

Some Friendly Faculty Advice

Pssst. I'd like to pass along some sisterly advice for university success: make yourself visible; ask questions; get connected. Hearing this message my first quarter would have made my transition from community college to UCSC easier.

Speaking from my experience as an alumna, I'd like to offer some possible college strategies. Remember that while getting your degree is important, so is getting noticed. Why does a student need to get noticed? Many transfer and re-entry students have only two years at UCSC to distinguish themselves through research and writing. Along with this primary goal, networking for career opportunities, discovering campus resources, and securing letters of recommendation will also be crucial. Faculty provide such services. If you are studying with a visiting professor, ask if they'll write a letter for you before they leave.

How can students make themselves visible to professors and teaching assistants? Ask thoughtfully considered questions during class, make time to attend open office hours, or schedule appointments several times over the quarter to discuss course work. Be assured that asking questions indicates your enthusiasm about a class, and your engagement with course concepts. Your narrative evaluations will reflect your efforts.

Finally, get connected. Establish relationships with peers and teachers, and network as best you can. When the time comes for letters of recommendation, you will have already established a rapport. No awkward, "You don't know me but I was in your lecture class of 500 four quarters ago." Instead, faculty will recognize you as a student concerned about her career, and confident about getting what she needs.

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