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KEY TIPS FOR YOUR *SOPHOMORE YEAR*:
BEATING THE "SOPHOMORE SLUMP" & PRIMING THE PUMP FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSFER

♦ Meeting the Key **Criteria** Used by 4-Year Colleges to **Evaluate** Sophomore Transfers

1. **Academic Record**: Your overall GPA and grades in your pre-major courses.

2. **Out-of-Class Contributions:** Campus involvement and Leadership
   You can note involvement in clubs or student government, a volunteer experience or participation in an on-campus event on your *resume*, in your *personal statement* (letter of application), or on a *personal "fact sheet"* you provide to those who will write your letters of recommendation.

3. **Letters of Recommendation**:
   a) Choose people with whom you've had an *ongoing relationship*—e.g., academic advisor, employer, or instructor from whom you have taken more than one course.

   b) Choose instructors with whom *you've done well* and who *know you well*.

   c) Seek a *balanced* blend of letters from *academic*, *co-curricular*, and *experiential* sources (e.g., teachers—especially those in your major, academic advisor, club sponsors, employers).

   d) *Ask* the person *first* if s/he is *willing* to write you a letter, then come back with forms and envelopes (rather than coming to the person with these materials in hand—which may send the message that you have already assumed the person will say yes).

   e) Give the person you're asking *plenty of time* to write the letter (e.g., at least two weeks in advance of its due date).

   f) There are *three* things that you should provide those who are writing a letter of recommendation for you:
      (1) a *"fact sheet"* about yourself that will make the task easier for them, and more importantly, will enable them to cite concrete examples or specific evidence of your achievements and contributions (which will make the letter much more powerful);

(2) a *stamped, addressed* envelope –a personal courtesy that makes the job a little easier for your reference); and

(3) a *thank-you note* close to the date that the letter is due—which is not only a nice thing to do, but also serves as a reminder for the person, in case s/he has forgotten about your letter, or has not yet set aside time to write it.

4. ***Personal Statement*** (*Letter of Application*)
In the statement or letter you write when applying to a school, try to demonstrate your knowledge of:
a) *yourself* (e.g., your personal interests, abilities, and values),
b) your intended *major* (e.g., why you're interested in it and what you might do with it after graduation), and
c) the *college* to which you're applying—show that you know something specific about the school (e.g., its mission, philosophy, and specific programs—especially the particular program to which you're applying).

♦ To maximize success at larger, 4-year colleges, take the initiative and make an effort to *"connect"* with key people who can contribute to your success:

1. *Faculty*—make sure they know who you are (sit in front of class; come up to speak with them after class; visit them in their office; volunteer to help them with research they're doing that you find interesting or relevant to your career interests).

2. *Students in your major*—connect with them in study groups and major "clubs" (psychology club, history club, etc.).

3. *Career development specialists*—connect with them on strategies for enhancing your marketability after graduation; ask them about out what graduates (alumni) with your major have gone on to do, and if they can connect you with an alum in who is already in a career that you intend to pursue.