

“...obviously your judgment is impaired when you're drunk, and when you can't say no, a lot of bad things can happen.”

— Amy, Ohio State University sophomore

Being aware of the risk of sexual assault can help you avoid putting yourself at risk. If college men and women work together, they can all help decrease the rate at which sexual assault occurs among college students. 🐼



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MAKING CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



> BY LORI MORTIMER

Starting college can be disorienting. Gone are the familiar faces and hangouts you have known for most of your life. In their place, you find the hustle and bustle of strangers exploring unfamiliar turf. Will you ever find your way around? Will you make friends like the ones you left behind? Will you fit in at this new place?

YES, you will. And your school will help you—in fact, the first few weeks of school are focused on you. During these “welcome weeks,” schools buzz with activities and events that “draw new students out,” says Muhlenberg College Student Activities Director Becky Grace. The goal: to encourage you to become involved on campus.

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GIVE US SOME BACKTALK



What do you gain, or hope to gain, from joining campus clubs or activities? Share your experiences with other students in our BackTalk forums.

CLICK here to join the discussion.

WHY GET INVOLVED?

“One of the key components of first-year success is student involvement on campus,” said Michelle Campagna, Director of New Student Experience at Montclair State University in Upper Montclair, New Jersey.

ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF COLLEGE STUDENTS WERE WORRIED THAT THEY'D HAVE TOO MANY ACTIVITIES TO CHOOSE FROM AS FRESHMEN.

—STUDENT HEALTH SURVEY, JUNE 2007, COLLEGE HEALTH SERVICES, LLC

That's because we all need to feel like we belong when we move into a new community. To feel like we belong, we need to get involved. You can join a club, attend lectures, or watch films in the student union. Whatever you choose, being active helps you transform a big, unknown place into a smaller, familiar community.

“Getting involved is the best decision, if only for that,” said Laura Given, a junior journalism major at the University of San Diego. “The percentage of people you know increases. When you walk across campus or go to the dining hall, you see faces you know.”

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Students, especially freshmen, need to strike a balance between activities, work, and school, Campagna said. Students are aware that this balance might be difficult.

According to a June 2007 College Health Services, LLC, survey, well over half of students were concerned that school work and/or a job would leave too little free time for campus involvement.

As a rule of thumb, students should spend two hours per week on schoolwork outside of class for every hour they spend in class, according to Campagna. For most full-time students, that's 30 hours per week of schoolwork outside of class.



LISTEN to *Student Health 101™* editor-in-chief, Lori Mortimer, discuss getting involved on campus.

“ONE OF THE KEY COMPONENTS OF FIRST-YEAR SUCCESS IS STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ON CAMPUS.”

—MICHELLE CAMPAGNA, DIRECTOR OF NEW STUDENT EXPERIENCE, MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Campagna suggests allocating three to five hours per week during the first semester for campus activities.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Consider these tips while navigating through the many ways you can get involved on your campus.

THINK ABOUT YOUR INTERESTS

Figure out what you like to do and how you might like to spend your free time on campus. Then ask yourself some questions to help target activities and organizations.

- Do you want to stick with activities from high school, or do you want to try something completely new?
- What would you like to get out of your experience?
- How much free time will you have for extracurricular activities?
- Do you want to join a group that's related to your major or career field?
- Can you name specific skills you'd like to develop?
- Will a particular organization help with or hamper your academic and career goals?

ASK QUESTIONS

Scratch beneath the surface of the groups you're interested in. Ask members a few key questions.

- What are the group's primary goals?
- Is the group allied with any off-campus organizations?
- How big is the group?
- Where are the meetings held and how frequently are they held?
- How much time does membership require?
- Are there any costs involved in joining or participating?

VISIT THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES OFFICE OR WEB SITE

These offices support student organizations and activities on campus, help teach life skills, and help students practice using those skills on campus. Some schools offer a searchable database of student organizations that matches your interests to campus groups, publish event calendars and contact information, and send weekly e-mails about upcoming events.

Take in the "welcome week" events and activities fairs. Student organiza-



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tions set up tables, promote themselves, and recruit new members at these events, so take the opportunity to talk with current members and learn as much as you can.

DON'T GO OVERBOARD

Remember to balance your course work with your activities so you don't overextend yourself. Especially in your first year, stick with one or two student organizations. Given said she joined a handful of groups briefly during her second semester so she could learn more about them. Then

she dropped all but two, her sorority and the school newspaper.

Even though the first few weeks of school can be overwhelming, taking the time to learn about campus groups and activities is well worth the effort. Regardless how involved you become, the key is to make sure you do get involved so you can feel fully connected to your campus community. 📖

LORI MORTIMER IS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *STUDENT HEALTH 101*™.



GIVE US SOME BACKTALK.



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TELL US YOUR STORY



CLICK here to share your story.

How will you (or did you) balance getting involved on campus with other responsibilities? Share your strategies for success here.