



Resource Tip Sheet for New Students: Managing the Transition to University

The transition to the university experience is exciting and filled with new challenges. It's natural to have some apprehension. But students bring with them skills, experience, and aptitude to manage the transition and flourish at SDSU; we're all here to support them! The following are some common transition challenges new students may experience and some tips.

Challenge: Creating and managing an **academic schedule**

- Use your Google calendar to schedule class meetings AND study time for every week in your calendar. One class requires six hours of learning/study per week. If you take 15 units, you're in class for 15 hours/week and have 25-30 hours of study time each week. **This is a full-time job at 40-45 hours of school per week.**
- Use technology to help—set alerts, timers; make personal and school calendars on the same application; create repeating events.
- Are you an early bird or a night owl? For the first semester or two, schedule studying, writing, and class times that match your best time-of-day to be alert and focused.

Challenge: Managing the transition to the **time demands of university**

- Remember that being a full-time student is a full-time job, so don't take on a full-time, paid job as well. You may have to make some choices. Speak with retention counselors in Student Account Services or Financial Aid to discuss options to help with finances so you can focus on school. Apply for as many scholarships as you can, both on campus and off.
- The beginning of semesters will seem easy; don't be fooled into thinking you can handle more activities or more work. It will get tougher and demand more of your time, often all at once.

Challenge: Managing all the choices of **extracurricular activities**

- For the first semester or two, I suggest just pick one or two activities that require time commitments outside of class. You'll have plenty of time for more activities once you get used to the rhythm and your self-awareness of what you can successfully handle.
- Not sure where to start? Choose activities or clubs similar to what you've liked in the past. Sports? Join your favorite sport club team. ASB? Get involved with Associated Students. Theatre? Campus productions. Yearbook/school paper? Join the Daily Aztec or KCR Radio. You get the idea! Most will have some kind of virtual experience. If you live in a city near another CSU, you may be able to attend some of those in-person events.

Challenge: Managing **physical and mental health** in a new environment

- There's a lot of newness in starting at university. I suggest continue to do those things that helped you stay healthy and grounded before: physical activity, art, music, spiritual activities, etc. Find the equivalent here at SDSU. Once you're settled and feel ready for something new, then try new activities. Again, most will have virtual experiences and some in-person activities, depending on the health situations.

Reflect and adjust: After the first semester, spend time reflecting about how the first semester went. Review transcript and grades earned. What worked that you should keep doing? What didn't work? Any grade or GPA below C (2.0) needs your attention but there's help! **Talk with the PSFA Student Success Specialist!**



When **LIFE HAPPENS**

*Things won't go wrong.
But if they do...*

- **If you need to withdraw from some or all of a semester:** After the add/drop deadline, students may petition to withdraw from some or all classes for serious situations beyond their control and with appropriate verification. (Policy details for withdrawals in catalog pg. 483). This may impact finances so check with Financial Aid and/or Student Account Services.
- **If you need a semester off:** Students who need to take a semester off for any reason may take a “Leave of Absence”. Students are allowed a maximum of four semesters of Leave. New, first-semester students, however, are not allowed to take a Leave. (Policy details in catalog pg. 483)
- **If you need to raise your GPA:** Students can retake SDSU classes in which they earned a C- or lower and replace the grade with the new grade in their GPA, up to 16 units, with maximum of one class at upper division level (300 or higher). This is called **Course Forgiveness**. (Policy details in catalog pg. 476)
- **If you are placed on academic probation:** Meet with the PSFA Student Success Specialist. Students are at risk of getting disqualified from SDSU and need to make changes ASAP. Students **MUST** earn a 2.0 GPA each term they are on probation; they must get to the required GPA within three semesters, too. **Please meet with us. We are here to help!**
- **If you don't agree with a grade:** Review the syllabus for the professor's policy related to the issue. Discuss with the professor during office hours. If that doesn't resolve the issue, then speak to the School Director. See Student Ombudsman website for tips on how to have these conversations. At any time, students may speak to the Student Ombudsman or Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

Family supporters: Remember that campus personnel cannot discuss your student's private information but can speak with you about general policies.

The PSFA Student Center is here to help:

Virtual office: psfa@sdsu.edu

Student Success Administrative Coordinator Jennelyn Sustal: jsustal@sdsu.edu

Student Success Specialist Theresa Luu: tnluu2@sdsu.edu | Assistant Dean Lanie Lockwood: alockwoo@sdsu.edu