

TO PARENTS

There are plenty of books on how to help your child gain admission to college. I have no intentions of repeating all of their advice. Instead, I would like to throw out a few thoughts based on 37 years as a professor.

The challenge in being a first generation student is not that you do not have all the answers. It is about learning all of the questions. I was a first generation college student, a first generation graduate student, and a first generation professor. I made every mistake in the book and actually kept track of them. I know most of these questions, but am constantly learning from the first generation students I advise.

I understand that you wish you could provide all of the advice your son or daughter need as they head off to college. I also understand that it is frustrating – or painful – to not be able to do so.

Things that are ‘Ok’ that you should **NOT** worry about –

- It is ‘Ok’ for a student to change majors. No big deal. None of us knew exactly what we were going to do when we were 18. It is a sign of wisdom to change paths when it makes sense to do so.
- If you student is not able to decide on a major, have them watch my video on ‘The Undecided Major’ and then have them get in touch with me through this website. (Hint: Think about the kind of life you want and plan in reverse.)
- It is not the end of the world if your student needs to drop a course. Again, it can be a sign of wisdom. It is always better to do less and do it WELL than to do too much and just get by. Take a look at my video on ‘How to Succeed in College in the First Three Weeks (of each Semester)’. It is not just as a freshman that you have to get your act together. You have to do it at the beginning of each semester.
- My mother always said a C grade meant you were average and average was fine, but there is a lot of competition for jobs out there. So when your child gets a C, have them contact me through this website. The student needs to know if they know ‘why’ they received a C grade and what they can do differently next semester to avoid it.

The three most common problems students have –

- 1) Avoiding professors
- 2) Using the first exam to ‘determine’ if they are studying correctly.
- 3) Thinking they can explain a C grade when they need to avoid it.