July 11, 2005

Dear New Student,

As you enter the Covenant College learning community, your primary calling will be your academic responsibilities. By choosing to come to Covenant, you have decided to enter into a rigorous academic environment. Because of this, I wanted to share a few expectations you should have as you plan to enter college life.

**Expect Changes**

Sometimes people who got good grades in high school are unpleasantly surprised when they get to college. They found it easy to get through high school without too much studying, and expect college to be more of the same. But, not all study habits (or lack thereof) that worked for you in high school are equally effective in college.

For example, if you’re the kind of person who thinks that you work better under pressure, you may be confusing panic with inspiration. Waiting until the last minute to complete an assignment doesn’t work as well in college. For one thing, assignments often are more involved, and the professor expects you to plan ahead and spend more time on them.

For another, you won’t get as many reminders about upcoming deadlines, so you’ll have to keep track of due dates yourself. Plus, you’ll be part of a community on the same tight schedule as you, all wanting access at once to the same books and computers.

**Expect Distractions**

We hope that you will have fun while you’re at Covenant, and we even try to plan events and activities that can give you a break from studying. But our assumption is that you are studying often and hard. We try to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to studying, but ultimately you have to motivate yourself to make it a priority.

Part of that will mean saying “no” to fun and attractive options. A bunch of friends will suddenly decide to go for a “donut run,” the Campus Activities Board will be sponsoring a good movie or lecture; your hall has a Bible Study or “creative date night” planned, and you have studying to do. In all those cases, studying should take priority.

Not only is it hard to make that choice initially, but it is also hard to stick with it. Even if you resist the urge to go see a movie with friends, it’s tempting to “skimp” a little on the studying, and do just enough to get by. But, “doing just enough to get by” is contrary to the Bible’s command to work with all our might, and to “study to show ourselves approved.” Being an obedient Christian student means taking studies seriously and doing them thoroughly.
Expect Results

No, we don’t mean “results” in terms of GPA and high-salaried jobs upon graduation, although we hope you work hard to maintain a GPA that reflects your effort and ability, and we hope you can support yourself financially after college. But, studies done in a Christian manner yield results that are, believe it or not, even more rewarding and exciting than your grade point average or your checking account balance.

Our purpose in studying at Covenant is to give God glory through the way we use our minds (we call it “thinking God’s thoughts after Him.”). We also want to take the things we learn and use them to change the world. We believe that the world’s knowledge (from accounting to zoology) is more helpful and effective when it’s put to use as God commands. Your Covenant studies will prepare you for the things you’ll encounter, and equip you to glorify God in your personal life and your life’s work.

Because it’s still summer, it may seem too early for you to begin thinking about your studies at Covenant College. Trust us; it’s not. While some concerns may seem more immediate (Who’s my roommate? Can I earn enough money this summer? Will I make any friends?), the most important part of your experience at Covenant will be the education you gain in and through the classroom. Teaching and learning is at the very heart of what we do as a college.

Reading these letters over the summer will help you prepare for the workload and academic demands that await you here. (And “reading,” as defined at Covenant, doesn’t mean just skimming. It may even mean—gasp!—reading things more than once!)

You may also find it helpful to talk with friends or family members who’ve already made a successful transition to college. Ask them what they did well; ask them what they wish they had done differently. It would be a good chance to get some free advice, so take advantage of it.

We believe God both led and equipped you to come to Covenant College to study and to learn. He has a plan for you while you’re with us and after you graduate. We’re committed to working with you to help you succeed.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact our office at 706.419.1107. We look forward to seeing you in August.

In Christ’s Service,

Doug Simons
Director of Student Life