Starting Fall Semester Strong!

It’s the first semester of the school year! Once students arrive on campus and settle into their residence halls, what do they need to know to make fall semester 2014 successful?

First, it’s time to get organized. Students can use a day planner to write down all the important dates for tests, projects, and presentations. They should remember to include extracurricular activities.

Second, they need to attend class and meet their new professors. Regular class attendance and visits to the prof during office hours help develop solid relationships that keep students engaged.

Third, they should create a study schedule so they won’t be forced to cram for their tests. Reviewing notes regularly and studying for ninety minutes to two hours at a time helps move course material into long term memory.

Finally, students should select one or two activities like joining a campus club, playing intramural sports, or participating in a service organization. Some of the best student learning experiences occur outside of the classroom. Students just need to be careful to balance fun with study time.

MEET THE STAFF...

Dana Roof is the Director of Academic Support Programs, which includes the TLC. She has a bachelor’s and two master’s degrees from Bowling Green State in Ohio and is currently working on a PhD. from Indiana State. Dana spent about thirty years teaching English and journalism at colleges in Ohio and Michigan. Six years ago she moved from teaching to student services. She worked as an academic adviser, student success mentor, and manager of the Bridge to Success program at the Owens Community College campus in Findlay, Ohio before coming to Monmouth.
Monmouth College uses a 4/4 system, which means that students are expected to take 4 credits each semester for 4 years to graduate on time. One credit = 10-14 hours of engagement with class each week. This could mean 4 hours in class or lab, plus 6-10 hours working individually. Full-time = 4 credits, Overload = 4.5+ credits. For each hour students spend in class, they should spend between 2-3 hours outside the class reading, studying, or working with tutors.

GPA equals the total points a student earns divided by the number of graded credits attempted. Since Monmouth uses plus and minus grades, this is often tricky to calculate. Here’s the formula: A=4.0, A-=3.667, B+=3.333, B=3.0, B-=2.667, C+=2.333, C=2.0, C-=1.667, D+=1.333, D=1.0, D-=0.667, and F=0. There is no A+ or F+. Knowing this information allows students to calculate both the semester GPA and the cumulative GPA. To be in good standing, students are expected to maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or a solid C. But for the first 3 semesters Monmouth uses a graduated GPA. Students can have a slightly lower GPA and still stay off academic probation. Their first semester, they must earn at least a 1.6. By the end of their second semester they must earn a 1.8. By the end of third semester they can have a 1.9. After the first year, they must earn 2.0.

Don’t mess up your first semester…You can still have fun and explore your new freedoms, but make sure you leave plenty of time to study. JESSICA H.

In college, students with disabilities must learn to be their own best advocates. After years under the watchful eyes of parents and teachers, they are on their own. While their professors receive letters at the beginning of each term outlining students’ accommodations, the students must choose when to activate those accommodations. Here’s a link to the self-advocacy handout: http://www.monmouthcollege.edu/