ADVICE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

1. ATTEND CLASSES IN ORDER TO LEARN NEW KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS.
   You will enjoy school more if you think of your college years as a time to seek an education, not just a degree. In addition, this will make you better prepared not only for the job market but also for life. Focus on understanding more and thinking in new ways rather than on how to survive classes with the least effort. In this period of your life, your primary job is to learn as much as you can, including how to learn more effectively.

2. HELP YOUR TEACHERS HELP YOU LEARN.
   Think about how you learned from a coach, a music teacher, a parent, or someone else who taught you knowledge and skills that really interested you. How did your reactions to their directions compare to how you usually react to directions from teachers? Try giving your instructors the same respect and trust you gave your favorite instructor, even if it was in a kindergarten class, instead of reacting to us as if we are mean parents who want to restrict your freedom. You do not have to love us to learn from us.

3. ASK QUESTIONS.
   Whenever you are confused or uncertain, ask questions in class, after class, or in your professor’s office. It is not shameful to admit that you do not understand something; it may only mean that we did not explain it clearly enough. You are only hurting yourself when you do not give us the opportunity to explain something. The sooner you ask for help, the better your grade is apt to be.

4. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY.
   Assume that when we ask you to do something, we have a good reason for doing so. You can even ask about those reasons, if you wish. Read and reread a syllabus and other written directions until you understand all that is being asked of you and/or until you know what you need to ask in order to understand it. In a test, make sure that you did not misread any questions (such as giving information about World War I when the questions was about World War II). After finishing a test, essay, or any other assignment, check to see if you have followed each of the directions.

5. GET TO KNOW YOUR PROFESSORS AND HELP THEM KNOW YOU.
   Visit all of your professors during their office hours at least once during the semester. Remind them of your name and diplomatically tell them anything that might help them assist you, including what you find especially interesting (but do not stay too long). Read between the lines of syllabi and what instructors emphasize during the first week to notice any expectations that may be different from what you are used to. Some teachers need some time to prepare before beginning a class. If that is the case, do not ask questions until they seem to be ready.

6. THINK BEFORE YOU WRITE ANYTHING DOWN.
   It is more important to understand what is covered in class than to include all of that information in notes that you can always look up later in a textbook. Do not try to be a court reporter; in order to record everything that is said, they cannot pay attention to the content of the trial. Never copy the exact words from a book, a Power Point presentation, or an overhead projection (unless instructed to do so) and never write down anything that does not make sense to you. Whether in class or reading at home, always take notes in your own words. If you can explain something to someone else, including a child much younger, you understand it and you’ll have no trouble remembering it. Never try to memorize the exact words of a text or a teacher.
7. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR OWN INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND STYLE OF LEARNING.
   Notice what kind of studying seems to work best for you in any situation and then consider how to develop a similar approach in other classes. Think back about what you did when you have learned the most in any field (including how to dance or how to repair a car). Be realistic when you are ill or undergoing an emotional crisis; think then about what you can put off until you are feeling better, as well as what kind of help you need. Consider if there are any extracurricular activities you can set aside temporarily.

8. DEVELOP A SCHEDULE FOR STUDYING.
   Do not try to do too much of the same kind of work at one time. This means you should not start an assignment the night before it is due and you should not start an essay or other long-term work only a week before it is due. If instructors do not give you a schedule for the different steps of the assignment, ask them to help you develop your own. This is especially important for term papers and other assignments that are not due for a month or more.

9. DO NOT EXPECT OVERNIGHT SUCCESS, BUT NOTICE STEADY PROGRESS.
   Think of what you are most proud of knowing and then remember how long it took for you to perfect it, including how much practice and how many mistakes. Approach your college studies in the way a child approaches learning how to walk. You may fall down a lot at first, but that is how you train your mind to do any task better. Every once in a while, take the time to notice what you have learned since the beginning of the semester or the beginning of your freshman year.

10. BELIEVE IN YOURSELF.
    You can learn and do more than you might expect, as long as you do not try to do it all at once. When you are frustrated, think about your earlier successes. If you think you cannot remember information, count how many songs you know the words to. If you think you cannot write, reread a text message or email you sent to a good friend when you were excited, angry, or worried about something. Never let anyone convince you that you are stupid or inadequate. You may be ignorant about some things, meaning you have not yet learned about them, but that does not mean that you cannot learn about them if you try and are patient with yourself.