

College Life: Helping Your Child Prepare For Making The Grade

(NAPSA)—In order to make the grade in college, incoming college freshmen will need to assume a number of responsibilities, such as managing budgets, establishing good habits and understanding limits.

“It’s never too early for parents to prepare their children for the next step after high school graduation,” said Sara Martinez Tucker, president and chief executive officer of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF), the nation’s leading organization focused on Hispanic higher education. “We work with thousands of students and their families, providing them with guidance, information and the tools to successfully manage the transition to college.”

Here are some tips to help students make a straight-A transition to campus life:

A+ssess the budget. Planning for college includes forecasting the costs—from tuition to housing to meals—as well as other expenses that tend to change over time. Create a budget and forecasting grid, keeping tally of daily spending to make the grid more accurate.

A+ccrue the money. Once you have been accepted to a university, determine financial aid eligibility. Criteria include having a financial need, a high school diploma and a valid Social Security number. One must be enrolled in an eligible degree program, be a U.S. citizen or an eligible non-citizen, and maintain satisfactory academic progress once in school. Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (<http://www.fafsa.ed/gov>).


A+pply for scholarships.

Research and apply for grants and scholarships to subsidize your education. Grants are awarded on the basis of financial need and scholarships are awarded on criteria that include academics, leadership skills or athletics. For example, HSF asks that applicants be U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens of Hispanic heritage. Grants and scholarships do not have to be paid back.

A+ttend freshman orientation. This experience will provide an introduction to the campus, faculty and all aspects of the college environment. In most cases, students will meet their college advisors during orientation and receive help with early registration.

A+ssume good habits. Help students figure out a daily schedule and health regimen, such as taking a nap in the afternoons to revitalize from morning classes, eating the correct foods and exercising regularly to better handle the stress of the transition.

A+im to get involved. Reinforce with incoming freshmen the need to know their college professors, and to feel confident about approaching them with questions. Suggest involvement with any number of student organizations and functions, such as student government, intramural athletics or associations such as HSF’s Scholar Chapters. This helps students establish a sense of community on their campuses and network among peers, a critical factor to academic achievement.

For more information about HSF’s scholarship offerings, visit www.hsf.net. 

Note to Editors: Although the information provided is evergreen, please note that May is National Scholarship Month.