

Dear New Student,

Welcome to the Covenant College family. We are excitedly awaiting your arrival on campus and are doing our best to prepare for you and the new year!

Covenant has so much to offer in terms of fun activities, great relationships, and challenging classes. If you are like me, it is easy to look forward to the “outside of class” part of college and pretend that the academic aspect is only a small portion of what you will be experiencing. In some ways, that is true. You will be getting to know your roommates and hallmates, playing on intramural teams, getting involved in clubs and ministries, connecting with a church, and volunteering in Chattanooga. It would seem 16 hours of class a week is only a small percent of the time you will be spending as a student, that small percent of time will play a huge role in whether you enjoy your time as a student or not!

As the Director of Career and Academic Development, I want to make sure that you succeed in and out of the classroom. I wholeheartedly believe that you will enjoy your time outside of class MORE if you are doing well in your classes. So, here are my top 5 things that every student needs to know to succeed at Covenant College.

1. You will need to spend more time studying than you did in high school.

That may sound like an obvious statement but being a student is like having a full-time job. If you are taking an average 16 hour course load, then you should be spending 30-35 hours outside of class studying. That seems like a lot, and it is! If you just show up in class, soak in the lecture and then do not do anything to retain that information or to prepare for the next class, you will not truly learn the material (and you will probably not perform on your tests and quizzes the way that you want to). Covenant College has some amazing faculty who are here because they want to share their expertise with you. Take advantage of that! Make an effort to really learn the information, not just remember it long enough to take a test and then move on.

2. Ask for help.

Being a student means stepping outside of your comfort zone. You will need to learn to talk to your professors, classmates, and people in the resource offices on campus to ask for help. I really do believe that you will find a network of people who want you to succeed. This may mean keeping track of all of your quizzes, test and paper grades so that you know how you are doing, as well as building a relationship with your professor before you ever need help. They need to know that you care about your success as a student. It also means being willing to seek out assistance from upperclassmen and others in support services who can come along side of you and work out solutions.

3. Just say No.

Being a student means learning to say “No.” There is always something fun happening on campus--there will always be someone who will be willing to go get ice cream with you in the Great Hall or go for a jog on the cross country trails. You will have to learn when to say “Yes” to these options to give yourself a break from academic stresses and when to say “No.” Some people work best with a lot of structure (“I will study after class until 6 pm, have dinner, study until 10pm, have a break, get up at 7 am, review before class, etc”) others need some flexibility (“I know that I need to study four hours today and I just need to make sure that I allow time to do it”). No matter what your style is, you need to learn how to best take care of yourself, your time and your stress levels. It is NOT healthy to stay in the library all day and all weekend without time with friends, but it is also not healthy to stay up until 3 in the morning having wonderful conversations with your roommates when you have an 8:00 class the next morning for which you need to prepare.

4. Check calendars, schedules and deadlines.

Do not miss the dates to register, change your schedule, or drop classes. There are key dates when you need to visit the Records Office. Students do not receive credit for classes for which they are not officially registered. Likewise, students will receive a grade (potentially an F) for classes that are not officially dropped, even if they have never participated. So, check your official schedule in Banner and be sure that the classes that you are investing your time and energy into are the same ones that will be on your transcript!

5. Keep track of your grades and know your GPA (or potential GPA).

While being a student is not “all about the grade” it is still important to understand this measure of your academic success. There is a chart in the Academic Catalog that presents the numerical value of each letter grade. If you do not know how to calculate your GPA, ask someone to show you once you are on campus. It is important to note that students whose GPA falls below a 2.0 may be placed on Academic Probation (meaning you will be limited in your semester course load, be required to go to study hall and meet with your Academic Advisor and an Academic Probation Advisor) and students whose GPA falls below a 1.60 will be placed on Academic Suspension (meaning you will be suspended from the college until you are able to demonstrate your willingness and ability to succeed). We do not want you to fall into either category so it is important to have a good grasp on your grades and your standing in each of your classes.

Please take time this summer to really think through your style of learning and studying, how to manage your time well, and how to hold yourself accountable to God’s calling to you to be the best student that you can be. All in all, you are in for an exciting experience at Covenant, and it will be that much better if you can hit the ground running and start off well academically. I look forward to meeting each of you and would love to talk about how things are going for you as a new student. My office is located in Carter Hall 138 so please feel free to make an appointment anytime to meet with me.

I will see you soon!

Janet C. Hulsey
Director of Career and Academic Development