



**FIRST2  
NETWORK**

# 20 THINGS I WISH I KNEW AS A FRESHMAN

## WHO WE ARE ● ● ●

First2 Network is an expanding group of people and organizations working to increase the number of college graduates in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) to strengthen our communities and drive an innovation economy in West Virginia and beyond. First2 focuses on *rural, first-generation, and low-income STEM students*, making sure all our students can succeed.

the following list was compiled by First2 Network Undergraduate Students  
for more information or to join our network visit [www.first2network.org](http://www.first2network.org)

1. College is a time where, in a sense, you can academically start over. You can try new things that you wouldn't have tried in high school.
2. Remember that professors want you to come to their office hours; it's a great way to network and understand the material. They want you to succeed!
3. Talk with someone at your college about financial aid and scholarships. It will give you peace of mind to know where your money is going and it can keep you from being surprised by a financial charge at the end of the semester.
4. Learning how to study and take notes effectively will really help you in college-level courses, because you may not get hand-outs or study guides.
5. Consider taking introductory courses before taking advanced courses. Just because you can test into a more advanced course does not always mean that is the best option. Introductory courses can serve as good refreshers, and having more background knowledge can help out when learning new or more complex material in later courses.
6. Professor ratings from websites where students review their professors may not be indicative of how those professors really are, so use your critical thinking skills when considering these ratings. For example, students who do poorly in a class may give their professor a low rating.
7. School is very important, but don't forget to make time to take care of your mental health.



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8. Knowing when you're most productive can help you decide between a morning schedule or an evening schedule. An 8:00am class in high school may feel completely different than an 8:00am class in college, so schedule yourself wisely.
9. Advisors can connect you with resources all over campus if you feel like you need to go somewhere for something but are not exactly sure where to go. If you feel uncertain about something your advisor has told you, you can always seek out another college administrator to double-check information.
10. It's ok to change your majors or minors; there are a lot of paths you can take through college and there is no one set way to graduate.
11. Not everyone has the freshman year roommate horror story that you often hear about. Randomized roommates can be a lot better than you would expect. Create agreements and boundaries regarding your shared living space early on so you can avoid conflict later.
12. Many people are in the same boat as you...away from home and trying to make friends. Be outgoing, and people will respond positively to you. It's important to socialize!
13. College exams will require you to understand the material being tested; you won't be able to rely on memorization alone. Remember this when you are studying.
14. Don't overload yourself with class hours, extracurriculars, and research your first semester of freshman year. Take time to settle in and start researching opportunities that will be available to you during future semesters.
15. Understanding how to learn is very important. Your professor may not be able to provide you with individual help during every class because they have many students they are working with. Utilize your professors' office hours or their teaching assistants' (TA) office hours to clear up any confusion you may have.
16. Freshman year is a major change, so don't give up if you do not do as well as you thought would. Stay committed, reach out for help and reference your syllabi to stay informed about how test/assignment grades may affect your overall grade. Remember that you have will have seven more semesters to improve academically. If you are struggling, contact your advisor for advice.
17. A study group can create a very conducive environment for work, but they can also be a big distraction. Pay attention to how well your work is getting done with these groups and make any changes you need to accordingly.
18. Keep up with university events including small events that clubs are hosting and volunteer opportunities. You'll make new friends and become a lot more aware of your campus environment.
19. There are still lots of scholarship opportunities to apply for once you are in college, such as scholarships within your department or program.
20. You may experience a culture shock at first, but you belong just as much as anyone else you meet in college.