Wishing you a very joyful Christmas and holiday season despite these difficult times. We really wish things were different and that we could visit you more! We hope that the New Year brings your family much happiness and prosperity, and that in time the world will be a safe place again. Take care of yourselves and see you on Zoom soon!
We will start back to recruiting with the new 21-22 upcoming school year that is right around the corner…

Here is the link to apply for Upward Bound online—share with your friends & family and help to reach everyone in your school!

If you need a hard copy email Geri at gnauck@concord.edu

https://botform.comansol.com/20225108960852
December is the 12th month (and last month) in our modern-day Gregorian calendar (as it was in the preceding Julian calendar). However, it was originally the 10th month of the Roman calendar (until 153 BC). Hence, "December" comes from the Latin word decem, meaning "ten." Back in Roman times, the calendar only had ten months and began with March!

CANDY CANE
WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

BREAK CANDY CANES CONFECTION CORN SYRUP DECORATION FLAVOR HARD HOOK LARGE MINI PEPPERMINT PULL RED SEASONAL STICKY STRIPES SUGAR SWEET TREAT TWIST WHITE WINTERGREEN WRAPPED YUMMY

WHOSNEERGRETNIWHBCUPURYSNROCCEDPKIWCAYRKEDGHEDERHSLAVLHZSHSWGROCKPOTLCJUCOGROOPARHTEEWSASOSK
tmspirtskslayeriisdzvodenmpbonhardoinzrinintgboptactyummypsopdslwrappeddj

The words appear UP, DOWN, BACKWARDS, and DIAGONALLY. Find and circle each word.

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One study suggests that 89 percent of low-income first generation college students leave college within 6 years without a degree. There are several factors that contribute to these statistics, but the most important thing is to not let that scare you from pursuing your collegiate dreams. The absolute last thing first-gen students should do is set aside their dreams and give up on college altogether. There’s a whole world out there to explore and it begins with earning a college degree! That’s why we asked several successful first-gen college graduates and collegiate support staff to give us their best advice on surviving and thriving in college.

9 tips for first-generation college students

1. Seek academic support resources early on

One of the biggest struggles first-gen students encounter in college is the lack of a family support system that has experience with the hurdles they’re facing. In the midst of an increased college course load, it can be easy to become overwhelmed. This can become particularly stressful if you feel like you have nowhere to turn for relief.

“Take time and go to tutoring if you are having trouble,” says first-gen graduate Tyler Yost. “If you’re [stuck] on a single concept, go to your professor’s office hours. They don’t like sitting in their office alone and you could also learn a lot while you’re in there.”

If you’re even the slightest bit worried about being behind your peers academically, seek assistance as soon as possible! Most campuses have a variety of tutoring and support services in addition to the office hours instructors keep that will help get you up to speed. There’s no shame in asking for help.

2. Find highly-motivated students to partner with

It’s mind-boggling when you consider the time and financial commitments of pursuing a degree, but not all students in college are going to be enthusiastic learners. “There will inevitably be group projects, and it’s up to you to find those who will actually work hard and you’ll learn from in the process,” Yost says.

Seek out group and study partners who seem to genuinely care; they’ll push you to learn more and make the most of your time. Yost says his strategy was to seek out military veterans, other first-gen students and students whose families live overseas — noting that many are very driven to earn a degree.

3. Embrace who you are

You don’t have to come from a long line of doctors and lawyers to fit in or provide valuable perspective in the college classroom. “The classroom environment can be intimidating,” says first-gen graduate Natasha Payes. “But your perspective matters. Speak up and sit in the front row.”

Academic discussions in college are supposed to expose students to new points of view. You’re smart enough to make it this far; don’t let false notions or misconceptions about not belonging hinder your learning experience. If you put yourself out there and really engage with the course content, you’ll undoubtedly walk away having learned more than if you stayed quiet in the back row.
4. Be proactive about financial assistance

While there are a variety of different scholarship opportunities available each year to students, don’t expect them to just fall into your lap. It might not be the most exciting activity, but dedicating time to your scholarship search can really pay off in the end! First-gen graduate Jessica Mehta recommends starting local — check with the school you’ll be attending, places of worship and civic groups for scholarship opportunities. Once you’ve exhausted your nearby options, scour the internet. There are a number of credible scholarship websites that can help you in your search.

Mehta recommends using Scholly, an app that aggregates scholarship opportunities and has strong filtering options to weed out the irrelevant.

But staying on top of the scholarship search isn’t the only thing you should be doing to maintain financial stability throughout your collegiate journey. It is important to keep meticulous track of any loan debt you’re accruing while in school. If this isn’t something your family support system can help you with, look into the resources available at your school — many institutions offer financial literacy programs to help instill a sense of financial confidence within their students.

5. Get involved!

“I would encourage first-gen students to find a way to create a home away from home at college,” says first-gen graduate Chanté Griffin. “I made it a point to get involved in clubs on campus.”

Want to know the quickest way to feel like you belong? Join a club! Whether you’re joining a ballroom dance team like Griffin or associating with a student political organization, you’ll instantly have common ground with other members and may just earn lifelong friends.

If you’re not sure where to start, most colleges will have a list of student organizations and clubs — find a few that sound interesting and inquire. Most groups would love to have someone excited to get involved, so don’t be shy!

6. Don’t overload yourself

If you’re planning on working a job while attending school, be cautious and don’t over-commit. Let your employer know your situation; if you’re working full-time and can afford it, see if a temporary shift to part-time work can be accommodated.

A common mistake is to not consider the time you’ll need outside of the classroom to complete your work. You might have a class that only meets once per week, but the out-of-classroom workload will be similar to classes that meet more frequently. Plan for a heavy load and adjust as necessary.
7. Take (smart) chances

“Want to startup a business selling neon t-shirts to clubs? Start it. Want to play the mandolin. Find a group and try it,” Yost says. “You won’t have as much time to test things out in such a low-risk environment ever again.”

This is an opportunity to go out on a limb and try something new that has always intrigued you. If it doesn’t work out, you’re in an environment that allows you to move onto the next thing that interests you with relative ease. As much as the college environment is about educating you to be successful when you enter the workforce, it’s also a fundamental time in your life to truly find yourself and discover new interests.

Embrace the freedom and explore something new — you may stumble across a hobby or future career path that you’ll hang onto for the rest of your life!

8. Build your support system

If your family is unfamiliar with navigating the challenges of college, who do you turn to for support? This ties into getting involved and seeking out academic help as both provide a great pool of peers and mentors who may be able to help. Many colleges have support services in place specifically to support and motivate students who may encounter struggles along their journey toward a degree.

That said, don’t rule out the ability of your family to assist you — mom and dad might not be calculus experts, but they do know you well enough to listen if you need to vent. Besides, they probably miss you!

9. Don’t doubt yourself

“I was scared. I didn’t know what to expect. I just knew that college would be harder than high school, and I was deathly afraid that I would flunk out,” Griffin says.

Here’s a little secret: The quote above could be attributed to practically any student heading into college for the first time. Some might hide it better than others, but there’s always going to be a bit of nervousness and doubt when you’re taking a big step in life. Don’t let it get the best of you — find confidence in how hard you’ve worked to reach this point and know that your family is proud of you and your ambition.