

We went straight to the source.

The Office for Parent Programs would like your son or daughter to have a successful and fulfilling college experience while at USC. In order to assist you in helping your student maximize the USC experience, we asked current students to share tips and advice that they wish had been provided to them before starting at USC.

Some of the advice is geared toward you as a parent, while other tips may apply more to your USC student. Feel free to browse this brochure and share it with your son or daughter to enhance the USC experience for both of you.

Ready to hear from the experts? Read on!

The Summer Before: Preparing for USC

- Buy supplies for school and your residence hall.
- Students: Pack early! Pack well!
- Students should create an address book of friends and family from home. Include friends' college addresses.
- Students and parents should talk about experiences the student wants to have while at college, what they want to study and maybe get involved in.
- Spend time together.

Most common answer: Visit the campus and explore the area; get a feel for where everything is. Learn where some of the administrative buildings are located: Registration, Financial Aid, Degree Progress, Housing, Transportation Services, Bookstore, Advisement, Student Services, Dining facilities, Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Coliseum, etc. Learn about the transportation around campus, such as Campus Cruiser, USC trams and DPS escorts.

Every USC Student Should...

We asked students to share the top three things they feel every USC student should do by the time they graduate. Here is a list of their responses:

- Put yourself outside your comfort zone. Go to events you normally wouldn't to meet new people. Challenge yourself by trying new things.
- Volunteer. Join a club. Take on a leadership position. These are not only great resume builders, but also excellent ways to make friends!
- Take classes you enjoy.
- Take advantage of student services offices and the Career Center for internships, job opportunities, externships and mentoring.

"Get an internship. The only way you will know if you will truly enjoy your future career is to jump into that environment early."

- Farzana Ansari, sophomore

- Visit your professors' office hours!
- Go to the football games.
- Sit on a bench and simply enjoy how beautiful our campus is!
- Value your time here.

Most common answer: Get involved!

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Advice from Students for Trojan Parents

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“Before a student leaves for USC they should purchase a Spirit Card so they don't miss out on any of the AMAZING football games. Also, parents should start making plans for Parents Weekend because it is such a great chance to fully experience USC by going to classes, meeting professors, tailgating and more.”
 – Emily Smith, freshman

Students: What to Do the First Few Weeks of School

- Get involved: sign up for clubs that interest you, go to the first meeting and decide if you want to continue. Don't overcommit yourself.
- Leave your residence hall door open so you can meet your neighbors and hall mates.
- Establish a good relationship with your roommate and RA.
- Get organized! During the first few weeks, professors will let you know when midterms, finals and other deadlines are.



Student organizations will have application deadlines too. Use a planner to keep track of everything.

- Call home occasionally. Your parents will be interested in what you're doing.

“The first few weeks are all about getting to know other people here, and being involved in something makes that process a lot easier.”
 –Craig Schliecher, sophomore

Staying in Touch

- Schedule a specific day/time each week to call.
- Talk about the frequency of calls that is acceptable for both you and your student.
- Familiarize yourself with new methods of communication like email and texting, or consider getting a webcam and using Skype.

Supporting Your Student Academically

- Be supportive of experiences that enrich students' academic experience, such as studying abroad or other international programs.
- Help your student find support or tutoring, if needed. There are resources on campus, such as the Center for Academic Support, the Writing Center and Supplemental Instruction, and not enough students take advantage of them!
- Allow them to balance their studies with fun.
- Ask them about their classes and express interest in their major.



Most common answer: Be encouraging! Praise good grades and be supportive if your student is struggling.

Supporting Your Student Socially

- Ask about the friends your student has made.
- Share personal stories about your experiences in college.
- Encourage your student to get involved with activities and organizations that interest them, and be open to the idea of your student participating in activities that don't necessarily interest you.

Most common answer: Be open-minded. Try to be open to hearing things you don't agree with. Be a good listener, and unless your student is doing something that may be harming him or herself, try not to judge.



“That's Not Helpful”... What Students Consider Bad Advice

- Pressuring your student to get straight A's.
- “Study to be a doctor, a lawyer or a successful business man.” There are a lot more good jobs in the world than just those three.
- Parents shouldn't try to force their students into the same experiences that they had in college. There is no “right way” to experience college.
- Discouraging your student from trying new things.
- Pressuring your student to choose a particular major because it's what you think is best.

Most common answer: Telling your student their only focus should be on academics. A big part of college learning comes from outside the classroom.



Anything Else?

- Your student is well taken care of.
- Let your student make mistakes and handle things on their own. It's the best way to learn.
- The calmer you are about your student's transition, the easier it will be for them!

“Encourage your student to explore opportunities to learn what is available and what excites and interests them. Most importantly, let your student ultimately choose the path they want.”
 – Mark Chiang, senior

- The Trojan family is real, and it's one of the best things about the university. Even though there are thousands of students who attend USC, it is a close-knit community.
- Your student will love it!