Overview

ACE is a series of Accelerated College Experiences designed to help students ace their way through college. ACE provides students with tools and support they need to navigate the challenges and opportunities that arise from the freshman through senior years, both academic and non-academic. ACE is structured to support students enrolled in both two and four year college programs. Both programs have the following components: Summer or fall intensives, designed to prepare students for the upcoming academic year, and monthly group coaching, designed to ensure each student stays on track through facilitated group problem-solving. Individualized academic coaching is also an option.

What Students Need

Every student needs mechanisms to ease the transition from high school to college. The students are leaving environments of structure, defined parameters and often, great success. They enter new worlds full of greater demands on their time and talents; higher requirements for skills and knowledge, constantly evolving social parameters, and newfound freedom to make their own decisions. ACE is a system, a combination of coping skills and strategies that helps support and guide students to academic and social success.

REQUIRED PRE-WORK

Parents submit a confidential questionnaire indicating specific abilities, advantages, concerns or challenges for their children as they prepare for college. This step ensures individual needs are met.

Students are expected to answer a questionnaire indicating any challenges, fears or concerns they may have about going to college. Students are requested to answer the questions honestly and not as they think they should. Responses are not shared with parents.

The answers in both assessments shape the programming, and individual coaching requirements for each student during the program. The responses will clarify the readiness of the students, and determine the level of instruction and support required during the program.

In addition, students will use a specific curriculum that requires study before and during the ACE sessions.
YEAR ONE: Onboarding (Incoming Freshman)

Onboarding is designed to simulate a full course load during the first semester of college. The objective is to let students experience the intensity of this experience without thinking they are “the only ones” and to help them recognize how to adapt to that intensity.

Students are taught how to work effectively in teams which is often a requirement for many courses. Students learn how to deal with different levels of expertise, different cultures and customs, team slackers, sharing work/workload, general group dynamics, etc. Onboarding includes nine monthly one-on-one coaching sessions and four monthly peer group coaching sessions to keep students on track, and to help them learn how to address concerns and issues as they come up. Support topics covered during the program include:

- Transitioning from high school to college
- Goal setting
- Understanding the relationship among course selection, GPA, and financial aid
- Time management – in and out of class
- The pros and cons of social media
- Dealing with peer pressure
- Social responsibility and appropriate behavior on and off campus
- The basics of academic success
- Sharpening classroom skills
- Creating a study system
- Preparing for tests and reducing test anxiety
- Leveraging the supportive network of peers; within cohort and across cohorts

YEAR TWO: Managing Your GPA & Academic Roadmap (Incoming Sophomores)

Managing Your GPA and Academic Roadmap builds on the tools and skills learned in Onboarding. Students learn how to refine their goals and manage their GPA. They learn how to manage their learning environment as well as money, credit cards and debt. This is also the year students usually choose a major if they haven’t already. They also learn how to think strategically about the extracurricular activities they choose, including internships, and how to use them to enhance their resume. Year two includes student group coaching sessions after each semester. Topics include:

- Reviewing your academic roadmap, refining your goals
- Managing your GPA
- Managing your learning environment
- Maximize comprehension, retention and learning
- Expand relationships: diversity and cultural competency
- Study in teams: collaborative competition
- Exploring potential career opportunities
- Building your resume via community service, study abroad and internships
- Finding the right internship: the protocol – what it is, and how to do it
- Using the basic interview protocol
- Preparing for interviews - (face to face and telephone)
- Following up after interviews
- Thank you letter protocol: email vs. snail mail
- Managing money and credit cards, living within your means and budgeting
ACE College Programs
In-depth

YEAR THREE: Consistent Persistence *(Incoming Juniors)*

Year Three is when coursework intensifies and students began to get weary. In addition to building on the tools and skills learned in Managing Your GPA and Academic Roadmap, students learn how to ramp up their study skills as the coursework intensifies, what to do if they “hit the wall,” and how to manage stress. They also learn how to think strategically about choosing the right internships that can enhance their career opportunities and how to use internships to enhance their resume. Year Three includes student group coaching sessions after each semester. Topics covered include:

- Reviewing your academic roadmap, refining your goals
- Managing your GPA
- Ramping up your study skills as the coursework intensifies
- How to avoid “hitting the wall” (and breaking through if you do)
- Staying energized about graduation goals
- Building and sustaining a supportive social network
- Celebrating achievements and milestones
- Handling stress and making healthy choices
- Managing money and minimizing debt
- Exploring potential career opportunities
- Building your resume via community service, study abroad and internships
- Refreshing your skills on the basic interview process
- Connecting with career affiliated associations

YEAR FOUR: Career Launch *(Incoming Seniors)*

Career Launch can be taken as a stand-alone, but also touches on the strategies and tools learned in the other three programs. Career Launch prepares students for life after graduation. All essential aspects of networking, career exploration, planning and preparation are covered, and students are given the opportunity to practice and hone their three minute elevator speech for potential interviews. Year Four includes student group coaching sessions after each semester. Topics include:

- Preparing for graduation
- Reviewing your academic roadmap, refining your goals
- Managing your GPA to ensure successful graduation
- Your plan for settling university debt and getting your transcript
- Keeping your academic game tight
- Networking
- Taking your college network with you into your future
- Building professional networks – face-to-face and social media
- The art of business dining
- Creating your three minute elevator speech
- Career exploration, planning and preparation
- Understanding the interview process
- Preparing for interviews - (face-to-face, telephone and Skype)
- Researching prospective employers
- Customizing your resume and cover letter
- Mock interviews
- Professional presence
- Dressing for the job you want
- Following up after interviews
- Thank you letter protocol: email vs. snail mail
- References – how to choose wisely
- Leveraging your campus resources
Coaching Services

Nine monthly one-on-one coaching sessions and four monthly peer group coaching sessions are included in the Year One Onboarding program. Two group-coaching sessions – one at the end of each semester – are included in the Year Two, Three and Four programs. Additional coaching services can be purchased separately in blocks of four, six, or twelve hour according to the needs of the student. Students can use these sessions to strategize with their coach prior to or after exams; review the use of tools and resources; role-play conversations they need to have with advisors or faculty; or address other academic concerns that may come up during the year.

Half-Day Parent Workshop

Your child has been prepared for college, but what about you? You have just sent your child off to college and now the real work begins – letting go and letting your child learn from their own mistakes. Some of the questions and concerns parents have that are discussed during the workshop include:

- You want to be supportive, but what is the difference between too much support and not enough?
- Now that they are considered adults and don’t have to disclose or share their academic progress, how do you keep tabs on how they are doing – especially when you are paying the tuition?
- You have heard about the wild parties, drinking, and sexual activities on campus; how do you help your child from buckling under peer pressure when they are struggling with being accepted and popular?
- Social media – what exactly is Facebook, texting, sexting; at what point do you stop trusting and start intruding or snooping?

This half-day workshop provides parents the opportunity to share their concerns, discuss these questions and receive direction and guidance on how to proceed. Every parent knows there are no guarantees, but being well informed and keeping the lines of communication open with your child will help alleviate some of the concerns.