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## Cerny: Freshman mistakes lead to senior wisdom

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By Tasha Cerny

So you find yourself on KU's campus, and you're probably wondering what to do with yourself.- There are classes to go to, an overwhelming number of books to buy and about



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twenty different activities demanding your attention all at once.- As a senior going into her fourth year of this experience, believe me, it doesn't get any less hectic.

For most of us, a new school year is like a fresh start, a way to get back on track, improve and discover.- Everyone always associates this mentality with freshman; I often hear it phrased somewhat like, "The freshmen are crazy 'cause they're trying to make a new identity for themselves."- But in truth, college students are just crazy.

Personally, I spent the first semester of my freshman year completely overwhelmed by my academic and social life (or lack thereof). As the daughter of two educators, and someone who holds herself to high academic standards, I worried profusely that I wouldn't get good grades.- And if I wasn't worrying about my homework, I was worrying that I wasn't meeting enough people because I was too busy worrying about my homework. Needless to say, I made my first semester pretty rough for myself.

What I discovered quickly into my second semester, however, is that everything gets easier (or at least less overwhelming) the second time around.- And once I realized that I could still get good grades without thinking about class 24/7 it became more a matter of finding a balance between classes and people, than devoting myself to one and forgetting the other.

This is easier said than done.- I've spent many nights staying in with the intention of studying, only to spend the evening watching countless Youtube videos.- While this makes for great conversation topics later on, it isn't really conducive to either academics or a social life.- Besides, the whole point of a new school year is getting out there, participating, and trying new things, right? Trolling the internet into the wee hours of the night probably isn't going to help you achieve any personal goals (unless trolling the internet is your goal).

So, as a senior at KU, I've made a list of tips I wish someone had shared with me early on in my college career:

**1. 1. Be Proactive.-** Get involved, initiate things, stay on top of homework.- Seems simple enough, but with so much unsupervised freedom, the ease and temptation to put



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off everything and watch Netflix becomes tenfold. I watched every season of 30 Rock my freshman year. Tina Fey is my spirit animal, but you can't put that on a resume.

**2. 2. Keep a Schedule.** Mapping out what your average week will look like, including class times, commitments, and designated recreational time will help you see exactly how much time you have each week to devote to social activities, studying, and doing anything else (like going down to the coffee shop to stare at the attractive barista).

**3. 3. Make a List of Goals.-** Since classes are my number one priority, my personal list involves mainly socialization and being active. It's really not a good year until you've made a few new friends, awkwardly trying to learn a new sport or workout regime.

**4. 4. Make A KU Bucket List.-** How else can you say you truly experienced KU and Lawrence?- A few things on my bucket list include swimming in the Chi Omega Fountain, trying every restaurant on Mass Street and studying abroad.

**5. 5. Don't get bogged down.-** While ultimately you're here to graduate and get a job, don't get so caught up in the strangeness of college life or the idea of the future that you can't enjoy yourself and be responsible.- You can have it your way, but don't get crazy.

Remember, college is full of opportunity and experience, and starting the year off strong is huge in making your time here all it can be.- If I'd gotten these tips early on, my first semester freshman year would've looked very different. Do yourself a favor and take some initiative to make this year exactly what you want it to be.

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