan to transfer to a four-year school, research schools that specialize in your major. The career services office often has information on potential places to go.

- Adapted from [www.jobweb.com](http://www.jobweb.com)

## Qualities/Skills

### Employers Look for in New Hires

1. Communication skills (verbal & written)
2. Honesty/integrity
3. Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
4. Motivation/initiative
5. Strong work ethic
6. Teamwork skills (works well with others)
7. Analytical skills
8. Flexibility/adaptability
9. Computer skills
10. Detail-oriented
11. Leadership skills
12. Organizational skills
13. Self-confidence
14. Friendly/outgoing personality
15. Tactfulness
16. Well mannered/polite
17. Creativity
18. GPA (3.0 or better)
19. Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker
20. Sense of humor

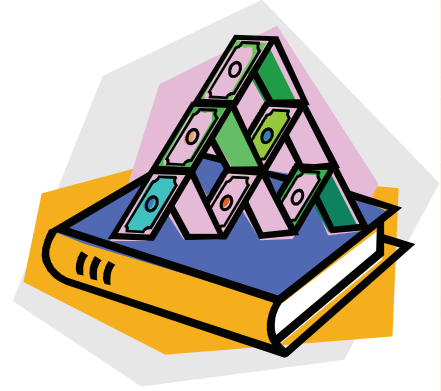


- [www.jobweb.com](http://www.jobweb.com)

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Medium Difficulty

For more fun, check out the optical illusions, games, puzzles and paradoxes at [www.michaelbach.de/ot/](http://www.michaelbach.de/ot/) and [www.curiouser.co.uk/](http://www.curiouser.co.uk/)



**House of Cards**

An inexpensive pastime for study breaks might be building a house of cards. Try it and you'll understand how "house of cards" came to be an expression for a structure or argument built on a shaky foundation. For some amazing photos of actual structures that have been built of cards, check out [www.cardstacker.com](http://www.cardstacker.com).

**Memo From Marilyn**

**Remember**, this is **your** newsletter, and your input is welcome! Please let us know what features and articles you find most useful. If you'd like to see a particular topic addressed or have a suggestion for a "Study Break" activity, send me an e-mail. Or better yet, submit an article! Do we have any cartoonists out there? I'd love to include a bit of humor—this might be your chance to be published! You can reach me at [Marilyn@questctr.com](mailto:Marilyn@questctr.com).



**Alumni Visits**

Meet with QFK seniors preparing to enter college! These students could benefit from your advice and experience. They would love to hear about how you dealt with "the roommate from hell" as well as what everyday life is like at college. Please come and share your helpful tips and "words of wisdom" at **3:00 p.m. on December 15th or 16th**. Many of your fellow Quest graduates participate in this event every year, so this is a great opportunity for you to reconnect with your fellow Quest Alumni.

Please contact Quest and let us know which day you are planning to attend.



**Quest 2010 Speaker Series**

February 5, 2010 ♦ February 26, 2010 ♦ March 12, 2010

Held at The Ritz-Carlton, Naples, the dinner/lecture series begins promptly at 6:00 p.m. Net proceeds raised from this event are used to fund the administration of the Quest For Kids program and purchase Quest college scholarships. If you are interested in attending one of the events, please contact Quest.

To learn more about the series, past speakers and who will be speaking in 2010, visit the Quest website at:

[www.questeducationalfoundation.org](http://www.questeducationalfoundation.org)