

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A RESPONSIBLE STUDENT AT NJIT

As you start classes, this is a good time to think about the responsibilities you will have as a student at NJIT – responsibility to yourself, to school, to your parents/guardians, and to your friends. As a college student, YOU are your number one advocate. You are the person who needs to ask questions, seek advice, and/or give counsel. The university offers academic, social, and personal support, but you must take responsibility for your education and behavior.

You should attend every class, even if you think it is not relevant to your degree. Core courses lay the foundation for your major courses. You should know the name, office location, and telephone number of each of your professors. This information is given to you with the course syllabus at the first class session. Also, remember that you are responsible for all assignments and conditions listed on each course syllabus.

If you are having trouble in a particular course, tell someone. Talk with your professor either before or after class, or, preferably, during his/her office hours. Go to the Center for Academics and Professional Enrichment (CAPE) for tutoring. Do not complain that you are doing poorly; act to improve your grade. If you are not getting the support you think you need, discuss this with the Director of the Center for First-Year Students and/or your Dorman Honors College advisors.

While attending classes, you must remember that the professor decides who speaks in class. Unless you are in a group discussion, only one person speaks at a time. Turn off your cell phones and beepers during class and as well do not text messages; this is the time to listen to the instructor. Some of your professors may have additional requirements (e.g., all hats/caps must be removed during class, coming late to class counts as an absence, etc.) This is your instructor's prerogative. Follow the instructor's rules; you might learn something about yourself in the process.

When you have first meeting with you academic advisor, let him/her know about any concerns (i.e., academic, social, etc.) you may have about college. Your advisor is specially selected to work with you. Your advisor understands the problems of first year students. He/she will you overcome your concerns and offer advice. Do not just go to your advisor when you need your registration hold removed.

Keep your parents/guardians informed about your academic and social progress. Your parents/guardians raised you for eighteen years and they are very concerned about you. Even if you are having trouble in a course, tell them. Also, tell them what you are doing to improve your academic status. Part of maturing means accepting our successes and failures. Your parents/guardians ask only that you do your best. Do not exclude from this very important time of your life.

In addition, when questions/concerns arise about classes, financial aid, it may be tempting to have your parents/guardians call the university on your behalf. Since you are

the person with the question, you should be seeking answers. Become familiar with university policies, especially those on class attendance, last day to withdraw from a course, and socially acceptable behavior. Read the student handbooks given to you thoroughly. “Not knowing” is not an acceptable reason for missing a deadline or acting contrary to university policies.

Read all correspondence you receive from NJIT. You are responsible for any information that is mailed to you by the university. If your parent/guardian opens your mail, ask them to keep your mail in one location so that you can review it and take appropriate action. If you live in the residence halls, check your mailbox regularly, not once a month.

As you begin to meet new people and form relationships, you should think about what you can give to and what you can expect from the other people. Choose your friends wisely. Choose friends who will support you in troubled times and rejoice with you in good times. Think more about what you can contribute to a friendship than what you can receive from it. If you associate with people who share this philosophy of life, everybody wins!

Communication – not confrontation- is the way we handle disputes at the university. “In your face” interactions are not acceptable. True, there are times when all of us reach our breaking point but that is the time when a mature person steps back, takes a deep breath, or counts to ten before proceeding.

Seek the assistance of a neutral third party (i.e., an RA, a faculty member, a member of the professional staff) if the dispute cannot be resolved between you and the other person. Do not let unresolved issues fester. Resolve them as quickly as possible and move ahead. Holding grudges is detrimental to a person’s well being. If you must have an outlet, go to the gym and walk the track/work the machines or both. This has a two-fold effect: you will have released your pent-up aggression and you will keep yourself in good physical shape.

Speaking of shape...many first-year students find that their sleeping and eating habits change drastically during the first year in college. It is very important to know your body and that you do not ask it to do things it cannot tolerate. For example, a person who needs eight hours of sleep a night can handle an “all-nighter” occasionally. However, regularly depriving yourself of adequate sleep can lead to reduced resistance to germs (e.g. colds/flu, etc) and a disposition that even your best friend cannot support. Be good to yourself.

Part of the maturing process includes making informed decisions about the way you will conduct yourself and facing the consequences of those decisions. Sometimes it is difficult to do or say things with which your friends disagree. Not drinking alcohol at a party might cause some of your friends to call you “chicken”, for example. You are the only person who has the right to make decisions about your actions. Always remember the consequences of your actions **BEFORE** you make decision. This same principle holds

true in matters of academic integrity and inter-personal relationships. Rest assured, you are not the only college student who refuses to cheat on a common exam.

You will meet people of many cultures at NJIT. Do not close your mind to a fellow student simply because he/she speaks with an accent or wears clothing different from your. The university reflects the diversity of the world, a world that is getting smaller and smaller due to advances in technology. Ask questions about the cultures of others. Learn the differences from your own. Do not box yourself in; celebrate this opportunity.

You have the freedom to make many choices...much more freedom than you probably even had before. We are here to help you make wise decisions. You may falter...we all do at one time or another...but that should not stop you from moving on. Rather, learn from your mistakes and remember them when faced with other decisions.

You are a first-year college student only once. Make the most of this year. Set a good foundation for yourself and graduation will be your reward.