



THE GREEN PAGES

News from Christ School's College Guidance Office

Fall 2017



Making Favorable First Impressions

by Darryl W. Jones

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Shake a hand!

When attending college fairs, visiting admissions offices, or meeting with admissions officers at your school, shake hands, have good eye contact, and ask questions that matter to you. For example, you probably care very little about actual student/faculty ratios, but you DO care about how much time faculty and students spend together beyond the hours that are required in class and during office hours.

Be authentic!

Students and parents often try to think of the “things I heard that admissions officers like to see,” and, in doing so, may come up with the “right things to say” and the “right things to join.” We want to know you and your own “uniqueness.” For example, if you love babysitting or have a part-time job during the academic year, it may not appear to be flashy, but the maturity, good judgment, and dedication that babysitters and employees have is just as substantive. A brief story: I once interviewed a young man who saved the lives of four year-old twins, and he teared up at the thought of potentially not saving one or both. On his personal statement, he used phrases such as “I thankfully had the wherewithal to act appropriately.” We want to imagine YOU when we read your essays.

Be consistent!

When applying to places that recommend interviews and require essays, recommendations, and activities lists, nothing is reviewed in isolation. We expect to see the same language, the same set of activities, etc. regardless of the source. When we compare documents, we want to see the same items appear. Glaring inconsistencies cause us to wonder why those inconsistencies exist. For example, if you are a team member and NOT a captain, please just show us that you are a dedicated team member. If other items mention that captain position, we will wonder why.

Go against the flow!

Here is a pro tip: At the end of an open house or large visitation event on campus, when we bid you farewell, be sure to come to connect with the closing speaker, get his or her contact information, and send a follow-up “thank you” message! Very few will do that, and most families will dutifully leave rather than make that move.

Take the lead!

If your parents say things such as “we are looking for a place that will give us the following opportunities,” remember that YOU are the person who is attending college, and YOU need to use your voice. You can always send e-mails with questions if you do not have time to call during the school day; we want to hear from you and know that you are in control of your process.

Have a positive social media profile!

If you wouldn't show a post to your parents, pastor, priest, rabbi, or grandparents, etc., then DON'T post it.

Remember that we like you!

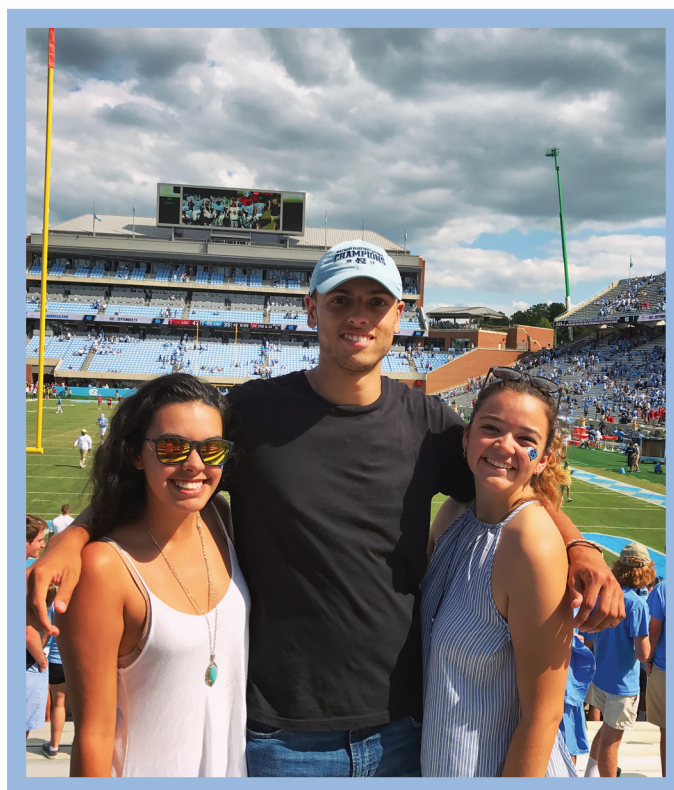
We are all involved in this profession because we like working with young people. It is okay when you don't know what to ask or you aren't entirely certain of your life's path. We want to help you; our profession is human, and we understand you.

GOOD LUCK!



Alumni Profile: Devon Johnson, Class of 2016

One-on-One with Devon Johnson '16 UNC-Chapel Hill Morehead-Cain Scholar



Devon with fellow Morehead-Cain Scholars and Tar Heels fans at Kenan Memorial Stadium

What are your freshman year survival secrets/tips pertaining to academics? Dorm life? Extra-curricular/social life?

Academic life at UNC is relatively similar to academic life at Christ School with a few exceptions. First, the class sizes here vary significantly. I've had lecture classes with over 300 students, music classes with around 60, and English classes with fewer than 20. The best way to navigate large classes in my experience is to first and foremost go to office hours. Whether meeting with a teaching assistant or your professor, office hours are a great way to get to know your professors and their expectations for you to succeed in the class. Also, the most important piece of advice is to advocate for yourself and the grades you believe you deserve. In large classes, grading errors do happen. As long as you are professional when going about it, professors will sometimes raise or correct your grade. Alternatively, they will tell you what to do differently next time, and they may even be more generous on the next assignment from your demonstrated effort. Another tip on academics is to take notice of the weighting of assignments. In some courses, you will turn in about five assignments the entire semester, and that will make up your entire grade. During my first semester, I made the mistake of not realizing how heavily an assignment weighed on my grade and consequently under performed—it was difficult to recover from that error.

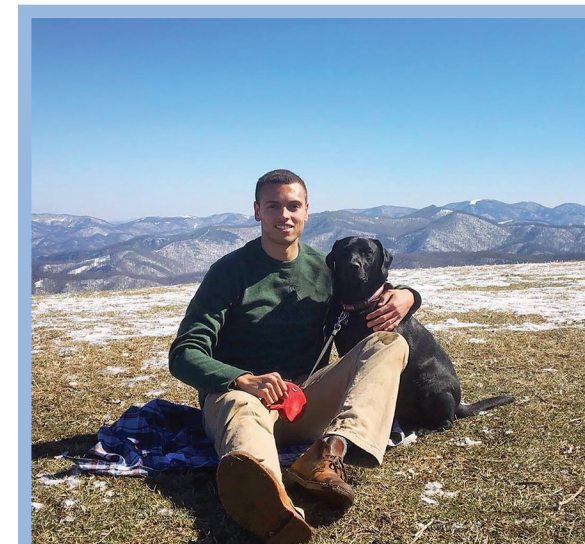
Dorm life at UNC is very comparable to Christ School, so my only pieces of advice would be to first find out if you're the kind of person that can study in your dorm or if you need to find an alternative place. Dorms can be more distracting in college because there is less supervision. Second, take the time to pick the best living situation for yourself before starting your freshman year. Doing a little bit of research beforehand can make your year much better. Social life in college is all it is cracked up to be. There are always 1000 different things going on and it is very easy to get lost in the social scene and lose focus on what you're really there to do—get a college degree. My main piece of advice would be that everything is good in moderation. Take advantage of social life and clubs in college, but don't spread yourself too thin. Find what it is you are passionate about and commit to it rather than trying to join every extracurricular at once.

What might you have done differently with your college search and application process?

I would have taken more risks. Looking back on the schools I applied to, and perhaps more importantly the ones I did not, I realize now that taking risks in applying paid off more often than not. There really is nothing to lose when applying to reach schools; there is, however, everything to gain. Risk taking also relates to scholarship applications. Fortunately, I was nominated for the Morehead-Cain; however, I did not really make a conscious effort to apply for other scholarship opportunities outside of those for which I was nominated. I have plenty of peers at UNC who sought out scholarships during their application processes, whether at Carolina or elsewhere, that provided them more freedom in choosing where to go to college. There is no downside to putting yourself out there—any kind of financial assistance in college goes a long way.

What has surprised you about your collegiate experience?

I wasn't caught too off guard by anything at UNC because I think Christ School prepared me well for most things that I've encountered. However, the amount of freedom you have is really hard to imagine until you have it. I have to admit I was a little taken aback the first time I left campus and didn't have to call the AOD. This independence is a blessing and curse, though. Nobody is watching over you, which means you can make your college experience whatever you want it to be. You have total freedom to do or not do whatever you would like, which can be really helpful when trying to pursue new interests. However, this freedom can also make it very easy to get distracted, stay out until 3 a.m. on a weeknight, or skip class without any immediate consequences.



Devon and Knox on top of on Max Patch Bald during a visit to Western North Carolina

What is the biggest difference between Christ School and college?

At Christ School, you have the luxury of existing in a bubble, both physically and socially; most people generally share your views, experiences, and interests. However, in college—especially if you attend a large university like UNC—you will encounter people who are extremely different from yourself and challenge your convictions. It is important to be able to engage these people who differ from you respectfully, intelligently, and amicably. These interactions have the ability to change your outlook on an array of important matters, more so than most of your classes. While it is possible to find your bubble in college and stay in the social spheres in which you are comfortable, it is vital to truly engage with all of your college community in order to succeed.

What specific Christ School programs helped in your transition?

Study hall at Christ School helped me develop the habit of allocating time to study that has followed me into college, which has been helpful because of all of the new free time. Also, the need to e-mail teachers at Christ School in a professional manner made my transition into college smoother, because almost all communication at UNC happens through e-mail. Some professors will not respond to you at all if you don't structure e-mails correctly or write them well, so make sure to perfect that skill at Christ School. Finally (and all of you guys are going to hate me for this one), in retrospect, midterm exams were really important. In college, midterms and final exams combined can sometimes count for about 50% of your grade or more. While nothing can really prepare you for your first round of college finals, the midterms at Christ School helped me learn crucial study skills and gave me valuable exam-taking practice that made taking my first college tests less stressful.



Devon leads a campus tour for Morehead-Cain finalists.

If students have more questions, they can contact Devon at:
devonj12@live.unc.edu

Fall Break College Tour 2017: 7 Colleges in 5 Days!

At the end of September, 22 Greenies hit the road with Mr. Depelteau and Mr. Becker on the Fall Break College Tour. The trip was jam-packed with a variety of activities and campus visits designed to give the sophomores and juniors in attendance exposure to a wide range of types of schools.

During the five-day tour, Greenies visited the campuses of the University of Tennessee – Knoxville, Vanderbilt University, Sewanee: The University of the South, Georgia Institute of Technology, Emory University, the University of Georgia, and Clemson University.

Traversing four states and covering over 800 miles, the group followed an ambitious schedule of visits, punctuated by memorable meals and sightseeing, including barbecue and Centennial Park in Nashville, TN, and shopping in Gatlinburg, TN, and Athens, GA.

While touring the schools and experiencing firsthand the variety of sizes, locations, academic strengths, and campus atmospheres, the boys were given the chance to actively consider which key characteristics they wanted to see in the institutions they attend after Christ School. Big or small? Rural or urban? Liberal Arts or Flagship? Do I want to study abroad? Do I want to go to a “sports” school? These are the types of questions these visits helped them begin to answer.



Kirkland Hall at Vanderbilt
University



John Fulkerson '16 joins the group at the
University of Tennessee's Thompson Boling
Arena.



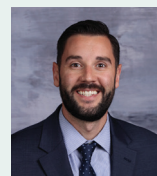
The Arch at the
University of Georgia

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