First Steps

**Did you know**

- There are over 17,000 students enrolled at BCC
- We have 3 locations: Paramus (Main Campus), Meadowlands, and Hackensack.
- Classes can be taken traditionally (in classrooms), entirely online (web based), or Hybrid (1/2 online and 1/2 in the class).
- There are many scholarship opportunities offered throughout the semester for students to pay for BCC.

**Steps to become a Bergen Student:**

1. **Apply to the College**
2. **Apply for Financial Aid**
3. **Study for Placement Test**
4. **Take the Placement Test**
5. **Open Portal**
6. **See an Advisor**
7. **Attend orientation to register for classes & pay your bill**

---

**College 101—for Parents**

**Bergen Community College**

**Welcome to Bergen Community College**

Thank you for supporting your student’s choice to attend Bergen Community College. Transitioning to college life can be filled with excitement and uncertainty, for both students and parents.

Our campus offers an array of resources to promote student success and keep you informed. Please use the information provided to help both yourself and your student make the transition.

It will take time for your student to learn how to become a college student. Very often we find that the first semester of college is a learning experience both in and out of the classroom. The best way to describe it may be to say that when they begin they are “high school students at college.”

**What is FERPA?**

What is FERPA and why is it important? FERPA stands for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. This is a federal law that protects the privacy and rights of college students. College faculty and staff may not provide information (attendance, grades, financial status, academic progress) to anyone but the student without written consent. This is to protect the student from illegal disclosure of information, bias, or prejudice. Information release forms are available in the Registration Office and must be completed by the student.

To help with the transition to college we suggest that you:

- Encourage Campus involvement—helps students to make friends and become a part of the school (Student Life)
- Encourage communication with professors. All teachers provide office hours for students to discuss class work one on one
- Allow independent decision making... failure may occur but important lessons may be learned
- Help identify support services on campus.

They key to a successful college transition from high school to college is communication. Talk you your student about grades, classes, finances. For more information go to: http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html
FAFSA – Have you filed your FAFSA? It is a question asked repeatedly around college campuses. FAFSA stands for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. It is the universal application for college loans, grants and aid for both federal and state. It may also be required also for scholarship applications. Awards from these programs may be combined in an “awards package to meet the cost of education.

The College Portal

The College Portal is for email, BCC news, Moodle, Web Advisor & more...

In order to activate your my.bergen.edu Portal account your student will need your Bergen User Name and Bergen Student ID number. Your Bergen User Name can be found in your Letter of Acceptance or by going to http://my.bergen.edu and clicking the “What’s my Bergen User Name”

1. Go to my.bergen.edu
2. Enter your Bergen User Name in the Bergen User Name field
3. Enter your initial password in the Password field. (The first two (2) letters of your last name with the first letter UPPER case. Followed by the last six (6) numbers of your Student ID number.
   For example, my name is John Smith, my Student ID number is 0123456. My Initial password is: Sm123456
4. Click Log On
5. Click Log On

Web Advisor

Web Advisor allows students access to their accounts online 24/7.

With a web advisor account students can:

- Add/Drop/Withdraw from courses during semester
- Student schedule of classes
- Check final grades
- Check Financial Aid status and awards
- Pay for classes
- Request an official transcript

Save time— Don’t stand on a line— use web advisor to register, pay your tuition, check financial aid and more...
How is College different from High School—parents edition

After 13 years of Back to School Nights, Teacher Newsletters, Parent/Teacher Conferences, college can be quite an adjustment for parents. For first timers, please note:

- There is no homework hotline in College. Students will have to follow the syllabus for work and assignments.
- Attendance is not mandatory. Your student must decide they want to go to class. Parents are not notified if their child is not in class.
- In High School, textbooks were provided to your student. In college your student will have to purchase, rent or borrow textbooks and materials required for class.
- In High School a note may excuse your student from being absent. In College, a missed class is a missed class. Many classes have strict attendance policies. If a certain number of classes are missed, final grades may be impacted.
- In high school, parents could schedule a meeting if they wanted to check on their child. In college, students may schedule an appointment to meet with a professor to discuss their situation.

If you have concerns, please have your student schedule an appointment with a Counselor in Room A118 and accompany them.

To work or not to work...

Students working full-time while taking a full course load in college can be extremely demanding and lead to poor, if not failing, grades.

We realize that, for many college students, full-time work is a necessity, not a choice. Your student may have worked full-time while attending high school, but the transition to BCC may present a bigger challenge than they are accustomed to. Strategies that worked for you before may not work as well in college.

Together with your student you may need to reassess the work-school balance to give the best chance for academic success. Consider the following:

- The student must be careful when creating their schedule. How can work hours and classes be scheduled to make the most use of time?
- Is success more feasible if the student works or studies part time even if it delays graduation?
- Will the employer allow time off during crunch times, tests, or finals?
- Can some of your earnings be replaced with financial aid to free up the time and energy you need for your coursework?

Helpful tip:
Have your students see if they can work on campus.

Student workers are employed through Federal Work Study and some College Offices. For information, go to A118, The Center for Student Success.

Time Management

Task and Time Management:
Time Management may very well be the number one challenge for new college students. High school is very structured, with most blocks of time during the day pre-scheduled for students.

College life is different. Course schedules vary from student to student, from day to day, & from semester to semester. Students may have more classes on some days, more free time on others. They may have only morning classes, or no classes until noon. Overall, college students may spend significantly less time in the classroom than they did in high school. That doesn’t mean that they shouldn’t be working more though! There is much more “out-of-classroom” work expected in college, which means that students need to make sure they are scheduling enough study time to support their in-class work. This may be new and prove challenging.
1. **What is your major?** - They should know. BCC does not have an “Undeclared” category which means all students have a major chosen at the point of application. Many students say they don’t have a major when they are actually listed as Liberal Arts or Professional Studies. These are both general degrees. If they are listed as “Non degree” your student will not be eligible for financial aid, scholarships and may not be able to register for certain courses.

2. **Will your major transfer to a 4 year school?** Traditionally AA (Associate of Arts) and AS (Associate of Science) Degrees transfer best. Some AAS degrees may transfer to certain schools. To find out, or change their major they go to the Center for Student Success, Room A118.

3. **Have you completed a graduation plan?** Based on your major requirements (see college catalog) and placement test results, your student should map out their semesters at BCC. This plan should be started as soon as possible so that students do not inadvertently register for the wrong classes.

4. **What is your GPA?** Knowing their GPA is one way for students to show they are invested in their education.

The Division of Student Affairs is here to help your student achieve a sense balance. From application to Orientation to Graduation we are here to help. The Division of Student Affairs collaborates with students, faculty, and staff to create welcoming, supportive and challenging environments that maximize opportunities for student learning and success. Through high quality programs and services, the Division staff facilitates student development, celebrates differences, and promotes civic engagement.

Questions your student should be able to answer:

1. **What is your major?** - They should know. BCC does not have an “Undeclared” category which means all students have a major chosen at the point of application. Many students say they don’t have a major when they are actually listed as Liberal Arts or Professional Studies. These are both general degrees. If they are listed as “Non degree” your student will not be eligible for financial aid, scholarships and may not be able to register for certain courses.

2. **Will your major transfer to a 4 year school?** Traditionally AA (Associate of Arts) and AS (Associate of Science) Degrees transfer best. Some AAS degrees may transfer to certain schools. To find out, or change their major they go to the Center for Student Success, Room A118.

3. **Have you completed a graduation plan?** Based on your major requirements (see college catalog) and placement test results, your student should map out their semesters at BCC. This plan should be started as soon as possible so that students do not inadvertently register for the wrong classes.

4. **What is your GPA?** Knowing their GPA is one way for students to show they are invested in their education.

---

"There is always a moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in." ~ Graham Green

Often, the biggest mistake a student makes is refusing to acknowledge there is a problem. *Any kind of problem.*

It will take time for your child, our student, to learn how to become a college student. Very often we find that the first semester of college is a learning experience in and out of the classroom.

Your student will face many challenges this year, especially the first semester. Changes in responsibility and independence combined with new social and academic challenges are par for the course in college, but many become overwhelmed with all the change.

Don’t let this be your student!