THE TOP TWENTY (in no particular order) THINGS ALL FRESHMEN
SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COMING TO COLLEGE
(BUT DIDN’T KNOW UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE!)

The following are from upperclassmen (one of them a graduate already!) of Catawba. They were asked by a faculty member to share their freshmen experiences and their top 10 list of things that incoming freshmen should be aware of, and so I would like to share some of their insights with you. Don’t worry if there are terms or ideas that you don’t know about yet—we’ll go over many of them the first few weeks of the Freshmen Seminar class. Please take all of these insights to heart—they will save you much anguish and trials come October and November, let alone in December when you are facing final exams! See you in August! Prof. Michael Bitzer

1) **Don’t be afraid to ask for help.** This isn’t high school anymore, just because you are a freshman doesn’t mean that anyone here is better than you; the upperclassmen have just been around longer. For the most part if you need help, someone will ask you if you need help before you can ask them—don’t be afraid to take them up on their offer!

2) **Don’t worry** if you don’t get all the classes or teachers you wanted the first time around. This is only your first semester, there is plenty of time to get the classes you want, you might even decided you like the new professors or classes.

3) **Make it a point** to meet at least one new person each day. Catawba is a small campus; it won’t take too long. This is a good time to get to know who you live with.

4) Academics are definitely important but so is becoming involved in other activities. Catawba offers a lot of different things to do from sporting events to a different movie every Saturday night. They also hold dances occasionally as well as various forms of entertainment such as bands and comedians. These events are fun and they allow you to meet other people. These activities also give you a break from your studies. Plus, they give you the chance to become a part of the college community.

5) **Try to get the general education requirements taken care of early.** This will give you more time to work on your major, but leave room for fun classes. You need to have some fun in college.

6) Take advantage of being away from home, but **don’t abuse it!!** Now that you are in college there are a lot more things to think about. How many beers you drank before getting wasted last night isn’t one of them. Mommy and Daddy aren’t here to save you now; you are on your own, this is your chance to prove that you are mature enough to be here.

7) **Don’t get discouraged** if you don’t know what you want to do. There is plenty of time to explore your options. Your freshman year is the best time for exploration. The majority of incoming freshman have no idea what they want, or if they do, they will change their mind more than once.

8) **Your professors are not aliens**, (face the fact now, they had to be where you are now in order to get where they are now) so if you need to discuss things with them, such as class work or even things not pertaining to class, just approach them about it. The professors are here to help you. Most have their office hours posted and are available to answer almost any questions you have. Get to know folks in your classes as well; they can help when test time comes. It may be the beginning of a beautiful friendship : )

9) **TRY** to get along with your roommate. This is the first time for both of you, help each other out a little. If the problems get too bad talk to her first before you make assumptions or talk about her behind her back.

10) Remember, you are not the only freshman! There are about 300 more just like you; it’s their freshman year too. There is always someone else a little more scared than you, help them out.

11) **Going to class** is always a wise idea. After all, an education is at least one of the reasons that you are here. You will do a lot better if you attend classes than if you don’t for the obvious reason that you will know what’s going on and if you don’t then you can ask for help, which leads me to my third piece of advice.
12) If you are confused, or for whatever other reason, and you have a relevant question pertaining to the class, **raise your hand and ask**. The people on the back row who had the same question will thank you (in their minds at least). If you feel uncomfortable asking a question in class, see the professor later.

13) Another wonderful option to explore is talking to people in your class about problems you may be having in the class. After a few days you will find people that you know you can trust in asking questions to. It is **helpful to study in small groups** to bounce ideas off of each other. After all, you may have missed something that they got and vice versa. The old cliche two heads are better than one comes to mind. However, there is a word of caution, choose the people you study with wisely.

14) **Find a place to study where there are minimal distractions.** Studying in your room is nice, but many times other people serve as distractions. It is a lot more fun to talk and hang out with your friends, but your work needs to get done too. This involves discipline and part of that is finding a place where you can study without being disturbed.

15) If there is a class that you really want to take, **go for it!** I realize that you have to fit in core requirements and some majors require all of your hours to fulfill the requirements leaving little or no room for other courses. However, taking a "fun" class that seems to be useless to your major but interests you is good because it holds your interest and will be rewarding. Who knows it may even lead you on an unexpected path.

16) **Absolutely do not fall behind in any classes.** It may seem like there is a lot of time to make up missed work but it’ll surprise you how busy you can be, especially the first semester.

17) **Try to stay healthy.** Eat right, and get some sort of beneficial exercise every day. When your body is in shape, it’s that much easier for your mind to be in shape as well.

18) **Don’t party too hard.** Make sure your studies come first before the good times. It’s easy to have a good time but if you aren’t doing your work, then you won’t be having a good time for long.

19) **When studying, study!!!** Do not leave your door open or anything, you’re just inviting people to come in and disturb you.

20) The best suggestion I can give to an incoming freshman is to **not procrastinate.** Once again, this is not high school where you can throw together a "D" paper the night before and hope to bring it up. Once you’re behind, you’re behind.

You may also want to check out the following websites for some other helpful hints on surviving college:

- [http://www.clemson.edu/collegeskills/](http://www.clemson.edu/collegeskills/)
- [http://www.uga.edu/dae/studytips.htm](http://www.uga.edu/dae/studytips.htm)
- [http://gcclearn.gcc.cc.va.us/stein/college.htm](http://gcclearn.gcc.cc.va.us/stein/college.htm)