

# SURVIVING COLLEGE

## How to make your college experience the best it can be

**Surviving College: Dorm Life**  
By Karly Guldán

In the midst of being accepted to colleges, registering for classes, and the excitement of the thought of being independent from their parents, students must realize the importance of planning for their living arrangements while away at school.

While students are packing and trying to bring pieces of their homes with them, they sometimes plan on having more room than is available.

Johnna Slocum, Guidance Counselor at ACHS, said, "I think some students bring more than they need. They don't realize how small the dorm room actually is."

Students should tour the campus of the colleges they are interested in, and get a feel for the size of the dorm rooms. Remember, the size of the room will be cut in half if they share it with a roommate.

When it comes to a roommate, "You never know what you're going to get. It may be a good idea to look for a school with a good screening process so the roommates are selected based on interviews and/or information about each person," Slocum said.

Colleges with a thorough screening process will be able to pair the students with more success.

"A common misconception about roommates is students expect their roommates to be their best friend. They need to form a working relationship first," said Jane Abramson, ACHS Guidance Counselor. According to Abramson, students should establish an open line of communication with their roommate from the start.

Abramson said, "College is where you can learn about how other people live. This can be exciting, but it can also be frustrating."

Speaking with the Housing Department of the college can offer information on what to bring, such as if the school provides linens or not, and what else students can and cannot bring with them to that school.

"It is important to read all of the information [about dorm rooms] to see if you need to buy rugs, loft beds, bring a microwave, buy linens, bring towels, and bring pillows. Most schools provide a desk and chair, but students need to make sure, and not just assume the school they are going to provides such things," said Abramson.

Abramson also said an important thing for students to do is talk to their roommates when they receive their room assignments, and negotiate who is bringing what, so as to not duplicate items and waste space.

An item students tend to not think of are power strips. Amber Carter, foreign language teacher, said, "Extension cords and power strips are a must-have."

Abramson added that talking with current students at the college will provide a new perspective on what is needed at the college.

Students also need to plan for the environment they will be living in, because it might be completely different than what they are used to or expecting. By speaking with current students, one can also find out things that help and hinder dorm life.

**COLLEGE**  
Helpful Tips For Incoming Freshmen  
By Shanna Casey



**Being Away From Home**

For most incoming college freshmen, college means one thing—freedom.

"For the first time, students are out of sight and out of mind from their parents," said Johnna Slocum, Antioch Community High School guidance counselor. "They want to let loose and have a good time." According to Slocum, without their parents looking over their shoulders, many freshmen let their newfound freedom take over, not feeling as much pressure to go to their classes or do their homework.

For many of these students, reality hits hard when the semester ends, because while most colleges don't require you to go to class, the classes tend to be a lot more challenging and therefore harder to keep up with.

On the other hand, another common experience linked to being away from home is homesickness. Some students have never really been away from home or their families for significant lengths of time before, so dorm life proves to be a shock for them.

If you experience homesickness, there are different people on campus that you can talk to. Each student is usually assigned to a counselor, and that person can be instrumental in helping freshmen through their first few months of college.

Also, in the dorm there is usually a resident assistant (RA) on every floor according to Amanda Bartz, freshman at St. Joseph's College in Indiana and former ACHS student. RAs are usually upper-classmen who are there to help the other people on the floor and can be a source of support if you're feeling homesick.

**Getting Involved**

Another great cure for homesickness is getting involved on campus and meeting new people.

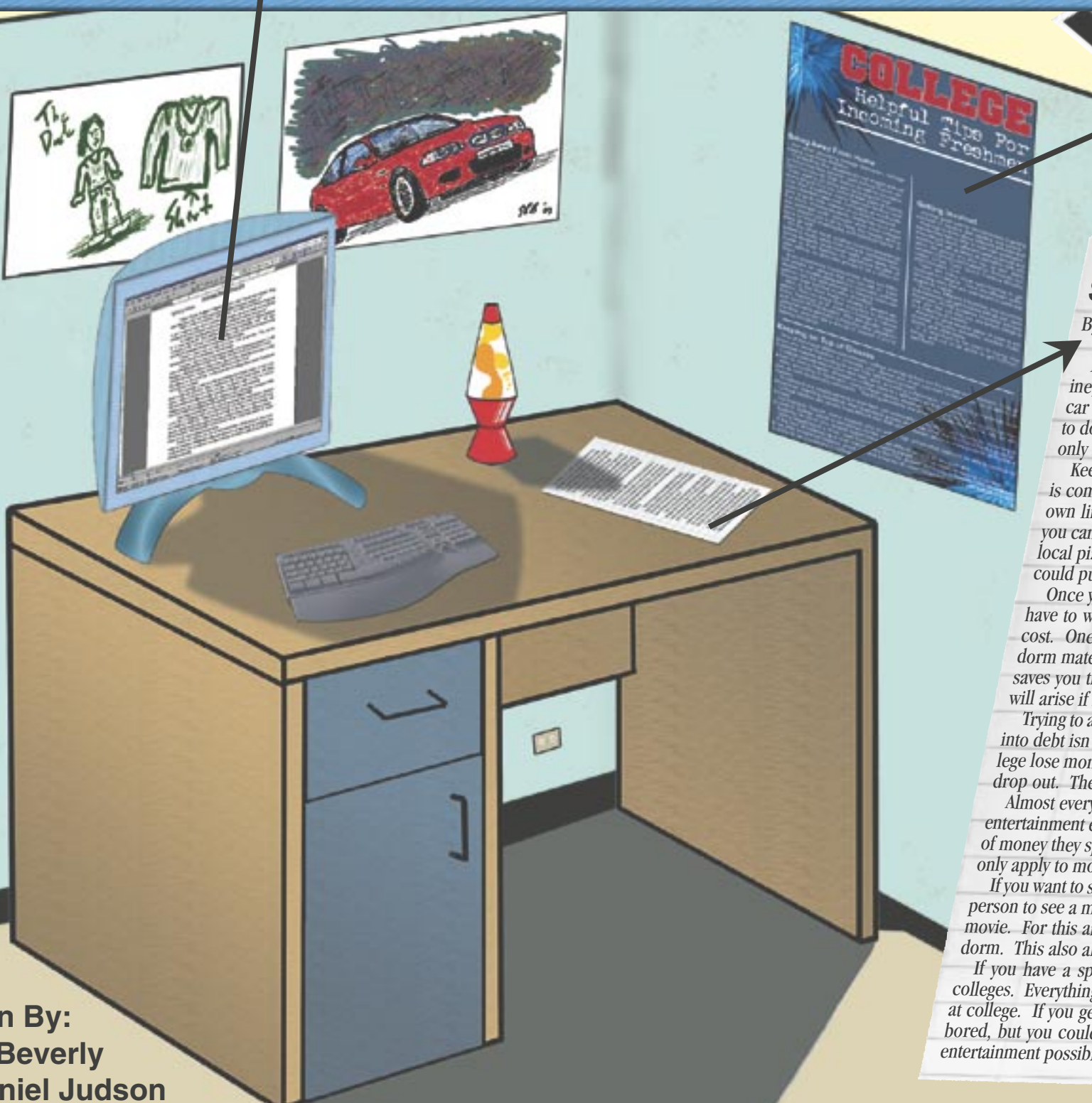
One way to learn about different activities that the campus has to offer is freshman orientation. According to Bartz, different campus groups and activities will set up tables at orientation with info about the groups and also sign up lists. Bartz became involved with Habitat for Humanity, Volunteer Corps, Color Guard, Campus Ministry, and Education Club.

There are many more opportunities to get involved on campus. There are different clubs, including ones that are specialized to particular academic majors.

There are different fraternities and sororities that freshmen can get involved with as well. Jane Abramson, ACHS guidance counselor advises that "you find out who you are before pledging to a fraternity or sorority."

Abramson gave several ideas of ways to get involved, including recreation facilities, clubs, dorms, and intramurals.

"It is important to be open to trying new things, and not to be afraid to get involved," said Bartz.



**Surviving College: Spending Habits**  
By Craig Maniscalco

*If you don't keep your eye on what you spend, you'll be paying a heavy price. Imagine, still trying to pay off your college tuition debts 20 years after you graduate. After car payments, house payments, insurance, and utilities, you won't have any money to do what you truly enjoy. Though it may sound like a lot, getting out of college with only a few thousand dollars left to pay off is coming out ahead of the game.*

*Keeping on top of your budget in college requires knowing two things, how much is coming in, and how much is going out. Every college student should know their own limits, and stay within them. On one hand, if you are really on top of things, you can end up having extra money each month to put into savings or your tab at the local pizza joint, but if you fall behind, you may have to take out extra loans, which could put a large financial burden on you after college.*

*Once you've made your budget, and you see how much or possibly how little you have to work with, you will need to find away to satisfy your social needs at a low cost. One way to decrease your initial cost of coming to college is to contact your dorm mate before school starts and discuss who will bring what to the room. This saves you the problems that can arise from bringing two TV's and the expense that will arise if no one brings one.*

*Trying to avoid going into debt is not something that needs to be done alone. Going into debt isn't only bad for you; it is also bad for the college. Not only does the college lose money as it loses students, but it also gets a reputation for having students drop out. The college is there to help you succeed.*

*Almost every college not only has services to help you get a job, but also has free entertainment events you can take advantage of. Every college has a certain amount of money they spend to make sure that they can keep you entertained. This doesn't only apply to movies, but usually extends to live performances.*

*If you want to save the expense of going out, and paying upwards of five dollars per person to see a movie, stay in. It costs anywhere from one to three dollars to rent a movie. For this amount, you can entertain as many people as you can fit into your dorm. This also allows you to avoid those enormous movie theatre candy prices.*

*If you have a special interest, there are also groups and clubs galore at most colleges. Everything from Japanese animation clubs to zoology clubs can be found at college. If you get in one, not only will you have something to do when you are bored, but you could be helping out the campus or even gaining access to larger entertainment possibilities.*

**Keeping on Top of Classes**

One of the major differences between college and high school are the classes and schedules. College gives you more freedom in choosing your classes and when you want to have them, so students can schedule classes according to when they feel they'd do best.

College classes also involve less busy work, according to Abramson. In high school you probably have a test on every chapter, whereas in college there is a test every several chapters.

Also, according to Abramson, many college classes, especially at bigger schools, are taught by professors as well as teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are usually graduate students that help out with classes.

"Professors are usually experts in their field, not necessarily in education," said Abramson. According to Abramson, teaching assistants often lead study groups and break down the information for the students.

College classes are usually more difficult than high school classes, which is where students tend to have trouble.

According to Slocum, many students who do well in high school often expect to be able to continue to do well in college, which is sometimes not the case.

Keeping on top of your studies doesn't have to be difficult, as long as you work at it.

"Being organized is a must," said Slocum. Keeping a planner can be helpful in staying organized.

A big part of keeping up is time management from the student, according to Slocum. The student has to be able to balance classes, social life, and a myriad of other things that can be a drain on a student's time in order to be successful in college.