

The ~~shit~~ no  
one tells you  
about  
college.

Scrapped together by  
Alvin Wan

# Let me clarify.

These brief few pages contains things that I in particular did not know. Does this mean you haven't heard of them? Of course not. On that note, this isn't just for any college either. In fact, a few points are specific to my undergraduate experience. Despite these, I do hope you stick around to hear my nuggets of foolishness. As I once told a buddy: I'm pretty effective at finding your bugs only because I've made every possible mistake before. The same goes for college.

# 1

## Rumors are blown up 10x

or completely made up. Sounds obvious, but in the moment, rumors will be accepted as truth. The professor for operating systems will bite your head off, and computer science majors will roam the hallways zombified, lacking fresh blood and sleep. Keep this in mind for rumored course difficulty and major stereotypes. I made it my personal mission to try each course, and at the end of the day, rumors are rumors. Sure, I got my butt kicked, but my head's still intact.

# 2

## Clarify the price tag.

This is a general life lesson that I'm sure my parents imparted to me at some point; I'm also fairly certain that at that point, I made the unfortunate choice to not listen: Cashiers will suggest a plastic bag to hold your items, and waitresses will offer fried rice instead of white rice. How nice! Until you notice a nasty extra line on your receipt, charging \$9999 for a plastic bag and fried rice! Hyperboles aside, be shameless and ask for cost of the bag or the adjustment.

# 3

## **Bus your dishes.**

Put away your dishes at restaurants as well as at home. This may be true of college towns in general, but restaurant managers will pee themselves in anger if you don't do this. More importantly, the folks taking your order--and likely the poor souls that'll need to pick up after you--are often college students just like you.

# 4

## Keep footwear on.

Especially in the showers, find yourself some footwear. Undergraduates are disgusting (keep in mind that as I write this, I'm still an undergraduate). Shower slippers are a widely known safeguard against unsanitary peers. To figure out what you're avoiding, just ask around once you get to college: what do you do in the shower? Your answers will range from confusion between the toilet and the shower, to confusion between the sink and the shower.

# 5

## Pick optimal routes.

Try as I may to avoid this, I'm still a creature of habit. For four years now, I've walked the exact same path from south side of campus to the north side. That isn't so bad, but I now know 3 more efficient paths that are significantly shorter. Not to mention, I know of a bus line that takes me where I need to be, bike racks ... the list goes on. In short, pick the shortest route (and method of transportation) the first time, and you won't have to worry about habits again.

# 6

## **Build a network.**

When push comes to shove, you'll want a shoulder to cry on. At the very least, I did. For those of you tough cookies out there, there's still a good reason to network: connections get you places, and your undergraduate institution is the best place to find those successful folks of the future. Finally, I've personally found significant value in having many mentors. Time and time again, we all hear that hindsight is 20-20. As a mentee, I can only pray that's true.



# 7

## Maximize your tuition.

Free legal services? Check. Extra helpful scholarship adviser that will read all of your essays for free? Check. Free 3d printing and training? Check. I didn't learn about these until my final year, and boy, did I miss out. I would highly encourage you to actively seek out these services. It goes without saying that "free" is a misnomer; you're already paying for these services via tuition, so might as well use them.

# 8

## Learn from mom, dad.

The laundry machine is intimidating: with only 3 options, I still had no idea which to click. In fact, for the first 3 times I used a laundry machine, I had to call either a floormate or my parents.

That's altricial youth at its finest. The same applied to dish washing, vaccuming, ironing, etc.

I could fill a textbook with the endless list of household chores I didn't know. Perhaps the most important is how to make homemade dishes, just like your mom and dad did.

# Good luck.

These were my two cents, or rather, my eight cents. I wish you the best of luck in your college endeavors. Although I whipped out a few tips here, I have a few more that didn't make the cut. They're just as important, if not more so, but they warrant more time and space than this 3 a.m. whim.

- Everyone has impostor syndrome.
- College is stressful, but the stress comes from you.
- Competition is fierce but only with yourself and the people you compare yourself to.
- Be smart about safety. Don't walk with your head buried in your phone. Use campus security services.
- Work hard but always ask if you could work smarter.

**Now you  
know.**

*So don't make the  
same mistakes!*