

## Life Lessons

Upperclassmen share hard-earned knowledge with freshmen

Story by Brian Fleming • Photo Illustration By Cody Wages, Mark McPherson and Robert Hynecek

College is a time of newfound freedom. But freedom can be cruel and its lessons are often learned the hard way. When students strike out on their own they often leave their common sense at home with their curfews.

Donald Bassham, a senior political science major, said his first weeks of college were filled with fun.

"It seemed like a perfect utopia of friends, fun and the lack of parental guidance," Bassham said. "I lived in the dorms, and after a while, it seemed so easy to stay out late and even easier to find someone willing to party at any hour. Needless to say, I also discovered it was pretty hard to do what I came here for — go to class."

Bassham said having too much fun sometimes comes with regrets.

"Looking back now I really regret [having too much fun]," Bassham said. "I mean, at the time, it seemed like I could not have enough fun, but it is pretty obvious that fun does not always have to happen on a Tuesday."

However, Bassham said his largest regret was one shared with many students; putting himself in a position to have to deal with Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services.

"Watch out for those guys," Bassham said. "They're serious. I think that at one point I had something like 14 parking tickets."

Bassham said one of the best lessons he learned was to make new friends as early as is possible.

"I met some of the greatest people my freshman year," Bassham said. "That was so important to me. If I could go back, I would

try to meet even more. I have always been a big believer that you can never have too many friends."

Poor academic performance is a common regret for most former freshmen.

Leslie Eschbach, a senior psychology major, said poor study habits have a high price.

"I know I have a lot of regrets about my first-year classes and I know that my biggest regret is my study habits," Eschbach said. "I remember people always used to tell me not to study in a distracting environment, for example. In high school I could study in front of the TV or when I was with my friends. That is not really the case in college. The classes are harder and there is much more to remember for each exam."

Eschbach said learning to study is college's difficult lesson.

"I remember for my first exam I watched some movie and went out to dinner with my friends," Eschbach said. "Needless to say, I did really bad. Eventually, I figured it might be better for me to study at the library and it worked."

J.W. Irving, a senior electrical engineering major, said when it comes to college, the old story about learning twice as much in half the time is true.

"Classes were so much easier in high school," Irving said. "I think that is what gets most freshmen. For example, you take a lot of the same classes your freshman year as you did in high school and since the material is still kind of familiar, people tend to slack off. I know I did."

Irving said the most important habit for freshmen to get into is organization.

"I wish I had kept a planner or something," Irving said. "One thing I will never forget was walking into a Physics 218 test with out knowing I had it. The only thing I can really say about that was that it was not good."

On academics, Bassham said there are other, less obvious solutions to those overwhelming situations.

"Community college is always your friend," Bassham said. "Never feel like it is a lost cause because it might just not be. Of course, I didn't figure that out until about last year."

Many upperclassmen want to share some common lessons for incoming freshmen: drink less, get involved and, as Eschbach said, call home more.

"I would definitely say that it is important to talk to your parents," Eschbach said. "I used to always forget to call at first, but eventually I began to do it more."

"That is important because for me, when I felt overwhelmed or lonely, it would always make me feel better to know someone loved me and was proud of me, regardless of anything."

Bassham said the most important thing for freshmen to remember is to relax, have fun and enjoy yourself.

"There are so many people that graduate with 4.0's that never really had any fun," Bassham said.

"Really, I guess it is all about just trying to find some kind of happy medium between work and play. One thing I know I will never forget, though, is something I read my freshman year: 'It's not the years in your life, it's the life in your years.'"

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