

A letter from the Associate Dean:

Welcome back to your second year with the Neil Griffin College of Business at A-State! By now, you have figured out how to navigate the basics of college. I want to take a moment to give you some suggestions for this year. There are two broad themes to my comments. First, you do not have to do this alone. Second, become a planner.

Pick a major

It is easy for some folks, and much harder for others. Your schedule will be full of business classes this year. The core business classes can serve as an introduction to several different fields, and some majors have student organizations dedicated to their fields. Most club meetings are open to everyone, so visit and see what appeals to you. Remember, you can always change your major, but some majors work better when you start taking your major courses early. Once you have decided on your major, get involved. Those student clubs for the various majors are a great way to get involved. Build a study group with your peers. Map out your future semesters. Decide if you want to study abroad or do an internship, and figure out where that fits into your plan. Consider graduate school. Get to know your advisor and ask them to review your plan.

Work on your grades

You do not have to be a 4.0 scholar to be happy and successful. You ought to take a holistic approach to your college experience, so grades are not the only factor to consider. However, if your grades last year were not as good as you had hoped, take the time to see if there are things you can do better this year. I have spoken with several students over the years who are surprised that potential employers care about grades. If you need help, ask for a tutor. Learning Support Services, located in the Library, provides tutoring for 1000 and 2000-level courses. If you are good at a subject, consider volunteering as a tutor. There are many services on campus like Learning Support Services, but you may have to look around to find them.

Build your brand

Who are you and where are you going? Can you explain that to someone you just met? Do not do things just to get a line on your resume. Do things that make a difference for you, then put them on your resume. I once attended a student forum where one of the speakers said her career advice was that young people should be thinking about their second job before they start their first one. That has stuck with me for some reason. Look at several people who hold the job you eventually want. Are their educational backgrounds and early career paths all the same? If so, you have a pattern to follow. If not, then you have some flexibility.

Develop good habits and break the bad ones

Many of us are creatures of habit. On Saturday morning, I will do precisely the same thing I did the last 52 Saturday mornings. Think about your lifestyle. Take a second and start to make things better. Get organized, work on your study habits, become financially responsible, and read your A-State email daily. Some good habits will help through your academic career, but others can make a lifetime difference. Plan some time for yourself and the things you enjoy just because. Taking care of yourself is a very good habit.

Life is full of surprises. It seems odd to say prepare for the unexpected, but you can do some things to help you survive nasty surprises and let you take advantage of the good ones. Be flexible and resilient. Set aside some money in an emergency fund.

I am glad that you are a student at our college. My office is in the Business Advising Center (Room 101B), feel free to stop by for a chat sometime. I almost always have chocolate to share.

John Robertson, JD, LL.M.
Associate Dean and Professor of Accounting

