

Academic Foundations: Where Student Success Begins!

As your student prepares to start college, it is important to think about both the opportunities and the challenges they will face. While every person's situation is unique, there are some common challenges that many new college students face, including:

- **Transitions:** It can take a while to figure out how college works – such as where to go for this or that, or what new terminology or acronyms mean (Provost? Bullsyc? Withdrawal? Oasis?). New students might spend a lot of energy just trying to make sense of the new environment and navigate campus life.
- **Academics:** For most students, college courses require more effort (and different kinds of effort) than high school classes. Some students may feel overwhelmed by large classes, the type of reading or writing that is expected, or the fact that in some classes the final grade is based on just a few tests. It's critical that new students go to class, learn how to study, and stay motivated.
- **Time management:** The structure of college is completely different from high school. College students are expected to maintain their own schedules and develop good study habits. It's important for students to quickly adapt to the structure of college classes and learn how to get things done (as well as make time for fun) each day.
- **Wellness:** Students must learn to make responsible choices when it comes to things like eating habits, physical activity, stress, illness, roommates, alcohol, sex, sleep, money, depression or anxiety, and other concerns. They will be faced with decisions every day that can affect their well-being. The good news is that there are numerous campus resources and support to help students create healthy habits.
- **Relationships:** At USF, students may encounter people with a variety of backgrounds. It can feel overwhelming to make new friends or find people with common interests. Learning to live with roommates might create an additional challenge. But the flip side of these challenges is the opportunity to learn how to interact with new ideas and new people, and the possibility of shaping a new personal identity.
- **Activities:** There are so many clubs, organizations, activities, courses, lectures, sports practices, etc. that it is sometimes hard to decide what to do. And students' academics may suffer if they become overwhelmed or try to do too much. Not doing enough may lead them to feeling isolated or bored. Balance is the key. The right involvement can help students make better use of their time and increase the quality of their work as well as their feeling of connection to USF.

Many college students experience these concerns – but we can help! The University of South Florida offers a 3-credit course specifically designed to help first-year students cope with these challenges as they transition to life in college. New friends, new home, new classes, new routine...it is exciting and overwhelming at the same time. Being in a small seminar class with just other freshman can help students to feel that they are not alone in these experiences.

In the SLS2901 Academic Foundations course, students will learn about how to work through these common challenges, as well as other topics that we know are key to students' success. Learn more about this course at: <http://www.usf.edu/undergrad/academic-foundations/first-year-students.aspx>. We hope you will encourage your new student to take SLS2901 Academic Foundations this fall! Students can register following Orientation, or work with their academic advisor as needed to create their course schedule. Questions about SLS2901 Academic Foundations? Contact: academicfoundations@usf.edu.

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