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1-7-2013

Transition from High School to College Challenges Students

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Centerburg High School

Centerburg, OH

Grade: 11-12

Genre: Journalism

Third place in the Journalism genre for the 2013 Best Midwestern High School Writing competition.

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Layton, Melissa, "Transition from High School to College Challenges Students" (2013). *Best Midwestern High School Writing 2013 Winners*. Paper 8.

http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/hs_writing_2013/8

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It is almost that time again; time for the transition from familiar to foreign. The time for decisions to be made and farewells to be exchanged. The seniors will soon vacate the premises and move on to their next stage of life: college.

Everyone has some idea of what college will be like. Many students seem to expect it to be more relaxed than high school because students can schedule their classes for later times and may only have classes every other day. However, according to Ellie Holsopple ('11), Brandon Burke ('11), Kierra Dye ('09) and Guidance Counselor Nancy Hull, college definitely isn't all fun and games.

"College and high school are two completely different beasts," Dye said. "It's a big change from other people teaching you how to be responsible to giving you full responsibility for every decision you make. It's an overnight change, and it can be overwhelming." Dye is a sophomore in college at Ohio State University, and she is also a resident adviser this year.

She said students must always be aware of when assignments are due because the professors don't always remind them. Therefore, more responsibility is laid on the college students' shoulders.

Hull said that it is also important for upcoming college students to learn time management and make sure they finish their work ahead of time. She said that if they don't, they may become overloaded with schoolwork. Holsopple's college experience has shown her how this could become an issue.

"I have a very busy schedule, and I don't have a lot of free time," Holsopple said. "It's very difficult to keep up." She said she had expected college to be more carefree but is glad she joined the cross country and track teams for Wright State University. Holsopple said that as an athlete, she must spend a certain amount of time working with the study table group so she can be eligible to participate in sports. She said this has helped her adjust to college life, but she also believes that she was ready for college.

“I think my teachers prepared me very well for college,” Holsopple said. “I think I was ready to be here.” She suggested that seniors who are moving from high school to college should be open to the change but expect a big difference. She said since Centerburg is such a small town, college can be intimidating at first.

“It’s going to be a very big transition,” Holsopple said. “Don’t freak out and want to transfer; it’s worth waiting it out.”

Burke commutes to his college, the Ohio State University branch in Marion, and said that his college experience feels similar to high school. He said since he is only driving there, he doesn’t always feel like he is really in college, but he does admit that he has more schoolwork to do.

“You really have to buckle down,” Burke said. “I spend at least two hours studying out of class to one hour [of being] in class.” He also recommends that seniors fill out plenty of scholarship applications so they can hopefully live on campus. He said that if students want to live on campus, they shouldn’t hold back.

“Go where you want to go; don’t let anything hold you back,” Burke said. “I’m content where I’m at now, [but] I wish I could have gone somewhere and really experienced college.”

Hull and Dye agreed that one of the most important things to think about when going to college is what the students’ personal beliefs are and who they want to become. Hull said students will often encounter situations in which they must figure out who they are and what they believe.

“I think one of the things I’ve heard most from kids,” Hull said, “is issues dealing with different people and their beliefs. People aren’t like you, and you have to figure out who you are.”

Dye also said that students need to talk with someone they trust and explain who they want to be in college and what they don’t want to change about themselves. She said it can be

tempting to follow the crowd, but students need to be careful not to get caught up in what everyone else is doing.

“The biggest thing is that you need to come into college knowing what your values and morals are,” Dye said. “I fully advise going out of your comfort zone because it will teach you more than classes can, but don’t lose who you are in the process.”

Adjusting to college can be difficult, but students can do several things to make the transition easier for them. Hull suggested that students take strong courses their senior year in high school and not just try to have an easy year. The strong courses will be more like college classes. Other things students should consider are joining a club or sport which will allow them to meet people who can help with adjusting. Dye recommended that students speak with their resident adviser, who will have plenty of advice and be able to offer help if they need it.

College life will always offer new challenges, but other people have experienced college and will be willing to help those who ask for guidance.