College versus High School: What’s the Difference?

So you’ve probably already assumed—or experienced, at this point—life is a lot different in college than it was in high school. The classes are different and your parents aren’t milling around; you have freedom and it’s awesome. The obvious differences aside, there are so many little things about college that the brochures, movies, and crazy stories from friends forget to mention. Let’s take a look at some of these minor differences.

Food – As a First-Year student living on campus; you are required to have a meal plan. Although there are other places on campus (The Hornet Shop, Brewed Awakenings, Roly Poly, Westover), the cafeteria is probably going to be your main source of food. You can get your breakfast, lunch, and dinner all in the same location, which is really convenient and neat, but you’ll have to adjust to the cafeteria’s meal schedule.

Cars – You get on campus and everything is great. You have friends, classes, a shiny student ID, and a sweet dorm room if you are living on campus, but, like most First-Year residential students, you probably don’t have a car. Losing your wheels for your first year at Lynchburg College can be frustrating—well, at first. As an LC student, you get free bus fare if you want to go anywhere in the city, you’ll meet and make friends with a car, and most everything you could want is actually within walking distance or provided by the school.

Class Schedule – At Lynchburg College, the earliest a class will begin is at 8:30 A.M. on Tuesdays and Thursdays or 8:00 A.M. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Compared to most high school schedules, that’s a pretty late start.

Now, let’s specifically take a look at the academic side of college.
**Faculty** – There is a good chance, over the course of the next four years, you’ll have the same professors for class after class. Over time, you may honestly grow to like your professors, look up to them, and seek guidance or counseling from them; they can go from just your teachers to your mentors—way different from high school. While some of the differences can be obvious, if you choose the right college the similarities are endless. Like teachers, professors will work with you on an individual level if you ask for help.

**Professors and Homework** – One major difference that many high school graduates fear is the teaching style of college professors and homework policies. Yes, high school teachers are a bit more lenient when it comes to homework and some college professors may cut you some slack, but in most cases you either have your homework or you do not. College professors will not constantly remind you when something is due or to pay attention because the information could be on a test; you must take it upon yourself to keep up with your assignments so that you are able to turn them in on time and to always be prepared.

**Syllabus** – A syllabus is a document outlining the class topics, homework assignments, exam schedules, and grading policies. It is similar to a contract between you and your professor but can be changed, although most faculty will not alter it once it has been given to you. To help stay organized with all of your courses, a good idea would be to make a syllabi calendar. A syllabi calendar is a calendar of important dates, including the dates of when certain things are due for each class; all that you will need is a blank calendar (paper or electronic) and the syllabus for each class you are enrolled in for that semester.

**PASS** – One of the interesting things here at Lynchburg College, is that fellow students are allowed to lead a study group for classes called PASS. Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)
is offered in a variety of subjects, particularly in the School of Sciences and the School of Business and Economics. Each class that is part of the PASS program is assigned a PASS leader who leads group tutoring sessions multiple times per week. In addition, PASS leaders provide office hours to meet one-on-one with any student who would like more assistance (http://www.lynchburg.edu/tutoring-coaching/peer-assisted-study-sessions-pass). The great thing about this program is that anyone can be a PASS Leader; you just have to be eligible and meet all requirements.

**Grades** – Another major difference is grades. In high school you receive a report card in which you have to get your parents to sign, in college however; parents can only see what you allow them to see. You have much more privacy when it comes to sharing information. You can access your grade reports online from the Students Online link in MyLC. Click on the "Grade Report” link, and then click on the correct term to access reports. Parents who request information about their student's academic progress by telephone or email will receive only general information about College standards, regulations, and available services. The student must give the parent a temporary access code which can be found on the MyLC page in order for the parent to view their grade report. If a college professor is asked to intervene in a student's academic progress by contacting other personnel or by changing a student's schedule the request will directly be forwarded to the student. The college will inform the student of the procedure that must be followed. In this way, the student can take responsibility for his/her college experience.

Finally, what happens outside of the classroom most likely differs from what you experienced in high school.
Outside the Classroom – Unlike high school, college life extends far beyond the walls of the classroom. This can be attributed to the fact that you are now living on campus or choosing to spend more time at school to avoid running back and forth between home. When taking into consideration that Lynchburg College is home to roughly 2,300 undergraduate students it is safe to assume that you are constantly with others in your new home, including your roommate, hall mates, carpoolers, and peers. Although you may be accustomed to living with and being surrounded by others (parents, siblings, etc.), your fellow students may not always be encouraging you to put your academics first as your family members might have done in the past. It is now up to you to allocate your time accordingly in order to take care of all of your responsibilities.

Diversity – A direct result of being in close quarters with others is immense diversity, which is another aspect about college life that differs from high school. Unlike high school, you will most likely be surrounded by your peers at all times; although, you will not be surrounded by the same people day in and day out. Lynchburg College’s undergraduate population represents 37 of the 50 states, as well as nine foreign countries, providing you with the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life, thus broadening your educational experience.

You will quickly discover that you are treated as an adult at Lynchburg College and it is your duty to act as one. Although all of this newfound freedom sounds nothing short of amazing, it is crucial to realize that with independence comes responsibility, and responsibility often times breeds stress. According to Cleary, Walter, & Jackson (2011), the transition from high school to college can become difficult for students when trying to balance the numerous changes they encounter in college on top of the increased expectation of autonomy; therefore it is of utmost
importance that you master the skill of moderation, not just in involvement but in all facets of your daily life.

Works Cited


