

A Preparation Guide
FOR NEW STUDENTS

Letters to Students
By Students

Plus Two

Honors College
Hampton University

Fall 2013

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

Dear Onyx Family,

Welcome to Hampton University!!!!

It has nearly been one semester, do you still have the enthusiasm you had during orientation? If so, that is awesome! If not, that is normal. It is normal because the work required to proceed through the journey is much more daunting than the idealism we have before we start the journey. However, in no way should you be discouraged! It is my hope that some of the ideas I share will help you proceed along your journey.

First, I would like you to ponder the following idea:

Yesterday is over and tomorrow has not arrived, so remember to be present for today.

Everything in the past has prepared you for this opportunity. Do not squander the precious time permitted by this opportunity relying upon or attempting to relive the past.

In addition to that, although the journey through college is one of preparation, do not become consumed with the future. This time, right now, is essentially all you have. Make the most of this time by doing YOUR BEST in class, engaging in new friendships, and growing with new experiences. Eventually, this portion of your life's journey will pass and its opportunities will become irretrievable – make the most of today.

Here are a few other ideas to ponder:

- *Discover who you really are and begin shaping who you really want to be.*
- *"Paint a picture of success and put yourself in it" ~ KRS One, Hip Hop Legend*
- *Studying to pass a test is cool, but studying to learn the information is better.*
- *Take risks because playing it safe gets you nowhere.*
- *The road to success is always under construction.*
- *The biggest room in the world is the room for improvement.*

And finally - *open your mind.*

Do not lie to yourself with procrastination, false confidence, and ill-based assumptions. The more receptive you are to new information, new experiences, and new opportunities, the more rewarding your college experience will be.

Remember, this is just the beginning of your journey – there is so much more to learn.

With open arms and an open mind,

Dr. Sabin Duncan,

Director, Freddie T. Davy Honors College

Proud member of Onyx 3

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

Dear Freshman Hamptonian,

I'm sure the last thing you want to read is a letter giving you sentimental, theatrical and "know-it-all" advice about surviving college. This summer you probably received an overflow of opinions from your parents, relatives, mentors, siblings and friends about how you should spend your next four years at Hampton University. I can assure you that this letter will not provide you with anymore advice because I refuse to preach a sermon you've already heard. However, I will share with you some of the life lessons I've experienced at "Our Home by the Sea."

The most important life lesson I learned is that you must be honest with God and yourself. There were times I was in denial about many issues happening in my personal and academic life because I didn't want to face failure and criticism. In the end, I created more damage in my life when I neglected to communicate and put my faith in God and my family to defeat these setbacks. You are going to face some types of adversity in college, it may be academically or socially but it will happen sooner or later and it's important to tackle these issues and have faith so that you can conquer through difficult times.

Another important life lesson I learned is that you can't be in a rush to form friendships. When I arrived on Hampton's campus I only knew one person and he was a senior from my hometown. We barely saw each other because he was busy with his classes and graduation, so I had to figure out the campus culture and etiquette on my own. In the beginning, I felt isolated and out of place because it seemed like everyone around me was creating friendships quickly and I still couldn't find the right connection with anyone. My roommate and I realized that we shared completely opposite ideals about "everything" and the notion of a friendship between us would be nearly impossible. I was on the verge of getting comfortable with the idea that I would spend the next four years alone until I met one of my best friends in a journalism class one day. We instantly connected and have been friends ever since that day. I met my other best friend by simply asking to sit next to her in the cafeteria. You can't force friendships and you have to let things happen naturally.

The final life lesson I will share with you is that it's important to find your passion. I always enjoyed writing which is why I chose broadcast journalism as my major but I never grasped the idea that it was also my passion. Finding my passion has helped me carve a plan for my future. If you are able to find your passion and turn it into a lucrative career then it won't even feel like a job and it will be a fulfilling experience. Lastly, I hope my life lessons can help you through your journey as a Hamptonian.

Best Wishes,

Raybin Dockery

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

Dear Freshmen,

First off, I would like to welcome you to our “Home by the Sea.” More than likely you have heard the phrase, “Hampton is what you make of it,” a million times from Student Leaders, resident assistants, big brothers, or big sisters since you arrived; I can guarantee that you will hear it quite often during your tenure at Hampton. Personally, it is something I live by. This journey you have just embarked on is going to be filled with so many experiences that you will probably never get to experience again. Cherish each one and be sure to **seize every opportunity** that comes your way, but keep in mind to **make the smartest and most responsible decision** for you.

Being a first-generation college student, I didn't really have anyone at home to guide me through these years of college. Coming from Houston, I knew NOTHING about the east coast or anywhere outside of Texas and Louisiana for that matter. I'll be honest, before coming to Hampton I didn't even know what a HBCU was. Unlike most people, I didn't come alone (I came with my best friend) so I thought that would make the transition easier. Boy oh boy was I wrong. I'm more of an introvert; while Cynthia (the bff) is an extrovert so she was into all the freshman activities and meeting new people. It took me more time to get out and mingle with people. I live with no regrets, every decision I make is made for a reason, so I can't say that I regret not getting out there but I can say that I wish I would have been more proactive early on. There are so many interesting people at Hampton from all walks of life and they are just waiting to meet you. Get out there and keep an open mind. Don't let **anything** hold you back. Just remember **you chose Hampton for a reason, stick with it. Think about your future every morning when you wake up and every night before you go to bed.** You are constantly making decisions every second of the day and each one you make determines your future, whether it's five minutes after you read this book of letters or when you finally get back to your dorm after a tough day of classes. One of the most crucial decisions you make on a daily basis is your attire for class. Ladies and gents, please be mindful that one day when applying for an internship, graduate school, or a job you are going to need recommendation letters or references from your professors to speak on your behalf. No one wants to be remembered as the young lady that dressed for the club every day instead of her 8am class or the young man who wore his hat inside the classroom and had his jeans hanging below his knees. Ladies, I'm not saying you can't be cute, but there are other avenues to doing so. Gents, I don't really understand sagging but I'm sure it's not too hard to pull them up and put on a belt. Just be mindful of your decisions.

Never lose sight of who you are. There is an unspoken stereotype that Hampton students act a certain way. Ladies, please do not come here acting uppity if that is not who YOU truly are. Treat others as you would want to be treated. Seriously. You're not in high school anymore, so the “mean girl” act is over. Yes, in college there is a time for fun, but you're not paying nearly \$35,000 a year to party, you came to further your education. If you have always been a hard worker, stay that way. It's not “cool” to go to class unprepared. Don't let anyone convince you that you should do anything you don't want to. Stay true to who you are. Respect yourself (both ladies and gents) and you will be respected in return. This will not only help you to grow, but you may just begin to find out who your true friends are overtime.

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

This time, right here...right now is just for you. No one can take it from you unless you let them. Enjoy everything that Hampton has to offer. Go to all events, even the ones that seem “boring.” You never know what will spark your interest. Stay focused and prioritize. Most importantly, stay you and realize that good people don’t just up and change; they enhance themselves to be a better person than they were the day before. Once again, I welcome you and hope that you have a successful first year and tenure here at Hampton. Good Luck!

Sincerely,

April Thompson,

Nursing Major

To the newly inducted freshman class,

You are on your way to a journey of a lifetime!!! Congratulations on your accomplishment on becoming a part of the 1,100 new freshmen onto Hampton’s campus!

One of the first lessons that you MUST learn is to build a network. Networking is one of the most important and helpful skills that you will need to survive at Hampton. This particular skill could help you purchase books, learn about future classes, receive internships, and gain a new friend. Although it is cliché, you will definitely make friends of a lifetime here at Hampton University.

As a student who has experienced moving far away from home, I understand when one can get homesick. The people that you choose to surround yourself with will be the same ones that can help you get through rough times. Reach out to those that are from your state or region. Try to join a Pre-Alumni Council so that you can find others that can relate. Hampton is a school full of students that come from numerous states and countries around the world. Most people at Hampton are not native to the city, so it makes it easier sharing new experiences.

My final piece of advice is to get involved! There are over 100 different organizations at Hampton University. There is at least one organization that will catch your attention! These campus organizations are here to help students bond and share a purpose so that they can serve others with their service and/or talent. At the same time, you may be able to make a change and serve in a leadership position.

Whatever you decide is up to you. Don’t forget to make your mark at Hampton. After all, this is an experience that you want to make the best of!

Sincerely,

Kimiko Krieger

Onyx IX

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

Dear Freshmen,

If I knew then what I know now, what would I do differently? My answer is simply, nothing.

When first tasked with this assignment, I began to automatically think of my beginning days at Hampton, simply struggling to find my place. I actually remember sitting in the lobby of Virginia Cleveland Hall reading this same book of letters trying to find a sense of purpose in my new life. I actually cannot believe that just a few years ago I was sitting in your seat just trying to make it through. While my journey throughout Hampton has not been the easiest and at times not the most enjoyable, it has been the most informative and rewarding. Never in my life have I literally had the world thrown to me and all I had to do was catch. So many opportunities will be presented to you throughout your time here and it is your single job to take advantage of every one no matter how big or small.

You've probably already heard it but I will say it to you again, Hampton is what you make it. You have the power to make the next 4 or 5 years the absolute best years of your entire life. No matter what challenges or struggles you face hold fast to your dreams and continue to press on because those days will soon be behind you. Even at my lowest I am so grateful for the time I have spent learning, laughing and growing at this wonderful institution. As my time here comes to a close I know that Hampton and most importantly the Freddie T. Davy Honors College helped me to become a person that I never thought possible and I urge you all to let these institutions change you as well. Be open to the process and see where life takes you. Good luck!

Kelli D. James,

Hampton University Class of 2014

Dear freshmen,

Don't be alarmed, but you will not be who you are at this exact point in time. You will never dress the same, hang out with the same group of friends or behave the same. The only thing I can guarantee, is that the only thing that will remain the same, is change. With that being said, will you change for the better or for the worse? Never forget who you were when you arrived to Hampton and where you would like your ambitions to take you. You'll change your mind. You'll change your mind again. When you make your final decision, be 120% sure it's the right decision for you; not your parents, not your friends, not for anyone else—just you. College is a time of experimentation and to really become one with who YOU are. Now is the time to figure out what you like, what you don't like, what you're good at and planning the next 4 years of your life. Oh, and learning somewhere in between. No one is here to tell you have to do this or that and that's what really shapes who you become. Your parents can preach to you until they're blue in the face, it never means anything until you're thrust head first into the situation.

Become involved. Yes, your number one priority is to earn a degree. At one time or another, the pressure and stress to earn that degree will get to you. Join at least ONE club or organization on campus that genuinely peaks your interests, meet someone new and try something different...

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

you might be surprised. Not mention, being involved forces you to become more focused and improve your time management skills (also important). A word of advice, don't allow your social life to overpower your academic habits. Take every skill, habit, lesson and experience from high school and build upon it.

Keep in contact with your family and friends from your home state. Bonds can either be weakened or strengthened by distance. Call your loved ones; let them know how you're doing. You don't have to only call them for money. They went to college too at one point in time; they may or may not have some advice that will help you through tough times. And, who knows, they may deposit a surprise from time to time in return. Parent's weekend is your friend! A trip to Wal-Mart, Target or a good meal will make a difference.

Be an active learner. Chances are you'll probably mostly likely understand the material more. Take the Ms. Frizzle (from the Magical School Bus') approach, "Take Chances, Make Mistakes, Get Messy!" Active learning is both an experience and dialogue. Not only will be forced to reflect on what you are being told, but examine what it is, if you agree or disagree with it and if you want to question or test it. Dialogue with others also helps us learn because we learn what other people's perspectives are and compare theirs with our own to reach a consensus; others might also help us look at something in a completely different way. Take full advantage of the resources readily available to you; there is no excuse for failing a class.

Enjoy college! Some people aren't even afforded the opportunity for a number of reasons. Be thankful you're able to attend this illustrious university and carry on the legacy of Hampton University left behind by those preceding you. After these four years, adulthood will hit you like a ton of bricks. You'll have to pay back loans, starts paying bills, and work a full- time job. Enjoy the now and reap the benefits later. This is your time. Write your own story with an exciting ending!

Sincerely,

Kayla Childs

Dear Freshmen Class,

During the 1957 World Series, Yankee catcher [Yogi Berra](#) noticed that Hank Aaron, batting for the Braves, grasped the bat the wrong way. "Turn it around," he said, "so you can see the trademark." But Hank kept his eye on the pitcher's mound; "Didn't come up here to read," he said. "Came up here to hit." Aaron proceeded to hit a homerun.

Throughout your matriculation at Hampton, there will be plenty of distractions. Often, distractions are subtle and uneasily detected. Yet they interfere with you accomplishing the tasks set before you, the dream you are pursuing, the *purpose* you are seeking to fulfill.

Onyx 10, my challenge to you is: *Remember why you're here*. College is typically referred to as "the best times of your life." I hope that your experience at "your home by the sea" will be enjoyable, memorable, and "fun". But *remember*, your purpose for being here at this university is to expand your knowledge, acquire new skills, and ultimately, be equipped with the necessary

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

tools to positively impact society.

Remember your purpose, focus on achieving your goals, and stay mindful of the sacrifice and investment of those who have supported you, encouraged you, and made it possible for you to be where you are today. I hope that you will have a prosperous and enriching experience at Hampton.

Sincerely,

Meagan P. Downing,

Onyx 9

Dear Freshmen,

As you work to navigate your new life as a college student, I want to share a few pieces of advice to help you along the way. The first thing I encourage you to do is protect your virtue. Stay true to yourself and the values you have already set. A lot of people get to college and lose themselves trying to cling things that don't line up with their true self. Be real, be you, and be mindful.

The second thing I want to suggest is to get involved. Now is the time to experiment. Join Student Government, volunteer, or even take a sailing class. Whatever floats your boat. Your life is comprised of all your experiences. These experiences will allow you to learn a lot about yourself and even uncover hidden talents or interests you may have.

The final piece of advice I have is to embrace change. Situations in college change rapidly. You must learn to be flexible and adapt in order to avoid unnecessary stress. Your life will be transformed dramatically over the next four years. From change comes growth. Being receptive to change will help you develop most effectively in all aspects of your life.

Trust me when I say that the time at Hampton will fly by! Take risks, make friends, and be smart. I wish you all the best and hope that you will have a wonderfully unique experience at Hampton University.

Best Regards,

Marissa English

Dear Onyx 10,

Embody what you represent. Onyx by definition is a rare, black stone that can be comprised of different colored layers. The Onyx class associates itself with the black diamond because it is also a rare, black stone that forms under extreme temperature and pressure. So what does geology and all of this talk about rocks have to do with you? As Onyx, you should stay rare, do not conform to ideals and images that do not represent who you are as a person. Be layered, meaning stay open-minded and involved. College is more than going to class and getting good grades, it is what you make it. Take form under extreme conditions, never give into pressure, and

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

know that some situations are not easy to deal with. As Onyx, you shine brightest when moments in life seem tough. Lastly, never forget that you are black. “Black” representing, your culture and your ethnicity, do not forget who you are, where you come from, and how you got here.

Onyx 10, by embodying what your class name represents, you will enjoy your tenure here at Hampton University, and effortlessly carry out the Legacy of Onyx!

With love,

Myiah Davis, Onyx 9

Dear ONYX 10,

I have to open this letter with a line from Timothy McCall Jr. a Freddie T. Davy Honors College Alum, “Get ready for a wild and crazy ride; what you are about to experience is something that you will never get to experience again.” When I first read this line in my letters to freshman book, I did not believe it but this is very true. This is the best way to describe my experience at Hampton University, and I hope that this will be your description of the Hampton experience your senior year at Hampton University.

Hampton is truly what you make it. If you sit in your room everyday all day studying you will not have the full Hampton experience. Now I am not saying go out and party every night and get kicked out of school, but I’m saying create a balance for your study and social life. When I was a freshman I never missed a party in Holland or the ballroom. Saturday night was my time. Monday through Saturday morning was my school time. You must find what works for you find your balance.

My second piece of advice is watch out for the upperclassman. Girls, the upperclassman boys will get in your ear, and the freshman guys will use the ratio to their advantage. Be smart, freshman year is indeed a time to explore but you also need to remember what your mother taught you. Don’t become the Hampton stereotype. Girls also remember you can have fun, you can go to parties and twerk, the problem is when twerking hits the internet. Which leads me to my third piece of advice, not everything is meant for the social media.

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Vine are all fun and games until you are remembered for being the person with the red cup in their hands, and you’re trying to apply for the job and that comes up. Twerking videos are ok for your friends back at home who are not in college but if you ever have hopes of finding a job keep that off the internet. Just because your page is private does not mean it cannot be found.

My last pieces of advice are get involved, and find your niche. I live my life by the song *I Was Here* by Beyoncé. If you have not heard it listen to it. When I came to Hampton, I came as a shy first generation college student who did not know what she wanted out of her college experience or life. By second semester of my freshman year, I knew I had one goal in mind, and that was to have a lasting impact on this campus. I wanted to leave a mark on Hampton University. So I sought out to join organizations with that encompassed my goal, SLP, Student Government Association Senator, PRESS mentor, and most importantly The Freddie T. Davy Honors College Program.

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

Please, Please, Please, follow my advice, and you will be the successful Hamptonian you are meant to be!

Cynthia Whittington

ONYX 9

Dear Freshman,

Looking back at my time here at Hampton, all of the years often get blurred and jumbled together. I have made many memories and have built friendships that will last forever, but I feel that I rushed my time in college by being in a hurry to grow up. College is known to be a time for young people to develop and find themselves, but all of that development doesn't have to be done in a single year. Remember, you have time.

During my freshman year I often complained about curfew, but now I realize that I made most of my friends during that time. Having nothing to do forces you to be creative and explore all of your options. I was so anxious to get off curfew that I didn't really get to enjoy that aspect of my Hampton experience. How many people can say that they had to run back to their dorms before their RA caught them coming in late? ... only at Hampton.

I slept my freshman year away. I was finished with all of my classes by 12 p.m. every day and slept from that point until I felt like leaving my room. I could've been more productive, but instead I slept. I didn't do homework, I didn't look for internships, I didn't plan out my future; I just kept hitting snooze. I often think that if I had spent more time studying and less time sleeping that I would have been a 4.0 student my first semester.

During my last semester of freshmen year I decided that I wanted to get involved on campus. I started to join and apply for clubs, planning out my future, and figuring out what my goals were for my time at Hampton. I decided to challenge myself to become the ideal Hampton woman.

Now that I am a senior, I feel that I have accomplished just about everything I've wanted to do. I wish that I would have slowed down a little and enjoyed the leisure time I once had. I wish I would have focused a little more on developing academically and a little less on developing socially through my extracurricular activities. Though I wish these things, I wouldn't take back a single experience if I could. Enjoy your time here at Hampton, take it slow, and absorb all of the memories that are coming your way.

Sincerely,

Lesley Robinson

Onyx 9

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

Dear freshmen,

You are adults now but there is still much yet to be learned. Enjoy this time of discovery. There are many things that you will experience in the years to come. They will be both good and bad. I encourage you to embrace them because they will be what you remember most. At the end of the year the classes, seminars, and assemblies start to blend together but things that you enjoyed are what you will carry with you for the rest of your life. I really only have two things to share with you: find your true friends and take your time.

The people you meet will vary greatly. They will be familiar and unfamiliar, crazy and quiet, dazzling and baffling. The ones you choose to associate with will be a reflection of you as you grow. You may find that some of the relationships from your freshmen year may not last until graduation. You may find that you see yourself differently when you are with these people. The question to ask yourself is, do they make me a better person? College is a lot of fun. I have had the best experiences of my life here. That is largely attributable to the time I have spent with the group of friends I have taken the time to cultivate. Look for friends and relationships that challenge you, that make you want to be greater, that make you laugh. Your true friends are the ones that you can trust to have your back, the ones that will remind you to take a break from working every once in a while to go out. Your friends will push you out of your comfort zone. And you will do the same for them. The bonds you form here will take you farther than you can possibly imagine.

The other thing I would like you all to understand is to take your time. College speeds by whether we are talking about a semester or the entire 4 to 6 years. Things will seem to have passed in the blink of an eye. So soak it all in. Enjoy every second of it because you don't get to do it over. There is time to have the relationships and have fun and get the grades you need. It is a lot like driving, it's easier to react when you give yourself some time and slow down rather than speeding ahead. You should reflect on your past, enjoy your present and dream about your future.

This is an opportunity to reinvent yourself completely. College offers a blank slate. You need not be limited by anything that has happened to you before. You can be an honors student, a choir member, a fraternity brother or sorority sister, a band member, a student leader, a student government representative, a member of the Homecoming Court, whatever. You are allowed to follow whatever path you want, but the most important part is that you make sure it is what YOU want. Others may be funding your education but you are the one responsible for following through and earning your degree. There is no reason for you to be miserable doing so. College is way too expensive and life is too important to waste a moment of it. So have fun and make every second count.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Turman

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

Dear Freshmen,

Welcome to Hampton University! The next 4-6 years will be filled with many trials and obstacles, but the next 4-6 years of your life will be filled with more memories and learning experiences than you can imagine. I would like to share a summary of some of the best lessons I have learned while I have been here at Hampton.

Get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Your experience at Hampton will be whatever you make it. I encourage you to take advantage of the resources available to you to make your experience as memorable and beneficial as possible. In order to take advantage of some of the opportunities at Hampton, you will have to step outside of your comfort zone and try something new. When you begin to take on internships and leadership positions, you will have to learn how to adapt to being outside your comfort zone and find some level of comfort with being in uncomfortable or unfamiliar territory.

Prepare yourselves. The people you were friends with in pre-college and the people you are friends with during your first year will not necessarily be the same people you are friends with when you graduate or even next year. I encourage you not to sweat those changes. College is a time of extreme growth, and you will learn more about yourself than you can even imagine. Unfortunately, there is a possibility that the person you grow into will no longer match with the people your friends will grow into. However, I found that the people who are still with you after you go through that time of growth are the friends who will be in it for the long haul. So what does all of this mean for you? Do not under any circumstances allow the group of people you hang around be a threat or hindrance to your success. If your friends don't encourage you or challenge you to continuously improve, succeed, and be the best person you can be, they are not who you need in your immediate circle. A motivational speaker once told me that your salary will be the average of the salaries of your five closest friends. Think about it.

Finally, please have fun, but be smart. Be smart about the decisions you make in every aspect of your life. Every party is not meant for you, especially if there is a question of safety. Every fight during or after a party is not for you to watch – this is how people uninvolved in the original altercation end up in handcuffs or an ambulance. Although there will be times when you have to choose one or the other, do not make a habit of sacrificing your study habits for having fun or vice versa. Start working to manage your time and responsibilities effectively early, and you appreciate it so much more later on.

These are some of the best years of our lives, and they only come around once. Make the most of the experience in every way you can – spiritually, socially, academically, professionally, and personally. I wish you all the luck and blessings in the world. Enjoy, and welcome to your Home by the Sea!

Sincerely,

Abriana Anderson

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

Dear Onyx 10,

The moment you all have been anxiously awaiting is here –you are officially a freshman in college. This is your time to shine and you should shine brightly.

College is a place to spread your wings and grow. Where you can flex your intellectual muscles and soak in the knowledge and life experiences that surround you. Until now, school has been a requirement. College is a choice—a choice to further your education and build on your existing knowledge and life experiences. Maximize both your time and your money. Pick classes that interest you, study hard and manage your time effectively. There will be plenty of time to have fun.

Through the tenure at Hampton, you will be making decisions that will affect your life years from now. Make choices that are good for you; your field of study should be a direct reflection of you, not your parents or your friends. Get all the information you need to make good selections. Trust your judgment.

Now, be fearless and tackle your dreams head on! And don't forget to call your parents. They need to hear from you on a daily basis and not only when you need money!

Much love and God bless,

Domanique Jordan,

To My Fellow Hamptonians,

As you begin your journey through college, I hope you enjoy all the wonderful things that come your way. For many incoming freshmen, the college experience is a very important one. It is a time where students can gain their independence and become more responsible. Overall, my time at Hampton has been a wonderful, heartfelt, and memorable experience.

Throughout my matriculation, I have grown more as an individual. I have come in contact with magnificent professors and advisors. And, I have also made some great friends. I remember when I started out as a freshman. I was uncertain about what was to come and what my overall experience at Hampton would be like.

Through the years, I became more involved on campus through various activities such as the Hampton Script, NAACP, Student Support Services, Student Ambassadors, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and Honors College. The list can go on and on. I have been able to interact with others and learn more about myself, as well as, my peers. Hampton is what you make it. Remember to take advantage of this opportunity.

By being involved on campus, it gives you the chance to meet new people, network, and become an excellent leader. This school is full of talented, ambitious individuals who strive to be successful in all aspects of their lives. Believe in yourself, know your strengths and apply these attributes in everything that you do. Live your life to the fullest, because before you know it, you will be graduating and entering into the real world.

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

I wish you all the best,

Janiece Peterson

Dear freshman,

Welcome to Hampton University, your new home away from home. I can remember my freshman year like it was yesterday, believe me the time goes by very fast so enjoy every minute of it! Congratulations to all of you for taking this new step, you are starting a new chapter of your life and I guarantee if you face everything with a positive committed attitude you will get very far.

From freshman year to today I can definitely say Hampton has changed me for the better. My story is a little different to most, I'm actually an international student, born and raised in the Caribbean, so coming to Hampton was a huge deal. I had to leave my home and friends and move to a completely different country. Sounds scary? Of course it was, I was just as scared, if not more than you are right now, but rest assured these next few years will be the best of your life.

My first piece of advice to you is to get involved! I met some of my closest friends by joining organizations including Honors College, The Student Leadership Program, The Student Government and The Caribbean Pre Alumni council. Find a group that you're passionate about and I guarantee you will find people who are interested in the same things you are. Another thing to keep in mind is balance, I'm all about getting the grades and being at the top of your class however you need some down time, just to relax your mind and keep sane!!! Now don't overdo it, not every Holland jam is for you, but remember to balance.

Lastly, I would say to keep a positive attitude at all times, Hampton is what you make it, so if you stay in your room all day and complain about how boring life is, it will only get worse, get out and have fun, meet people, network, join clubs remember to always look at the brighter side of life, we are all so blessed to be here, many wish to be in your spot and many are waiting to see you fall, prove them all wrong. Once you do your best and believe in yourself you will go further than you can even imagine. Make me proud Onyx X!

All the best,

Tahnnya Pascall

Dear Freshmen:

This letter was very difficult to write when I viewed it as me giving you advice, but when I reflected on the advice I would give myself as a freshman, words flowed instantly. First, I will begin to say my letter is not one size fits all, and isn't neglecting anyone's alternative path. This is just what I wanted to know as I walked in the Home by the Sea for the first time. I know many of us didn't have the luxury to start over but I did. I attended my first freshman year at a

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

University in Canada, but I got a second chance to start a new one in Hampton University.

My first freshman year in Canada was a bust, I almost failed all my classes but I did learn a few things that helped me in my second freshman year at Hampton. In this fresh start I wiped my slate clean. I didn't transfer my credits, I wanted to prove to myself I could be good in school. First thing I learned was that not everyone has your best interest at heart. If you came to the university to succeed then not everyone will support you in doing so. So choose your friends wisely. For example, choose a friend that will hear you when you say "I can't go out tonight I have to finish this," than a friend who will say "dang! Really you're so boring just come out you will finish it later." This leads me to my second advice, know your goal. Have you ever heard of this quote, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there." So know what you want to get out of this University experience, or you will be sorry. Third, if you have a goal then you will develop will power. Will power will determine your grades, and success. I always say I would rather struggle now and then party later when I actually have money to enjoy it. That is why I don't stress myself when I miss a party. If I don't have enough money I don't go.

Lastly, is determine if this is your end goal. If you would want more than a bachelors, if so then do it now while you are in your 20's. Either masters or Ph.D. don't wait till later because things get in the way. I always say I would rather struggle in my 20's than in my 30's or 40's and unfortunately some 50's. Here is a fun fact, high-school graduates make \$1,304,000, bachelor's degree \$2,268,000, master's degree make \$2,671,000, doctorate \$3,252,000 and lastly professional degree make \$3,648,000.

This is all in your entire lifetime. So as you can see if you go for Doctorate and higher you will make 2 million more than a high school graduate and 1 million more than a bachelor degree holder. All I can say is look at how many shoes you can buy. Anyway, if you would like the high achiever path, then research opportunities and studying for standardized test is a must, so start early. I wish I started in freshmen year. Oh well! I hope this helps you.

Sincerely,

Barbara Njuguna

Dear Onyx X,

I would like to personally welcome you to our Home by the Sea! This new chapter of your life might come with many mixed emotions. Whether you're excited, careless, overwhelmed, anxious, regretful, or prepared just know that the odds are in your favor. First off, you're at the best University ever with the best student body and staff. Secondly, you are Onyx, the chosen class! And last, but not least, this new chapter gives you a blank slate allowing you to start anew. You have many opportunities at your fingertips. You can either take the beginning of the rest of your life by the reigns and run with it, stay at a standstill, or fall under pressure. The choice is yours.

You have made the right decision to attend Hampton University. You will receive a quality education from Professors that genuinely care about your future endeavors. I know it's probably

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

been stated so many times that it sounds like an old record, but I can't stress the importance of making freshman year count. General Education courses are like padding for the rest of your college tenure. If you strive to do good (like straight A's good) freshman year, then when it comes to those harder higher level courses you'll have something to fall on. So don't just show up to class, actually be engaged in the lecture or discussion, seek help and take time to study. The most important piece of advice I can give is to become acquainted with your professor and build a professional relationship. This will not only help in the classroom, but it will also get you far outside of the classroom. Hampton Professors don't just live and breathe Hampton. They have outside professions and connections. If an opportunity presents itself, then you want a professor to remember your name and work. You also want a quality recommendation for any opportunities that you seek for yourself. So when you begin to dwell on the increasing amount of college tuition, just remember that it all pays for itself in the end.

However, life at Hampton would be dull without friends and fun. Here's another age old phrase, Hampton is what you make it. That's definitely an oldie, but goodie. Hampton has so much to offer outside of the classroom. There are many clubs and organizations that you can pursue. Step out of your box; take chances, risk losing because in the end you will win. Not only will organizations look good on your resume, but they will also lead you to meeting new people. Networking and making connections with people at Hampton is a necessity. We all strive to be bigger and better after Hampton and someone you meet here might be your business partner in the future. Don't get so stuck on your group of friends that you first met that you don't go out and build relationships with others. But besides all the academic benefits and networking opportunities, joining different organizations is fun. Get out of your room, take a break from studying, and get involved.

Everything will not please every student. Someone will disagree with something, it's inevitable. Almost every student has a love-hate relationship with Hampton. The administration being seemingly overzealous about rules, the infamous Hampton run-around, and the never-ending work load. But at the end of the day (or at least by senior year) you will realize the good always outweighs the bad. In actuality, the bad only built character, work ethic, and time management. The reward is always greater than the challenge.

Sincerely,

Simone Summers

Dear freshman,

I bet sometime in your life you heard someone mention that college is where you go to find yourself. I know because I hear the same thing all of the time. When I stepped onto Hampton's campus in 2010, I knew Hampton was the place that I was going to find myself. I thought I would come to Hampton and, four years later, I would walk across the stage at graduation knowing exactly who I was and where I wanted to go in life. However, now I know it takes a lot of courage, wrong turns, and hard work to find yourself. In fact, I wouldn't call it "finding yourself" at all. "Shaping" is more accurate because the obstacles you tackle and the people you

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

meet in college will impact and help shape you into the person you will be when you graduate from Hampton. Not only will the events and the people shape you, but you will learn more about yourself than you thought possible. However, you have to be willing to take risks in order to mold yourself into the best person you can be.

As a fellow Hamptonian, I would like you to become the best you can be; as a senior, I will share this with you, some of the most meaningful experiences you will have at Hampton will occur outside of the classroom, so seek out extracurricular activities. Do not be afraid to step out of your comfort zone by participating in activities without your core group of friends. Although it is comforting to attend meetings with a good friend by your side, your friends may not be willing to go to every meeting with you and you should not limit yourself. Remember that you are on a journey to shape yourself, so invest in activities and programs that interest you and will enhance your best qualities.

While you are on this journey, you will discover who your true friends are, you will learn how to be a true friend to someone else, and you might even have your heart broken. Remember that everything happens for a reason and every encounter you make, every experience you take will impact you and play a role in molding you.

I wish you the best,

Jennifer Perry

Dear Freshmen,

I have been waiting patiently for the day that I could instill most of what I've learned to the freshmen class. First of all, there is so much potential in you. You have the power to do and change whatever you want and do not let anyone tell you anything else. Second, there is so much you do not know which is why it pays to listen not only to your professors but to the upperclassmen. They have been there before and for some it happened very recently so take what they tell you and use it to your advantage.

One thing that I would repeat given the chance is to introduce myself to just about everyone I met. Even if you never talk to the person again, they know your face and it helps to build a network for just about anything you may need, from tutoring, to professors, and eventually, internships to jobs. It is very real and I am happy to be reaping those benefits now.

One thing that I would do over again is better plan my four years. It pays to initially seek out your advisor not just when you need to register for spring semester or next year's courses. They are there to help you and keep you on the right track. It is advantageous to take the time to sit down and plan out the next four years of undergraduate school so that you do not have surprises or make room for some just in case and have a failsafe. This is especially wise if you have a minor or two.

What I wish I could have done in my tenure here was do more things that I liked to do and try more things. I had my foot in almost every facet on campus but I still feel like I was missing out on a few things just for the fun of it because it felt like these may be my last chance. But also I

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

wish I had had more time to do electives that I wanted to do that were outside of my major. When it comes down to it, now is the time to try new things and open up your mind and dabble in things you may be into academically. This atmosphere is about finding yourself and shape the Hampton woman or man that you will eventually become.

Truly yours,

Sarah J. Berryhill

DEAR ONYX 10 BABIES!!

As a senior and fellow member Onyx, I welcome you all to our “Home by the Sea,” Hampton University! I am your Student Government Association Student Representative to the Board of Trustees for this academic school year and I challenge you all to make the best of your college experience here at Hampton University. As you all settle down on campus and overcome the awkward transition from high school to college and leaving your family, take this time to reflect on your accomplishments thus far in your life and use those similar motivating factors to promote personal growth, maturity, responsibility, academic achievement, social involvement on campus, and meeting new friends along the way! Remember you came to college for an education, but you will also experience some of the best few years of your life! **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL OF YOUR OPPORTUNITIES!**

After reflecting on my tenure here at HU, my achievements came from learning to balance school, extracurricular activities, and TURN UPS! You will not always make every party or kickback you are invited to or hear of because it is important to prioritize your goals and remember that your diploma is your ultimate goal for attending school. Personally, I always enjoyed partying more after I completed all my work for the week/day. Once I finish all my work, then that gives me the rest of my time to attend social events and have fun without worrying about work and studying because I have already handled my responsibilities. Staying organized is the best way to allow yourself to stay focused and able to balance your school and personal/social life. **PLEASE USE A PLANNER** to write all your homework down and any other important events throughout the week so you can stay on top of your business and reduce the stress of being overwhelmed or procrastinating! My planner was my best friend and life throughout college because I wrote everything down and was able to manage my schedule better that way to eliminate taking on too many activities and obligations.

The key to success in college is simple- study, stay organized, stay focused, and balance your time effectively- so you can work and play as much as possible and still enjoy your time when doing so! **GOOD LUCK** this year and do not be afraid to get involved, study hard, and play hard! Your freshman year sets the tone for your future years in college and is important that you take advantage of any opportunities provided to you or provided through your own personal means! Once again, enjoy these next few years and remember it is the **YEAR OF ONYX!!!!**

Love your fellow Hamptonian,

April Jones

SGA Student Trustee

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

Dear Potential Honors Scholars,

I. So you are in college!!

For many, this will be your first college honors class. Therefore, a review of the orientation to college honors classes and college life seems appropriate at this time so that many of your questions and concerns can be addressed and clarified. People often think that college is an extension of high school. It is not. Some think that the skills developed in high school will get them through college. This too is incorrect. College is very different from high school. There are many reasons for the difference, but most significant is that **college is for adult learners**. Adults choose to attend college; high school is mandatory to age 16 years. A second difference is **in college the time requirements are drastically reduced**. For example, high school classes are for a 9 month year; the college semester is just 16 weeks or 8 weeks in summer. High School classes are everyday; college classes meet often 2 to 3 times a week. Combining the element of choice with reduced time in class, more focused thinking and reasoning while in class is needed to accomplish the requirements of the class or the curriculum.

These two primary reasons lead to some secondary reasons for college classroom attendance and participation to be different than high school. While in high school, living at home with family and friends, the reality of independent living and community responsibility are often not a concern of the student. Often high school students have a carefree life with social relationships as their principal “problem.” Few adult students live such a carefree life. College students thus often want/need class work to be challenging, relevant, and applicable to future life endeavors. This desire Dear Potential Honors Scholars,

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I hope this orientation message is painting the picture that attending classes as an adult is quite different and far more complicated than most students experienced when they attended high school. For example, when most students attended high school classes, the goal was only to pass just enough to get through it, since few questioned if or how the material would benefit their career lives. In fact, many knew that they would never see the material, so if they just gave the right answer, everybody would be

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

happy. As you attend college, passing can no longer be the focus. Mature college adult learners need and hopefully want to learn the material and develop needed skills.

A focus on learning moves the adult learner away from two primary cognitive skills developed in high school, memorization and seeking the right answer as the key to passing classes. Memorization will not be sufficient for successfully mastering most college classes. In fact, memorization is not a cognitive skill required for most college classes. **The cognitive skills for college classes are understanding or comprehending, categorizing, prioritizing, analyzing, and evaluating, to name a few.** These skills, once developed and incorporated into the student's cognitive skill repertoire, are extremely important and have the added advantage that they are useful in career, family, and community life. In addition to increasing the cognitive repertoire, college students must seek justifiable solutions rather than right answers.

While all students have chosen to attend college, few are prepared to change their way of thinking. In fact, many think that they can attend college, pass, and move forward without any changes in what they think or how they think. This idea must be examined, especially in light of the increased need for a college degree to advance. Truthfully, few have actively come to college to change their thinking.

Many will actively resist. But to successfully navigate the college curriculum, all students must change their thinking and reasoning skills. Those who do not change their thinking will have a harder than necessary time in advancing. College graduates, even some non-graduates, think and know more than people who only attended high school. In fact, the basic purpose of college is to increase the range and focus of the kinds of issues and ideas that students address. Colleges are designed to teach and students come to learn more information and to explore this information in greater depth than possible in high school. **A flexible, analytical thinking mind can be a byproduct of a college education.**

II. What can I expect to learn?

Honors students can expect to learn how to think and reason like a social scientist while participating in this class. Scientific thinking is different from the kinds of thinking most people do every day.

The primary difference between scientific thinking is evidence based. You must have empirical or concrete evidence to validate the basis of your reasoning. Empirical evidence must be verified through the senses or you must be able to see, hear, smell, taste or touch the objects of interests. It cannot be based in speculation or everyday thinking. "Speculations are thoughts and ideas that may be unique to you, that you can think about in your head, and in your mind." This information is what you think; no one else has to share your speculation. It's your opinion. Lots of people do speculative thinking all the time. While appropriate somewhere else, it is not appropriate in honors classes. The purpose of this college class is to move the student away from pure speculation. The class seeks to get the student to use the power of scientific thinking to make more informed thinking and reasoning decisions using research and empirical data of the discussion.

III. Classroom Culture

Every class has a unique culture. The culture of this class has been characterized by former students as "different" from other classes, so some explanation and rationale is needed. First, this is a participatory class. Every student is expected to talk. As a teacher interested in learning, I know that learning happens when students talk, not when the teacher talks. Therefore, students must talk to learn.

To have a constructive class session, all students must read assigned materials prior to attending class. That way, students are prepared to explore what they have read or comprehended while outside of class. Without student discussion, students are not engaged. Without student engagement, students are in

Letters to Students by Students Plus Two

no position to challenge their thinking and understanding. This is not a class where I or a select few students will carry the class. For most students, this is a major difference. However, former students also stated that they learned more after accepting the responsibility of speaking. Moreover, to increase student dialogue and interactions, students will work in teams. Additional information will be presented to explain how team assignments will work.

The primary distinction between adults and children is adults assume responsibility for their behavior, whatever the behavior is. Attendance may be a good place to describe adult behavior. Students are not to call the teacher to report absences. Unless you are out of class for several sessions, especially weeks, then and only then must you call the teacher to explain. Our time together is quite short (see section I above), and there is much material to cover. Therefore, you are expected to attend all classes. If for some reason, personal or professional, you have a conflict, then you as the adult will make the decision of whether you attend class or not.

If materials are due, you can leave completed work in my office with my secretary. Or you must negotiate with the teacher to get your late written assignments read. Adults do not whine or blame others for shortcomings. Whining is telling the teacher information she cannot change (if changeable, only the student can change it) and expecting adjustments based upon things that the teacher will do, not what the adult student will do. Whining is not acceptable. Example, whining is saying things like “my other classes, my job requires, etc., etc.” There is nothing that I can do about these outside forces, and as presented earlier, all students have these conflicting obligations.

As your teacher, I do not need to know who you “blame” for your problems. The nature of our relationship is that I not serve as your confessor or parent. For me, the issue is what you are going to do about it? With a plan, as an adult you are in a position to negotiate. We have a business relationship; therefore, while we may or may not like each other, the purpose of our 14-week relationship is for you to learn to think and reason scientifically. Period!

Secondly, I have high expectations of students. I expect all students to work hard in this class. I challenge you to discipline your mind and to perform at your best. Therefore, I seek to communicate to you as honestly and clearly as I can. If your performance is not up to my standards, then you will not get the best grades. While my intention is not to reduce your GPA, my intention is to give students grades based upon their performance. I seek to be fair to you and the performance of this class.

I cannot teach and communicate everything you need to know during class time. I expect to see each of you in my office at some point during the semester and hopefully not after you have received a failing grade. Once you realize that you are not keeping up with the class work, then it is your responsibility to seek help either from classmates, a tutor, or from me.

Finally, because you are adults, if this is not what you want, then you need to decide what you will do. In some classes the responsible thing to do, if you chose not to continue, please withdraw. Inform the professor that you are leaving and, if you chose, you can tell her why.

Each semester I meet some wonderful students in my college classes. I expect this semester to be no different. I challenge you to learn, grow, and develop your mind. A developed mind is the best tool to maximize your personal and professional success today and into the exploring information age of the 21st century. It is my pleasure to work with you in that endeavor.

Sincerely,

Freddie T. Davy