

## The Right Start to College

*Summer is rapidly coming to a close – time to get back into the fall swing again. And for us at your new Okanagan College in Vernon, that means getting prepared to welcome about 500 brand new students to the Kalamalka Campus - 500 people coming to a new place, meeting new people, and wondering how they will achieve their desired goals of success.*

*So how will the Kalamalka Campus try to promote and support our students' chances for success? I'd like to introduce you to Derrick Doige, our Counsellor who will describe a new approach we have in store for our new students – a program entitled “**The Right Start to College**”.*

Starting college can be a particularly stressful event, and most students arrive on their first day pondering many questions. Will I fit in and make new friends? Will I like my professors? Where do I buy my textbooks? Am I in the right program? Will this help me get a good job? Am I smart enough to succeed in college?

Although the staff and faculty at the Kalamalka campus have always tried hard to make students feel welcome and minimize any transition difficulties, this fall as we begin a new era for Okanagan College, we have chosen to implement the award winning “**Right Start to College**” orientation program developed by Don & Lisa Fraser from Durham College in Oshawa, Ontario.

When students arrive on campus next Tuesday, they will be greeted by their professors, second year students and alumni who will lead them through a series of relationship building, career visioning and success skills exercises. These interactive exercises are designed to help new students get to know their professors and classmates, see a connection between their program of study and possible careers choices and learn a few strategies that will help them be successful not only at college, but in their careers as well. The “Right Start” model endeavors to tap into and develop student motivation by treating students as professionals and helping them see themselves as the primary stakeholder in their education. On Tuesday, students will also enjoy a free lunch, live music and a chance to win one of over 50 door prizes donated by businesses in our community.

The idea behind “Right Start” doesn't end after the first day either. Numerous services such as the Success Centre, Counselling, Educational Advising, Disability Services, Tutoring, the Kalamalka Campus Student Association (KCSA) and Campus Life exist on campus to help students find success and enjoy their college experience.

In closing, I have noticed over my years as a college counsellor that the students who have been most successful in our programs are those that take charge of their education, find a balance between school and life, and learn how to “work smarter, not harder”. Take a look at my “top ten” list of student success strategies:

1. Stay healthy! Don't skimp on sleep, healthy meals and exercise.

2. Learn how to manage your time effectively so you can balance school, work and play (*attend a free time management workshop on campus*).
3. Set regular study hours and start big projects as soon as they are assigned.
4. Do assigned readings before class, attend classes and be prepared to ask questions.
5. Get to know your professors. Visit them during their office hours.
6. Take good notes and review them regularly.
7. Form study groups with your classmates and anticipate exam questions.
8. Try to teach/explain the material you are learning to someone else.
9. Learn how to use the library at the beginning of the semester.
10. Seek out and utilize the support services available to you on campus.

*Thanks Derrick for explaining how the Kalamalka Campus plans to help our new students start their College education off on the right foot.*

*In closing, I would like to highlight two important community events occurring at your Kalamalka Campus in September. First, a reminder about your invitation from Jim Hamilton – Okanagan College’s new President. Come join Jim, Derrick, myself and the rest of our employees on September 7 on the Kalamalka Campus from 7 to 9 a.m. for a College-Community Breakfast. It’s a chance to come up, visit and see how we are answering the needs of the region. There’s no charge for the breakfast, just a request that you bring your curiosity.*

*- Tony Sellar  
Regional Dean, North Okanagan, Okanagan College*