

UW student offers advice for future college freshmen

Editor's Note: Maggie Capwell was the Vox's copy chief last year and just finished her freshman year at the University of Washington.



MAGGIE CAPWELL
University of Washington

Graduating seniors: Congratulations! You are near to completing the not-insignificant accomplishment of graduating from high school. And, if you're anything like me, you are starting to worry about college.

College is a big change from high school, without a doubt. It's a complete environment shift scholastically, mentally and physically too, if you're escaping good ol' Spokane.

Did I say escaping? I meant leaving. If you plan on living in the dorms, or their equivalent at your school of choice, I again congratulate you. Living on campus for at least part of your college career is a fantastic way to meet diverse people and get connected with your university community.

It's not just about living on campus, though. It's about living somewhere other than your parents' house. Don't get me wrong, living with your parents while going to college is fine, and a sound economical choice. However, college is most likely your first opportunity to venture forth into the untamed wilds of living on your own, and exploring all that is oncoming adulthood.

With that said, here are some fundamental do's and don'ts for your first year at college, bullet-style:

Do:

- Bring earplugs if you're living in the dorms.
- Bring a mini fridge if possible, and a supply of dorm-appropriate (i.e. microwavable and/or non-perishable) food.
- Make a sincere attempt to eat healthily. Your parents are not watching over your shoulder making sure you eat your vegetables anymore, but a balanced diet is key to keeping your body running properly. So eat those vegetables.
- Sleep. Making all-nighters a weekly ritual is a bad idea. Sleep is another one of those things that helps your body function at its peak.
- Bring a bathrobe that you don't mind being seen in for the journey between your room and the bathroom.
- Expect to have more homework than you had in high school. Expect also to be held accountable for homework even if it is not a graded assignment and will have no impact on your overall grade.
- Develop a budget and stick to it. Most college students regretfully suffer from lack of income. Therefore, not overspending is important to keeping your sanity and your credit score intact.
- Learn to use your campus resources, particularly the libraries. They can be intimidating at first, but there are these people called librarians who have no problem helping you find what you need.
- Personalize your space. Cover the walls in posters, pictures, bumper stickers or with whatever makes you happy. An impersonal dorm room is a depressing place to live.
- Get a printer, if possible. Printing in the libraries or with someone else's printer is a hassle, and often library printing costs money, as does copying.
- Bring clothes appropriate to the climate of your school. For example, a high quality raincoat for Seattle is a great investment.
- Bring a surge protector to plug all of your electronics into, and a fan for when your room gets too stuffy.
- Use an academic planner to keep track of homework assignments and due dates, and test dates.
- Call your parents once in a while. They miss you.

Don't:

- Procrastinate on large assignments or on studying for tests. You will hate yourself for it when you're still awake at 4:30 a.m. finishing that paper you had three weeks to complete. We all know that AP stands for Advanced Procrastination, but it's time to break the habit.
- Plagiarize. Ever. Under any circumstances. Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously in college, and it's a good way to get kicked out quickly. Cite your references properly.
- Download music or movies illegally over the school's Internet network. It's easily tracked, and administrators don't like it. Not to mention illegal.
- Have parties in your room or keep alcohol there. Most dorms are dry, and you can get into big trouble if you're caught with alcohol or drugs.
- Have unsafe sex. It's easy enough to use protection, and cuts down on the risk of STDs and pregnancy.
- Walk around by yourself at night. Regardless of whether your school is large or small, rural or urban, it can still be unsafe at night, especially for women walking alone.
- Leave your laptop or anything else valuable sitting by itself in an insecure place, like the library, even just for a minute. Theft is a common problem in places like libraries on college campuses.
- Be afraid to tell the guy next door to you who is playing loud music when you're trying to sleep to shut up. I just did it; it's not that hard.
- Expect everyone to be just like you. Not everyone will agree with your point of view, not everyone will have come from the same cultural background as you. Respect differences of opinion, get out and try new things, and experience new cultures.

Those are the basics, from my experience, except one final piece of advice. I saved the best for last.

My most important advice to you, incoming college freshmen, is to get involved. Find your niche. Join a club, play an intramural sport, join the student government, participate in dorm programs, go to concerts, make friends.

It's easy to get lost in the crowd, regardless of whether you are going to a school of 40,000 students, or a school of 4,000 students. Finding a group of people who share your interests is a ready-made support system, and can help give you things to do and people to hang out with when you need a study break.

Becoming part of a community within your school, any community, is what makes college a great experience. When you look back on your years in high school, which of your memories will be the most fond? Will you remember studying for that one huge final junior year, or will you remember the time you were in the musical, or the time your sports team went to the state tournament?

It's the same with college. Focusing on school is important, but being well-rounded and doing things other than school are important, too. So branch out, experience new things, get involved, and have a blast during your years at college.

Traveling is a rewarding, enlightening experience

CORRINE SCHMIDT
Staff Reporter
FERRIS

To some, summer is a chance to relax in the sun and take a break from a year of hard work at school. To others, summer is a chance to work longer hours than they would be able to during the school year, allowing them to make some extra money. To a more enterprising few, however, summer is a chance to experience another culture by traveling to another country.

Rachelle Grossman, a senior at Lewis and Clark High School, is one such student. Beginning June 20, Grossman will spend four weeks in the Northwest region of Ecuador where she will be staying with a native family.

She met members of the family through a leadership exchange program and has been invited to stay with them in order to better understand their culture.

This is not the only traveling experience Grossman has had. In the past, she has also visited Israel and Hungary as part of an international youth program.

"It was fun," Grossman said of both experiences. "I really appreciate the sense of universal elements of whatever connected us as young people even though we were so culturally different."

Claire Dionne, a sophomore at Ferris High School, is another student who plans to travel during the summer.

From July 16 through August 7, she will be visiting Tenerife, in the Canary Islands,

Spain, as part of a program called Short Term Ministries, put on through the Faith Bible Church.

Last summer, Claire's family was part of the same team which helped to establish the first church branch in Tenerife based off of both Faith Bible Church and a church in Caracas, Venezuela.

Called "Iglesia Cristiana Fuente de Paz y Esperanza," this church branch's name means "Christian Church Fountain of Peace and Hope."

"It was an amazing experience because I was able to both learn to speak Spanish and learn the culture there. I was completely out of my comfort zone the entire time but when I looked back, it was a summer that changed me forever," Dionne said of her experience last year.

"I grew to love [the language of] Spanish and love people I had never met and be alright with being in the dark. Besides that, it was the most beautiful place I have ever seen," she said.

While traveling can be a rewarding and cultural experience, there are some preparations that need to be taken for such a big trip. Besides the cost of airfare, hotel stays (if the traveler is not staying with a host family) and any additional costs as far as sight seeing goes, travelers must also take into consideration any vaccinations they might need to get, as well as paperwork that must be filled out.

There are also cultural aspects to keep in mind. Grossman's friend in Ecuador, for example, told her to plan clothes for the stay

that did not show too much of her body. The women there dress more modestly than they might elsewhere, and she was told not to bring tank tops or shorts.

For some parents, there is also extra concern for their teen's safety when going to another country on their own.

While Dionne was able to travel with her parents last year, she will be making the trip without them this year because her brother is going to college and her parents want to be able to be with him through the transition.

"My parents are excited for me to get to go again, yet they are very worried, both for me being alone and the travel being dangerous and me being lost," Dionne said.

Still, both girls recommend that students give traveling a try.

"It always amazes me when I think about it that while we're learning in Spokane, people around the world are doing other things. [When you travel] you get to see how people are living and it's amazing," Grossman said. "It is the best way to learn about other people as well as yourself."

"[Traveling] gave me a bigger picture of the world outside of the U.S. because before, I guess I lived in a world where the U.S. was the only place where people really 'lived' but this in fact is not the truth," Dionne said. "People outside our country are really amazing, both culturally and politically, and socially, and so many other ways. So in short, yes! Go overseas. You will never be the same!"

Habitat: continued from page 1

The success of this intense building session is made possible by the large numbers of volunteers who are willing to work through the night, and the many donations from sponsors.

Despite the surge in the number of volunteers during "Blitz Build," volunteer participation with Habitat for Humanity generally drops in the summer, as many people are out of town or have summer jobs.

Also, many of the school groups, such as the "Knights of the Leash" group at Gonzaga Prep, do not meet during the summer. However, many youth groups around the area find time to help in the building process.

This summer, Westfield looks forward to volunteering with Habitat for Humanity whenever he has the chance. He encourages others to take the time to help those in need.

"[Habitat] is a great experience as you can have fun with your friends, serve your community, as well as gather valuable construction skills," he said.

At Habitat, "the construction staff is friendly and always willing to assist and teach," Westfield said. "There is no separation between adults and teenagers, only between experience levels and those who have the willingness to take on new challenges."

The Vox currently seeking new staff members

The Vox is currently seeking high school students interested in journalism to join its staff for the 2008-2009 school year. Applications are now being accepted for staff positions. Any high school-age student in Spokane County or North Idaho may apply.

Prior journalism experience is not required. We are seeking students interested in writing news, sports, opinion and entertainment pieces. We are also looking for photographers, page designers and graphic artists, along with a political cartoonist. Additionally, we are seeking bloggers for the coming year. Students chosen will

work with Spokesman-Review staffers.

Academic credit opportunities are available through Spokane Virtual Learning for students selected for staff, as well as volunteer hours with AmeriCorps.

Students selected will be required to complete training in July and will need to attend staff meetings during the school year at the downtown Spokesman-Review office.

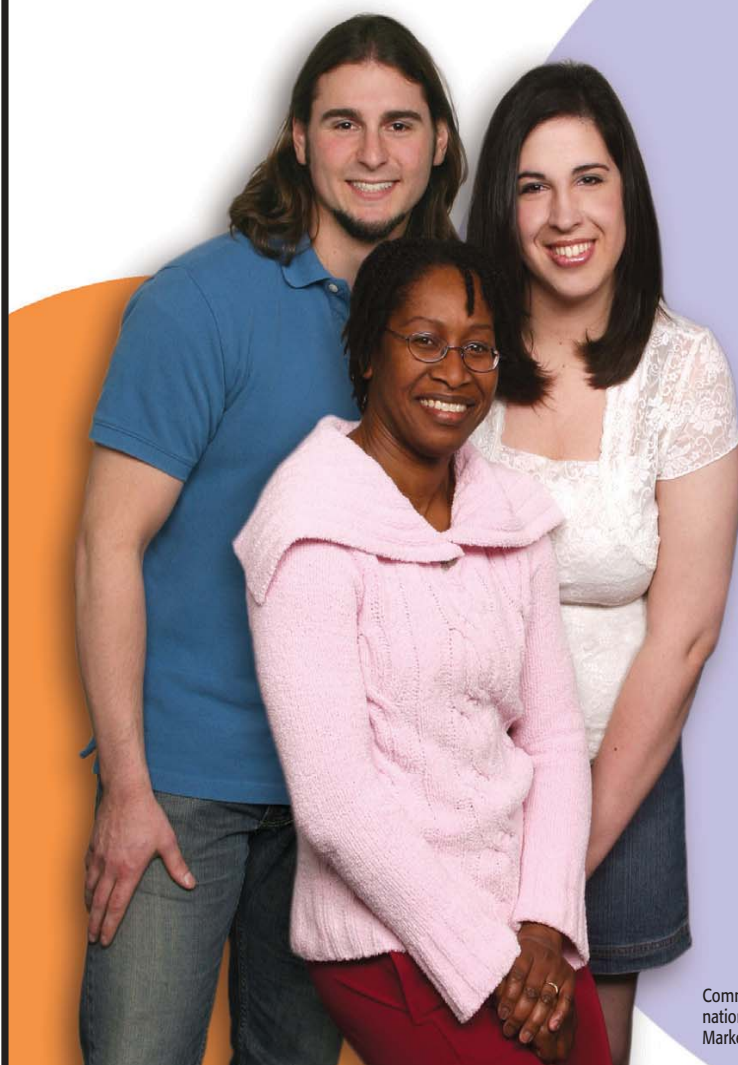
Applications are available online at www.spokesmanreview.com/blogs/vox. E-mail questions to erind@spokesman.com. The deadline is June 13.

Applications are available online [on the Vox blog] ... The deadline is June 13.

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