**Top 10 Differences Between High School and College**

1. Nobody monitors your attendance.

In high school every teacher takes attendance and an automatic message is sent to your parent or guardian’s phone notifying them of your absence. In college, you are responsible for your own attendance. The professors will rarely comment on your absence because it is not their responsibility to monitor your attendance. However, attending class is crucial in order to get a good grade.

1. Nobody monitors your grades.

In high school their might be a designated drop-out prevention specialist or your teachers may comment on your grades and try to help you out. But in college, it is your responsibility to monitor your grades and seek assistance. I knew I was not a good writer, during my first semester I lost points on every paper so I sought extra help by going to tutoring and going to the writing center. Use college resources when you know your grades are low if you need extra help. Typically, professors will not urge you to use tutoring services, this is up to you.

1. If you cheat or plagiarize you will FAIL.

Although the biggest warning in any academic setting is not to cheat, some students in high school or starting college still try to cheat. In high school the punishment may not be as harsh as it is in college. You will FAIL. People FAIL courses and are unable to earn a degree because of cheating or plagiarism, this is a SERIOUS offense in college. Just try your best.

1. If you don’t prioritize your school work, no one else will do it for you.

Typically, freshman year is the year students adjust to living on their own. Some people indulge in partying and making new friends over taking the time to study and create a strong GPA to maintain throughout their college career. It is easier to ruin your GPA than it is to bring your GPA up. Creating a 3.5 or better GPA during freshman year is crucial to stay competitive for graduate school. I never heard someone say, “Hey guys we should stop hanging out and do our school work” or “hey, did you finish studying for your exam? You should study some more before we party tonight”. It is crucial to prioritize school work before friends and leisure activities because no one else will do it for you.

1. Nobody monitors your dating life.

Relationships may not be as intense in high school. But in college, it is easy to get distracted by the desire to have relationships. But if you end up in a bad relationship, it can easily take over your whole life. If you are having challenges go to counseling services on campus (it is free and no one will judge you), be honest with loved ones who call to make sure you are doing okay in college, and be honest with yourself. If you are in a bad relationship, the classes in college are too big for professors to notice a change in you. Seek help.

1. Underage drinking is even more dangerous than ever.

Underage drinking is DANGEROUS period. But underage drinking in college is especially dangerous because typically a college student lives alone, you may be counting on peers who are drunk themselves to take care of you, people with not so great intentions may be lurking around you… Stay alert, don’t drink excessively, and stay safe.

1. Living arrangements.

In a perfect world, everyone will get along with their roommates all of the time and never get into any disagreements. However, it is important to have open discussions with roommates if there are any issues. Living in a stressful environment is not ideal, be open and honest with roommates if any issues arise and work together to create solutions to problems.

1. Be proactive about less than great grades.

Making a C, D, or F for a grade can be discouraging. It can damper morale and be embarrassing, but don’t blame your professor figure out what you need to change to make a better grade. It may be embarrassing but speak with your professor and ask for more resources, use the tutoring center on campus, and keep trying.

1. Use summer school to your advantage.

Summer school seemed like a punishment in high school, but summer school can really help in college. There are two major perks to taking summer school courses. The first perk is that you can take less courses during the school year so you can have more time to focus on the most difficult courses during your junior and senior year. The second perk is that you can look at what is offered and take a harder course during a summer session which will only work if you are strongly motivated. I was not good in chemistry, so I opted to take it over the summer so that I can just focus on chemistry and nothing else for a few weeks and I did well. Summer courses are more difficult, it is a lot of work in a short period of time but if you can focus there are perks to taking summer courses.

1. Group Work.

In high school, the participation of every group member is monitored, not participating may mean a bad grade for that group member and a possible exemption from that portion of the assignment. In college, if a group member slacks off the work still needs to be done. That group member may not get a good grade, but their portion of the work must be done. It is important to know everyone’s part in case someone does not attend class during the day of the presentation, it is important to collaborate with others and not try to outshine each other because the presentation will fall apart, and it is important to network! Most of your classmates will graduate and become young professionals. Be the group member you would want to work with and possibly network with as a professional.