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Tips from one transfer student to another

By Valentina Toro
Managing Editor

Transferring to a new college can feel like starting over. You are not necessarily new to college, but you are new to the campus, the people and the community around you. As a transfer student, I learned that finding your place takes time, but you also must be willing to put yourself out there.

When I transferred to the university, one of the biggest things I had to learn was not to compare my experience with students who had been here since their freshman year. Some students already had established friend groups, knew their way around campus and were involved in organizations. As a transfer student, it can feel like you are behind, but you are not.

My biggest piece of advice is to get involved as soon as you can. Joining a club, attending an event or even going to an organization meeting can introduce you to people you might never meet in your classes. You do not have to join everything, either.

Getting involved in student media helped me find my own community at the university. Through journalism, I have been able to meet students, professors and people across campus while also gaining experience in something I want to pursue professionally. Finding an organization related to your interests or career can make campus feel more familiar.

Another piece of advice is simple: talk to people.

It can be intimidating, especially when it seems like everyone already knows each other. Introduce yourself to the person sitting next to you in class.

Not every conversation will turn into a friendship, but some of them might.

Transfer students should also not be afraid to ask for help. You are entering a new university with different expectations, resources and systems. No one expects you to automatically know how everything works. Talk to your professors, advisers and other students when you have questions.

I would also tell transfer students to actually experience campus. It can be easy to come to class and immediately go home, especially for commuters. But doing that can make it harder to feel connected to the university. Stay for an event sometimes. Attend an involvement fair.

Most importantly, give yourself time. Your first few weeks might not look the way you imagined. That does not mean transferring was the wrong decision.

Being a transfer student gives you an opportunity to start a new chapter while bringing everything you learned from your previous college experience with you. You do not have to recreate someone else's version of college.

My final advice to new transfer students is to say yes to opportunities, even when they make you a nervous. Finding your place at the university might not happen immediately, but sometimes all it takes is showing up.

Editor-in-Chief's advice to freshman

By Brianna Wallen
Editor-in-Chief

It feels like yesterday I was packing up my whole life and loading everything I owned into a car. Now, three years later, I'm sitting at my desk in Chase Hall, writing this message during my final semester and I can't help but feel nostalgic. I'm right back where I started, except this time, I'm preparing to leave.

I remember my first week here, when I met my best friend, Juwell Clay and some of my closest friends. At the time, I never could have imagined how many memories, friendships and experiences would come from those first few weeks.

For many of you, you are starting your first semester here, whether you're a freshman or a transfer student. You might be excited, nervous, overwhelmed or a little bit of everything. My advice to you is simple: capture every moment.

Take risks. Try new things. Go to events, even when you're not sure if you'll know anyone. Join the club you've been thinking about. Talk to someone new. Say yes to the random plans that come your way. Step outside of your comfort zone. You never know which random "yes" will turn into a friendship, a favorite memory or a story you'll still be telling years from now.

When I think about walking across the stage this fall, I know I'm not going to think about the exam I scored badly on. I'm not going to remember every assignment I stressed over or the countless times I slept through my alarm. Instead, I think about the late-night girl talks in Neff 205.

I will think about random car rides with no destination, the spontaneous trips to New York, the laughs that made my stomach hurt.

As I'm writing this, I'm honestly feeling sick to my stomach thinking about how close graduation is. There are so many things I wish I could go back and experience for the first time. That's why I want you to appreciate where you are right now.

Take pictures with your friends when you're all dressed up but also take pictures on random Tuesday nights when you're doing absolutely nothing. Keep all the silly Tok Toks and horrible selfies. My night routine conists of scrolling to the year 2023 in my camera roll and looking back on all the memories.

I know it sounds cliché when people say college goes by fast, but I promise you, it does. One minute you're meeting your roommate and figuring out where your classes are, and the next, you're moving out and preparing to walk across a stage.

So, to the freshmen and transfer students reading this, welcome to Southern. I hope you find your people. I hope you find places that feel like home. I hope you have moments that make you laugh until your stomach hurts and memories you'll carry long after you leave this campus.

Most all, I hope you make a life here that you'll be sad to leave.

Because one day, you'll be standing where I am now, looking back at these years and realizing just how special they were. And when that day comes, I hope you have a camera roll full of blurry pictures, random videos, screenshots, inside jokes and memories that instantly take you back.

Until then, enjoy it. You only get to be a freshman once.



PHOTO | JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT

Managing editor Valentina Toro and editor-in-chief Brianna Wallen at the Involvement and Resource Fair on Sept. 2.

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