

OPINION

Looking Onward How to successfully prepare for a New School Year

BY JAMES VO

COME NEXT FALL, times will be different. Seniors have graduated, undergraduates are moving up a level, and teachers are changing classrooms and groups of students. Gaining a new year of one's college career also brings new challenges with grade specific classes and a blank slate onto which one can fill with classes ranging from sports science to journalism to medieval studies. This is true for required classes, prerequisites, and experience required for college majors and minors, as well as scholarships attained before and during college. What this means is that it can be hard getting ready for a new year of college, especially when exposed to the unique culture and reality that there is no such thing as children in this setting. All students, faculty members, and professors are all adults and are expected to be more on their own, where if one needs help, they have to ask for it themselves.

Fortunately, resources exist to aid students in planning, executing, and evaluating their new school year plans, to secure classes, housing, and their personal life for the 2021–2022 school year. Although it can be nerve-racking, there are ways for students to take control and do their best to prepare for a new school year.

To begin, students should take a look at their academic degree audit and requirements for their scholarships they're in. Especially when a major is declared, this page will include any general education requirements, classes and prerequisites, as well as student faculty advisors and their academic advisors. Students may also want to explore more classes outside of their major, or in fields that interest them. These are important later this year when current freshmen, sophomores, and juniors are encouraged to sign up for classes during the summer or this new semester in the fall. As always, everyone is encouraged to speak to their advisors, especially when it comes to crafting their new semester. On a side note, the rest of one's college career at CSP can be planned out in one setting, as elements can easily be changed.

With the academic side of things more secure, housing should be addressed as well. Over the next few months there will be information shared within CSP Residence life. For a lot of people, this means finding a place to store their belongings which were collected to live on campus or apartments. It does depend on the family, but some may want to store them in places such as storage centers or other short-term storage until they can pick the items up and move them in fall 2021.

Preparing for next year means preparing to exit this year strong, whether it means working on an academic plan, assembling various personal belongings, clothes, bedding, and household items, preparing a summer plan, and keeping up to date with classes in order to leave CSP strong and on good terms academically and socially.

The Great Zoom Debate

BY ANNA FRITZE

ALONG WITH THE CRAZINESS of social distancing and mask-wearing, COVID also brought increased online classes. These online classes themselves brought frustration among both teachers and students who had to learn the ways of online school, late assignments due to technology, and plenty of awkward encounters with malfunctioning cameras and microphones. These issues have been worth it to many, though, since it gives the opportunity for students and teachers to stay safe during these unsafe times. However, students at Concordia have different ideas about these online classes.

Senior psychology major Tacora Taylor has had some issues when it comes to online classes, but those issues are not with the technology. Taylor says that she believes students should have a say in whether or not they can attend classes over Zoom for those classes that are in-person. She says, "I made all my courses online this semester because I'm very uncomfortable with coming into classes." She's especially nervous this semester with the new strands of COVID that have been discovered, and all of the positive tests that occurred last semester without being reported. She informed one of her professors of an in-person course of these feelings, but instead of emailing her back directly, Taylor's professor sent out a mass email that stated all students would meet in person for the course. The first day of classes, her professor responded with a change and said that the course could be done through Zoom, but students were still required to come in for tests and assessments. On this, Taylor says, "I still feel as if students should have a full say in how to receive classes. We are the ones paying for the course, not the ones getting paid."

On a similar note, junior Erika Soukup arrived at

one of her classes for the first time and was surprised to find a room full of students where everyone had to share a table. She said that she was lucky enough to have a roommate in that class that she could sit with, but it still made her feel very uncomfortable throughout the time she was there. In contrast with Taylor's situation, Soukup's professor understood the discomfort and even encouraged the students to take the class over Zoom.

On having the option to come to class in-person or take it online, junior Allie Gosen said, "I had a class last semester that was an option for both. This made attending the class really easy as a commuter, but it also made it easy to slack off." This is a common viewpoint of students this year, but Gosen continued, saying, "Ultimately, having the option is incredibly freeing, and it's a good opportunity to exercise independence, responsibility, and accountability as students and young adults." Basically, because it is so easy to not pay attention, we are faced with the choice to make the adult decision and learn in order to better our future careers, or we can make the juvenile decision and not move forward in our lives.

These different stories and viewpoints show how students feel regarding being forced to take classes in person or online. With the pandemic, many students don't feel safe going to classes in person. Those who know they have the option to stay safe at home feel relief with the knowledge that they don't have to come in contact with multiple people every day. Not only does online learning help students stay safe, it also helps to increase maturity and accountability as students work to achieve their professional goals.

A Snowy Christmas

BY KACIE DUNCAN

BING CROSBY'S TIMELESS LYRICS, "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas," have never resonated with me more than my first Christmas in Minnesota. Personally, the only good part of not having snow until the day before Christmas was being able to sing those lyrics at the top of my lungs in the most heartfelt way I ever have. Besides that, I was pretty crabby about our lack of snow. If I wasn't a broke college student with classes and a job to attend to, I would have hopped on a plane to my wonderful home in Alaska, where they are most definitely not lacking any snow.

Let's focus on something positive though, we did get snow in time for Christmas this year! It truly felt like a Christmas miracle. It was pretty magical watching the snow come down as I made my way to work on Christmas Eve, appreciating the white flurries in a whole new way. I know that loving snow is an unpopular opinion (as my co-workers love to scold me for), but I can't help it. The nostalgia in me loves to see the snow coming down and covering the trees in thick blankets. It reminds me of building snowmen with my friends, working to get the three perfectly proportioned body parts. It reminds me of drinking hot cocoa as I watched Scooby-Doo with my little brother.

I know the snow is cold and wet and slippery, but hopefully the next time it snows this winter you can take a moment to appreciate it for the memories it brings. Perhaps you can appreciate it knowing that there are little children somewhere in the city making the best snowman of their lives. Whatever your feelings on snow and winter are as a whole, I hope you all drive safely and maybe go outside and catch some snowflakes on your tongue to let your inner child out.