



From Fall 2015 Freshmen

Summer 2016

Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement
Holland Hall 306 - 963-5383

Tiger Echoes

Past Freshmen Letters to Incoming Students

Special points of interest:

- Financial Aid issues and advice
- Experiences differ
- Wishes for success
- Getting motivated
- Preparation for life
- Preregistration
- Love TSU
- Friendliness

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Welcome to the SECOND

issue of *Tiger Echoes: Past Freshmen Letters to Incoming Students.*

Students enrolled in UNIV1000 Freshman Orientation were asked to write a letter to you, the incoming freshman student, with the purpose of providing you “insider information.”

These letters are from those who have just completed their first semester of college sharing with you what they wish they had known! Letters are

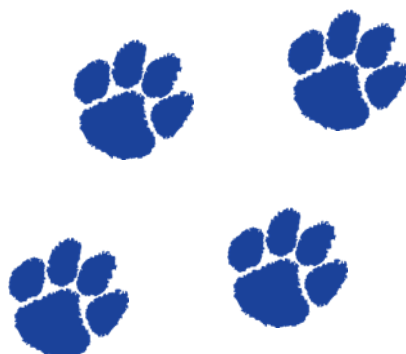
unedited and give very specific advice

on study, play, residence hall life, and a number of other suggestions for making your first semester, first year, a successful year!

Although the names of letter writers have been omitted, their sentiments are from the heart.



Current Freshman -



You will have the opportunity to share your experience with the next generation Freshman class in Issue 3 of *Tiger Echoes!*

“College is what you make it”

Dear Freshman,

College is what you make it, never forget that. It is definitely going to be a big adjustment due to the many differences between college and high school. But the key to success is to take care of your business. I mean, don't get me wrong, have fun, go to parties, school-related activities, mingle with people and try new things. Just don't have too much fun and fall off of your studies. Always be humble and remember why you're here.

*“My biggest downfall
was thinking I knew it
all—.”*

Welcome to Tennessee University!

Trust me you have made the right decision by coming here as long as you make good decisions yourself. TSU has a lot to offer, more than you can ever think of. If you want to know something, do not be afraid to ask questions like I was. **One of my biggest downfalls was coming into my first semester thinking I knew it all and that I am grown now.** Yes, you're an adult now and can make your own decisions, Freshmen, but you do not have college figured out if you have never been, so make sure you ask question. It will definitely help you out in the long run. The professors, staff, and even the students here do not mind answering any questions. The more you know how TSU operates, you can use to the flow of things. Also make sure you learn the campus where everything is because you never know what you may need in the

Choose your classes early!



Dear Freshman:

My advice to you is to choose your classes early, so you can pick the classes you like and the professors you want. Also, try to put all of your classes in 2 days minimum—3 days maximum, so you have time to finish all the assignments for all classes. Use your time wisely because this is the most important thing.

Sincerely,

A Second Semester Freshman Student



Dear Incoming Freshman,

Your first year at TSU will be stressful, so prepare yourself. There is so much to do with SO little time. If you want to be successful here, you need to be punctual and stay on your business. You can and will be left behind if you're not paying attention. I suggest making your money and education your number one priority. Everything at TSU isn't all bad thought, you'll meet some really cool people from all over and get to meet those few teachers who really care and change your life. I major in Early Childhood

Education and never knew I liked Geography so much until I got into Dr. Padgett's class. Now Geography is my minor. Most importantly, don't be afraid to go out and have a good time. You don't have to party everyday but getting involved is a really big part of getting the TSU experience, in my opinion. Also, I know it's really hard but please don't PROCRASTINATE. It's not going to do anything but push you further away from your goals. One thing I hope all freshmen will remember is to not give up and GO GET HELP. There are so many organizations and TUTORING centers to go to. You need to use them because you're paying for them to be there. Be responsible and enjoy yourself.. Best Wishes—



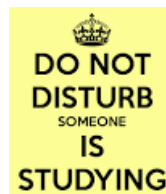
Dear Future Freshman,

I started out my first semester of college in fear. I didn't know how college was going to be like: how professors and other students were going to act, how to get around campus, how my schedule was going to fit with my life outside of school and more. As my second day of classes was coming to an end, I felt a little better because I had a feel of how my schedule was going to be like. It's all about TIME MANAGEMENT, especially using your time wisely outside of classes. When it comes to studying, it's all about your personal way of studying. Be mindful of how you like to study: in a library, your dorm room, a café, with or without music on. TSU professors are caring and always willing to help students. They provide resources given by themselves or the university, letting us know we are not alone. Speaking of being independent, it's not a bad thing. Learning to become independent is essential while being a college student. Don't forget while you're on campus, a lot of connections are made. A common connection we all have is food. The café at TSU provides a variety of dishes along with the Chick-Fil-A near it. On a weekend out, you can try Which Wich on West End, providing healthy and tasty sandwiches. Working out might be the last thing on a stressed freshman's mind, however, it shouldn't be. At TSU, there is a Wellness center at the Gentry complex open for all students to exercise in.

Future Freshman,

1. Attend class
2. Be attentive
3. Learn your professor's habits
4. Do your homework
5. Study

And your first semester will go by as a breeze! Don't forget to have fun! Good Luck, -



Dear Fellow Freshmen:

First I would like to congratulate you for making it this far. If you are here that means you have tackled a lot of obstacles. Please do not take that for granted. Your education is of much value not just for you but for you and your future family.

Secondly, I know how it feels to be a freshman, embarking on a new place with a lot of new faces and another realm of opportunities. Do not tread lightly. Use this to your advantage. Ask questions and if you do not get the answer you need dig deeper until you are satisfied. This is where making yourself familiar with the campus comes in handy. There are a lot of resources. Please utilize them. This is not longer a free education, this is your money or your parents money being spent. You do not want to waste it.

Third of all, I cannot stress enough how important it is to take advantage of your academic and program advisors to stay on top of what classes are needed. You do not want to waste your time or your money. Keep up with your GPA. This is very important for a lot of reasons. If you drop or add a class on-line, follow up and make sure your classes was actually added or dropped. This is your responsibility.



Last but not least, enjoy the place you will be spending the next four years but make your education your priority. If you came here to party then you came with the wrong agenda. Join clubs, get involved with community events and volunteer not only is it a rewarding experience, it looks good on your resume.

Congratulations for making it this far. Tennessee State University is a great college and can take you any-

Plan Ahead.....set priorities...take classes seriously

To all incoming freshmen, I would like to welcome you to Tennessee State University and wish you the best of luck with your new college experience. I hope you find this letter informative and helpful to start your first semester here at TSU. Once you have settled into your new place, try to organize your schedule and set priorities. Get involved on campus, meet new people, and learn about the courses, teachers, different majors, clubs, etc....you never know what great opportunities might be hiding for you. Take your classes seriously



and try to learn everything there is to learn. Live the full experience in your class, ask questions and don't be shy. Utilize everything that's offered here at TSU like computer labs, gym, and students services. Make sure you see your advisor at least twice a year and plan your schedule a head, classes usually get filled very fast here at TSU. Talk to your teacher regularly about your grade and don't wait till the last week of the semester, they don't like that. You're probably overwhelmed right about now with mixed feelings of excitement and scared, but just remember to do your best and to enjoy it.

For me, this is my first semester at TSU. I'm a transfer student. So coming to TSU I really didn't know anything or know what to expect for the university. I just wish some upperclassmen would have just told me about the school is some ways as in like where some places are, the best places on campus and just what to expect. With being here for half a semester, I think I caught on pretty well!



Don't be afraid to ask questions

Welcome to The Tennessee State University! Trust me you have made the right decision by coming here as long as you made the decision yourself. TSU has a lot to offer, more than you can ever think of. If you want to know something do not be afraid to ask questions like I was. One of my biggest downfalls was coming into my first semester thinking I knew it all and that I am grown now. Yes you're an adult now and can make your own decisions but you have college figure out if you have never been, so make sure you ask questions it will definitely help you out in the long run. The professors, staff, and even the students here do not mind answering any questions. The more you know how TSU operates you can get use to the flow of things. Also make sure you learn the campus and where everything is because you never know what you may need in the future.



Utilize the resources on campus

First, I would like to Congratulate you for making it this far. If you are here that means you have tackled a lot of obstacles. Please do not take that for granted. Your education is of much value for you but for you and your future family.

Secondly, I know how it feels to be a freshman, embarking on a new place with a lot of new faces and another realm of opportunities. Do not tread lightly. Use this to your advantage. Ask questions and if you do not get the answer you need, dig deeper until you are satisfied. This is where making yourself familiar with the campus comes in handy. There are a lot of resources. Please utilize them. This is no longer a free education, this is your money or your parents money being spent. You do not want to waste it.

Third of all, I cannot stress enough how important it is to take advantage of your academic and program advisors to stay on top of what classes are needed. You do not want to waste your time or your money. Keep up with your GPA. This very important for a lot of reasons. If you drop or add a class on-line, follow up and make sure your class was added or dropped. This is your responsibility.

Last but not least, enjoy the place you will be spending the next four years but make your education your priority. If you came here to party then you came with the wrong agenda. Join clubs, get involved with community events and volunteer not only is it a rewarding experience it looks good on your resume.

Congratulations for making it this far. Tennessee State University is a great college and can take you anywhere you



LEARN EVERYTHING THERE IS TO LEARN!

To all incoming freshman, I would like to welcome you to Tennessee State University and wish you the best of luck with your new college experience. I hope you find this letter very informative and helpful to start your first semester here at TSU. Once you have settled into your new place, try to organize your schedule and set priorities. Get involved on campus meet new people and learn about the courses, teachers, different majors, clubs etc...you never know what great opportunities might be hiding for you. Take your classes seriously and try to learn everything there is to learn. Live the full experience in your class, ask questions and don't be shy. Utilize everything that's offered here at TSU like computer labs, gym, and student services. Make sure you see your advisor at least twice a year and plan your schedule ahead, classes usually get filled very fast here at TSU. Talk to your teacher regularly about your grade and don't wait till the last week of the semester, they don't like that. You're probably overwhelmed right now with mixed feelings of excitement and scared, but just remember to do your best to enjoy it.

Seek Academic Advising Early!

In a few months, you will be embarking on one of the greatest educational journeys of your life Congratulations! All of those numerous hours prepping for the SATs and packing your schedule with much needed courses and those exhausting trips visiting college campuses before finding the one that best fits you—has finally paid off, because you are here.

I would strongly suggest that you take advantage of every presentable opportunity. Ask many questions, no question is a dumb question and it does not matter how many times you ask the same question just as long as you get a full description and understanding of what it is you need to know. Please understand and realize that this is your education. I cannot stress that enough.



Please make yourself familiar with the college campus. It will be to your advantage to know all of your resources. Make sure you meet with your advisor designated for your chosen Major as often as you can to assure you are on the right track with your educational goals. You do not want to waste your time or money by taking unnecessary classes and neither do you want to repeat classes that you have already taken. Along with that make sure you keep up with your transcripts. I cannot stress enough how important your GPA counts and will matter when time to apply for your desired program.

Get involved. Join clubs, participate in community activities and volunteer is a rewarding experience. The way you see life now will soon change if you are engaged. Be proactive about your future, this is a great way to build relationships, to meet new people and to establish networks as well as shape the future for the freshmen to come.

Once again, I would like to extend a warm Welcome to Tennessee State University and I wish you all the success with your education journey.



Congratulations on your acceptance to Tennessee State University. As a former TSU student, I hope this letter will give you some good advice to help you with upcoming four years. I was a transfer student and overall my experience here was great. First of all, as a freshman make sure you get in the habit of completing all applications and forms before deadlines. I would usually print out a copy of the semester's calendar from the TSU's website and keep it with me at all times. Make sure you have an advisor and meet with them at least twice a year before each semester, that would keep you on the right track in terms of what classes to take. Use your resources that are offered by the university and don't hesitate to ask your professors and advisors for anything you're not sure about. Surround yourself with the right people and don't waste your precious time. Join clubs and organizations, it would look great for future applications.

Make sure you plan out your day and dedicate enough time to study for each class at least an hour for every time class meet. Do your homework and papers ahead of time and the main key is to not procrastinate. Good luck and have fun.

College is not like high school! Not even close -

As I wrap up the third year of my undergraduate career, I have realized one thing. Time flies. It seems like just yesterday that I came into this confusing and ever-changing experience that we know as college. So far, it has been a bumpy ride, but I am proud to say that I have adjusted pretty well to this lifestyle. I have made many mistakes throughout the past three years, but I have learned from these mistakes. I am reflecting on some of the challenges that I have faced, and I've come to realize one thing: I wish I would've known how much different college is from high school so that I could've been better prepared for it. So now I write this letter to you, the incoming freshmen, so that you don't make the same errors that I did.

At TSU, there are a lot of activities and organizations on campus throughout the week, so it is very easy to lose track of your studies. The most important advice that I can give you is: Don't forget why you are here. You came to acquire an undergraduate degree in the field of your choice. A lot of students, come into their freshmen thinking that it they will get a head start on extra-curricular and their classes will just work our like high school. College is a lot harder than high school. You're going to have to put in a lot more time and effort if you want to graduate on time. I'm not saying that extracurricular activities and school organizations are bad. I'm just pointing out that you must use your time wisely in balancing classes with whatever else you get involved in.

Choose your friends wisely!



College is very serious, not only does it determine your future but it molds you as a person throughout your years attending. Tennessee State University is known as a party school; but if you aren't self-disciplined, coming to TSU will be a tough task for you to be a scholar student, so much temptation. Some of the friends you meet in your freshman year may not be around to finish up the mission you have started. **Therefore choose your friends wisely and make sure you all are after the same goal, graduating and getting a degree.** Most importantly teachers here take attendance very strictly; as a result being in class consistently will only serve you a purpose at the end of the semester. In addition, if you know you aren't an early bird; please don't sign up for any 8am classes if you have the option to.

First off I would like to inform you that Tennessee State University is a phenomenal school to attend. The first thing I would suggest is not being antisocial. Being antisocial may lead you to missing out on a lot of opportunities. I came to Tennessee State University being anti-social and to do this day I regret it a lot. In addition, stay on top of your progress as a student. For example, get very familiar with your teachers, advisors, and other staff members that can put you in the position to graduate on time. Also, attend as many on campus functions as possible; for example, seminars, sporting events, probates, etc. you will regret if you miss out on those experiences.



I would like to welcome all incoming freshman on behalf of Tennessee State University. Your journey at TSU is just beginning so try to start it right. Plan ahead and finish your applications on time and don't wait till the due date. See your advisor and register for classes right away from day one. **Have a good relationship with your professors and talk to them about the materials and your grade. Be very cautious with your GPA, it is easier to bring it down then it is to bring it up!** Take every educational opportunity that comes your way, you'll appreciate it later. Choose your friends wisely! It's ok to go once a week, but don't let it affect your studies and schedule and mostly important learn to say NO! Like no to going out when you have things to do for school. Use your money wisely; I myself faced some difficulties while managing my loans and financial aid. Don't take out any extra loans. Pay your balance on time. And it's ok to have a fulltime or at least part time job if you can handle it with your school schedule. The main key is to manage your schedule and making it work. Stress is very common among college students, try not to stress so much over everything. Make enough time to study so you don't have to stress. Workout and relax so you can relieve some stress. My last advice to you is to be responsible and use your freedom wisely. Have fun and make the best out of it.

Stay healthy!



I write this letter to you in hopes that you don't make some of the same mistakes that I did when I first came into this school. I believe that if I were given advice and warned about certain things when I started my college career, I would have been a lot better off. I hope that my advice helps you to succeed while at TSU.

The most important advice I can give you is to always maintain your health to the best of your abilities. A lot of people come into college thinking that the freshmen-15 is just a myth. It is real, and it is a very slippery slope. Your eating habits change in college, so it is important that your exercising habits change as well. Always keep track of how many times a day you're eating and try to eat healthy as often as possible. It is very easy to gain the freshmen-15, but it is also very easy to stay away from it.

Dear incoming freshman, welcome to the impeccable Tennessee State University. Congratulations, you've made it! You've proven you have what it takes to prosper by completing high school, now it's time to move into a new chapter of your life and strive for your set goals. My advice to you would be to avoid influence. Tennessee State University is infamously known as a "Party School". Many students are victims of being influenced into excessive partying, usage of drugs and other negative things. Partying and drugs make it hard to focus on what's important: your future. The best way to have a successful future is through education.

Set goals to achieve!

Congratulations freshman class of 2020! Welcome to the great Tennessee State University! The journey to success has been long and hard, it's not over yet. You've proven you have what it takes to prosper by completing high school, now it's time to move into a new chapter of your life and strive for your set goals. My advice for you would be to know what interests you. Before dedicating your time into any degree field, you must first know what interests you. From personal experience, not knowing could set you back tremendously. Many students spend years undecided on the majors, careers, and futures wasting hundreds of hours of time and thousands of dollars in loans which you eventually have to pay back. Finding your interest isn't just the only part. Once you find it, you must plan for the future and decide the best major that both interests you and is productive for your future. Finding and follow your goals are the best way to success at TSU. Have a great year!



When I was a Freshman as I reflect back now as a Senior, I wished my upper classmen would have told me to ask questions. **No question is a dumb question.** For a long time I went through taking classes I did not need or had to take. I wish they would have told me to stay in constant contact with my counselor. I wish they would have insisted I take advantage of the scholarships to take extra classes such as in Maymester. I wish I was told to find help for classes I was struggling with so I would not feel the need to drop them. I wish I was informed of filling out financial aid before a certain time as not to miss out on scholarship money. I wish I was told to press through even when it seemed impossible.

Don't get side tracked!

There will be a lot to learn and to get used to while you are in your first year of your collegiate career. You will be faced with a plethora of peer pressure to drink, smoke, party, and etc. College can teach you how to be responsible by putting your work first, then party last. **It is very easy to get side tracked while you're in your first year because you're on your own for the first time, mom and dad isn't there to tell you what to do.** Nevertheless, it is up to you to make the right decision.

Your first time being on campus may seem to you like it's a big world, but once you get used to it you'll see that everything is primarily 5-7 mins apart. There are also maps stands posted over campus to help guide you. Your first two years, your favorite building will be the student success center building. This building you will get advised for your general education classes and if you need any help at all; tutoring sessions are held in this building as well as counseling. After those two years then you will be sent to your actual program department for advisement where you be advised in your program classes.

If you want to get more involved on campus, there are many ways to do so; you can join student organizations such as SUBG or SGA, who are students that are elected to put activities and events for students, but if you go on tstate.edu/studentorganizations you will see a whole list of organizations that you can choose from.

As a freshman it is important to know all the information you can regarding the scholarship information, withdrawing from classes, financial aid, and what as a student you are required to have. Because the wrong decisions can cause you to be in college longer than you expected.



Coming to college is a big step. You are on your own; you are part of the real world now. **You are not a child anymore;** it is time to gain some independence. Do not sell yourself short. Take pride in all that you do, again you are doing this for you. There will be no one on your back saying "make sure you do that homework", "come in before midnight", "clean this/that", YOU have to look out for yourself. College is about prioritizing. It is up to you determine if partying until 5am is reasonable or not when you have an 8am class following. You make your own decisions in college. Don't play yourself. College is not hard at all, but it does take time and dedication. One thing about it you must be dedicated if not you are here for all of the wrong reasons. Of course there will be times where you want to break down and think about quitting, don't let this get the best of you, keep going.

Your freshman year is the most important year of all, don't mess it up. Stay focused. You can play hard but make sure at the end of the day you have worked hard.



Financial aid and handling your money

TSU is an amazing school. There are a lot of opportunities to discover who you want to be, where you would like to go, and your passion. One of the biggest things I would have like to known before I attended is organizational skills, knowing the faculty, and the additional educational tools the school offers.



Like with any state university, you are responsible for most if not all activities of your day. You need to organize your life to accommodate when you need to register for class, when you need to be advised, how to find scholarships and their due dates, and making sure your financial aid is in order. TSU does have some great student activities, some sponsored by the school and some are not, but you have to have that organization and balance in your life to make sure you are putting your true purpose here at TSU first. Time management is key. You have to break down what you need to do whether it be rest, school work, a job, family, or friends to see what is a high priority. Many times you may have to choose one over the other and understand that this is all for a reason, to better my future.

Another major thing is get to know your faculty. Get to know your advisor in the LRC, but also know your college advisor as well. There are times that my college advisor informed me of more opportunities that my LRC advisor and vice versa. Get to know your teachers they always can make time for you especially if they know you are trying. Get to know your UNIV teacher and take the class seriously. Since I have taken this course, I have been able to facilitate more scholarship opportunities which has saved me about \$5000 so far in one semester and for someone who doesn't receive grant money it is a major contribution to lowering my debt. Those are a true asset to the university and you should utilize their knowledge as much as possible.

Lastly know about the computer labs, Tiger tutoring, teacher office hours, and class tutoring. TSU offers so many opportunities to

Understanding financial aid

You must know that financial aid is not required to be disbursed to you for your full four years of college. What I mean by this is that you must comply with all rules in order to maintain government funding. You must maintain a certain GPA, pass more than half of the course hours you have completed/or completing (you will learn more about this along the way) and you must only take a certain amount of hours in an academic year. The worst thing you could do is have your financial aid taken away trust me I would know. College is not cheap so make sure you keep up with where you are when it comes to how many course hours you have. If you have to withdraw from a course, make sure you speak with that professor or an advisor before dropping that course. Too many W's on a transcript due to withdrawing from a course can also result in termination of your financial aid. Course you can file an appeal to try to regain your financial aid, but this does not always work so make sure you stay on your toes. Good luck and welcome to The Land of Golden Sunshine!

Don't forget WHY you're here!

It's getting close to that time for you to guys to start your freshmen year in college! Don't get too excited though because it's harder than you think. There will be due dates back to back, papers left to right, and a lot of tests you will have to take, but keep calm as long as you stay focused you can get everything done. College is a learning experience and trust me you will learn a lot. One thing you will learn is responsibility. College is also what you make it. So never forget the reason you came. Buckle up an get ready for the ride because it is a long one.



Learn first— make the most of your time at TSU

I hope you all are excited about beginning your first year of your college career here at the Land of Golden Sunshine. We are very grateful you chose THE Tennessee State University as your choice to fulfill your aspirations; we welcome you into Big Blue with arms of love. The administration as well as the students are here to help you with anything or able to point you in the right direction. Practice random acts of kindness, make friends, network and socialize. Do not be afraid to speak or smile at someone you see walking on campus, everyone here at TSU is very friendly. You may never know but a simple smile or greeting can make someone's day. I have only been at TSU for one semester and I feel like I have known most people here all of my life. Get out there and make yourself known! Its college, you are here to meet new faces as well as learn. Make sure you learn first though. Enjoy your time here at Big Blue. College years swiftly pass.