

# COLLEGE EXCEL

## WHAT TO EXPECT YOUR FIRST TERM AT COLLEGE EXCEL

The following outline is designed to help you understand what typical College Excel students do week-to-week and how our coaches and academic team are involved in their lives during their first months of the program.

### WEEK 1 - ORIENTATION

A student's first week at College Excel (CE) is a structured orientation process supervised by our Enrollment Counselor. Each student will follow a pre-arranged schedule that includes daily appointments with their selected Life Coach and meetings with our Academic team. The day after a student enrolls they will begin participating in our First Term Student Development Curriculum where they will have the opportunity to meet other students, get outside, have some fun and begin to learn the necessary skills to be successful both personally and academically.

#### Day One

Their first day will be spent formally enrolling in CE, meeting with their Life Coach and setting-up their new home. Students who will be living in CE's Student Housing will be checked-in, have a meeting with their roommates to discuss house rules and review their resident responsibilities which include chores, menu planning, grocery shopping and cooking. For students not living in our Student Housing, we ask that you be moved in and set-up prior to CE's Orientation Week.

#### Day Two

Day two students begin participating in our First Term Student Curriculum. They will join in classes and be introduced to the classmates. In between classes they will meet with their Life Coach and our Computer Technician who will help set-up their computer to access our wireless internet system. The new student is taken on a tour of Bend and will receive help buying any additional items they may still need to feel settled into their home.

#### Day Three

Day three focuses on assessing the student's academic needs and wants. Each student spends the day at CE's Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) meeting with our team of academic advisors. Our team will help them to understand their academic status, determine their specific needs, and define their goals. Their Academic Coach will conduct a thorough interview with the student about their educational history and issue a Learning Styles Inventory which will help them understand their learning style and identify their strength and weaknesses. Based on this information, the student will be guided through choosing classes and registration for the upcoming term. Each student will receive a tour of their college campus's tutoring facilities, library, computer lab, bookstore, advising and counseling departments and athletic facilities. Also, each student will be shown how to sign up for campus activities, pay their tuition and add or drop courses. If a student still needs to complete the required placement tests for math and English, this will be scheduled and may delay the class registration process. During day three students are still attending their First Term Student Development classes.

#### Day Four

On day four students meet with their coach to develop a monthly budget for their living expenses that they will propose to their parents in week two. They will be more in the swing of things and continue to attend their First Term Student Development classes.

#### Day Five

On day five, the student meets with their Life Coach to review the week and share their life story, goals and dreams. Together, the student and the coach build a weekly schedule that includes class times, study hours, activities, meetings and free time. This schedule is revised weekly to help students maintain a balanced lifestyle where they are accomplishing their goals. In this meeting, the coach also helps clarify for the student how to utilize their coaching sessions so they are receiving the greatest possible benefit from their time together.

## WEEK 2

During week two, students begin to fill in the time between our First Term Development classes and if the term has begun, their college courses with an intensive goal setting process. With their Life Coach, they begin working on developing their Action Plan. During this time they establish short-term and long-term goals and learn how to utilize CE and the resources in their community and college to help them achieve their objectives. Their coach will also help the student identify the independent living skills they may need to acquire. Examples of these skills may be how to open a bank account; begin a job search; meet financial objectives; fill a prescription; find the best doctors, dentists and counselors; or how to make a healthy, nutritious weekly menu and shop within a budget. Students who are registered in CE's accredited courses will further solidify these skills by completing formal assignments. Examples of these accredited courses are Personal Finance, Study Strategies, Stress Management and Human Relations. Whether registered in a class or working directly with their coach, every student continues to work on these skills until they are successfully managing their lives.

**Each week, students fill out a detailed weekly schedule, develop a “to do” list and review their Action Plan with their Life Coach. Students meet one or two times a week in person with their Life Coach as well as speak with them by phone on a regular basis to check in. They will also meet with other College Excel coaches on a weekly basis. Generally, they will be coached in person four to six hours a week.**

If classes have started, each student's syllabus is carefully reviewed and a comprehensive calendar for the academic term is developed. This calendar of assignments, due dates and tests is developed by the student and their academic advisor. The calendar is reviewed every week by the student and his/her coach and together the student and coach (and if needed the ACE staff) build a weekly schedule that incorporates when assignments will be completed and when the student will prepare for tests and quizzes. Students are regularly attending Supervised Study Groups where they will receive the support to complete homework and prepare for tests. During this week, students seeking extra support will make appointments with the necessary private tutors.

For students not yet attending college classes, support is available for finding a job, internship or becoming involved in a community service project. Keep in mind that students are also attending their First Term Student Development classes which require a commitment of 20 hours per week. They are also working out, learning to meditate or participating in our weekly excursions to Barnes and Noble to discuss books and current events.

If a student has chosen to be part of Dr. Birch's recovery group they will attend their first session on Wednesday. This is a private therapy group for students who are working on the emotional issues surrounding their healthy recovery. Dr. Birch's group is an additional cost.

In week two, parents will receive an introductory call from their son's or daughter's Life Coach. The coach will give the parents an update on their student's progress and answer any questions they may have. Parents may schedule this call by emailing the coach. If parents are interested in our teleclasses they can schedule at this time. Parents are always welcome to email or call College Excel with questions or concerns, but regular updates are not given. If a parent wants a progress report on how their son or daughter is doing, we will be happy to conduct a three way call with the student, their Life Coach and the parents.

## WEEK 3 AND 4

During weeks 3 and 4, students are still adjusting to their new environment. They are being coached to stay on track, establish healthy daily practices and follow their weekly schedule. They are just beginning to practice the independent living skills they need to learn to be successful and if they are interested in working, they may still be looking for a job. If they are seeking counseling, they may still be interviewing mental health therapists or if they are looking to make new friends, they may begin in extracurricular activities offered by both CE and their college.

Academically, students are still being closely supervised and supported. They are beginning to establish an academic routine, know their professors and complete assignments. Because both OSU and COCC operate on a quarter schedule, classes move quickly and many students will have had their first paper due or taken their first quiz or test.

## MONTH 2 AND 3

By this time, students will have begun to establish a healthy daily routine where they are practicing independent living skills, such as managing their home, keeping track of their finances and establishing vital relationships in the community with people like doctors, therapists, tutors and new friends. They are achieving short-term goals and revising their action plan if needed. They may be working or involved in a community service project. Most students are making new friends and are comfortable with the CE staff. Their free time may include more fun activities and their confidence begins to build.

Academically, the ACE staff will have identified the areas where students need extra support. They have also had the chance to evaluate the student's true abilities. General guidance can now be offered in relation to possible degrees that could be pursued or career options where the student would have the best possibility of excelling. It is during this time period that many students are beginning to struggle with college life and the pressures of doing well. They may now seek out counseling or ask for extra support from their coach. They may revert to unproductive patterns of coping, but will be coached to implement new ways of overcoming their challenges.

By the end of month three students will have completed their 12-week First Term Student Development Curriculum. Most students will have a much better understanding of themselves as learners and they will know how to use college and community resources to get the support they need to be academically and personally successful. They are open to trying out new challenges and aren't shy about asking for help. They will have developed new friends and a solid relationship with their coach. Students will have built a foundation that will support their footing as they continue to create a life that brings them pleasure, challenge and success. If they have completed a successful college term, they are happy and more confident. Specifically, students will have acquired the following skills:

- Develop a time management plan that incorporates personal time, class time, and study time
- Know how to set and achieve goals that are important to their success
- Understand why college is important and the components and purpose of degree requirements
- Identify their career interests, skills, and competencies
- Identify the methods of finding the jobs they want
- Construct an effective cover letter and resume
- Identify all costs of living independently
- Construct a budget which will provide for both living expenses and savings
- Understand their level of emotional intelligence and how it plays a role in their success
- Identify their unhealthy or counter-productive personality traits
- Know how to plan a healthy weekly menu and shop within a budget
- Know how to cook 8-10 different healthy meals
- Assess their level of fitness and develop a personal health plan that incorporates both nutrition and exercise/fitness
- Practice a beginning level of meditation
- Use artistic endeavors as a way to relax and spend free time

As students progress through College Excel, we work to help them to balance their lives with fun, work, and time to relax. Students are given the time and encouraged to further explore their spiritual lives, practice meditative arts through local classes such as yoga or tai chi, work out regularly, learn new healthy activities like rock climbing or snowboarding and pursue their intellectual, musical or artistic talents. All of these activities are discussed with the student's coach and implemented into their Action Plan.

## EVENINGS

During the evenings, students have the option to participate in healthy, fun, supervised activities like cooking classes, bike rides, rock climbing, concerts, jam sessions, bowling and movies. The colleges also provide free evening and weekend activities for students that include drop-in volleyball, pick-up basketball, spin classes and open studio time for artists.

## WEEKENDS

During the weekends, students are expected to self manage. Whether they work, play, study or relax, this is their time. Each student's Life Coach will help him/her find fun, constructive ways to spend their time. Often times students group together on their own and plan activities that include each other. Every few months, if there is enough student interest and the weather permits, we contract with local guides to take students on outdoor adventures like backpacking, camping, mountain biking, rafting, horseback riding, snowshoeing or cross country skiing. These excursions are optional and are offered at an additional cost to the student.

Many of our students are snowboarders and skiers and head up to Mount Bachelor Ski Resort for fun during the winter months. For students who want to learn to snowboard or ski or just improve their technique, Central Oregon Community College offers college credit courses that are conducted on the weekends. For outdoor enthusiasts, the college also offers instruction in wilderness search and rescue, backpacking, cross country skiing and white water rafting. We encourage our students to sign up for these types of courses because they include weekend excursions with other young people seeking healthy ways to spend their time.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Each student progresses at his or her own pace during their time at College Excel. What students are working to accomplish is completely individual and based on their goals and needs. About 90% of College Excel students re-enroll for another three-month term of support, about 80% stay for a total of nine months, while 30% chose to continue past the nine month mark.

**Students who live in our student housing sign a lease for 3 months. If they would like to stay in the housing for another term, they must sign another 3 month lease. For students who are ready to move out we require a 30 day written notice.**

## WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO ENROLL IN COLLEGE EXCEL?

We highly recommend, if at all possible, that students enroll in College Excel two to three weeks prior to the beginning of the next college term. This gives students the time to set up their new life, get registered for classes and establish relationships with their coaches. Two weeks prior to each upcoming college term our 12-week First Term Student Development Curriculum begins. Students who enroll mid-term are required to participate in the First Term Student Development classes. These classes are designed so students may enroll at anytime.