KALAMAZOO COLLEGE 2019 SENIOR SEMINAR

“COLLEGE BACKW ARD AND FO KNOWLEDGE

BY COLLEGE STUDENTS FOR PROMISE STUDENTS
This zine is dedicated to all students eligible for The Kalamazoo Promise. By studying The Promise, we discovered that there are many non-academic skills that can help students thrive in college.

We asked current KPS students what they wanted to know, interviewed current Promise recipients about what they wish they’d known, read books about The Promise, and listened to Promise coordinators.

Then we took what we learned and made this zine. Some of it is funny, some of it is serious, and we hope all of it will make going to college and succeeding once you’re there just a little bit easier. Who doesn’t need a recipe for no-bake cookies?!

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This zine is brought to you by the students of Kalamazoo College’s 2019 Senior Seminar “College Backward and Forward”: Noura, Justin, Amy, Katryn, Anais, Travis, Alex, Alex, Sara, Archie, Will, Abby, Adelaide, and Bailey
ASSOCIATE’S DEGREE

2 YEARS, LESS EXPENSIVE, MORE FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING, MIGHT BE ALL YOU NEED TO GET THE JOB YOU WANT!

• Alpena Community College
• Bay de Noc Community College
• Delta College
• Glen Oaks Community College
• Grand Rapids Community College
• Henry Ford Community College
• Jackson College
• Kalamazoo Valley Community College
• Kellogg Community College
• Lake Michigan College
• Lansing Community College
• Macomb Community College
• Mid Michigan Community College
• Mott Community College
• Muskegon Community College
• Northwestern Michigan College
• Oakland Community College
• Schoolcraft College
• Southwestern Michigan College
• St. Clair County Community College
• Washtenaw Community College

BACHELOR’S DEGREE

4 YEARS, MORE EXPENSIVE, MORE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, GRADUATE SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

• Western Michigan University
• Wayne State University
• University of Michigan
• University of Detroit-Mercy
• Spring Arbor University
• Siena Heights University
• Saginaw Valley State University
• Rochester College
• Olivet College
• Oakland University
• Northwood University
• Northern Michigan University
• Michigan Technical
• Michigan State University
• Madonna University
• Lawrence Technological University
• Lake Superior State University
• Kettering University
• Kalamazoo College
• Hope College
• Hillsdale College
• Grand Valley State University
• Finlandia University
• Ferris State University
• Eastern Michigan University
• Davenport University
• Cornerstone University
• Concordia University
• Baker College
• Aquinas College
• Alma College
• Albion College
• Adrian College
BLESS’YA FAFSA

• Talk to your parent/guardian before filling out any forms. You’re going to need their help and the following information and documents from them:
  - Social Security Number
  - If you are not a U.S citizen, Alien Registration Number
  - Bank statements and investment records/portfolio
  - Any record of untaxed income
  - FSA ID, which you can easily find if you search FSA ID (you will need an email address)
  - Driver’s License Number (if you have it)
  - Any and all Federal Income Tax Returns
  - This includes W-2 forms along with any other records of annual income

• You will need a list of schools you are interested in applying to, so start making a list ASAP!

• The list can include schools you end up not applying to, so be generous when including schools on the list.

• It is important to note that, regardless of where you fall on the economic spectrum, you will almost always receive some kind of financial aid. Apply to every school which interests you!

$AVINGS TIPS

Create an Emergency Savings Fund.

Be prepared for the unexpected.

Make A Budget – Pay all necessities first: Food, Shelter, Clothing, Transportation. 10 percent rule – 10% of any income goes straight to savings.

Create checking and savings accounts. This helps you distinguish how much money you have available to spend.

Establish a goal. Having a specific, achievable goal can be motivating.

Commit!
  - Ex: My goal is to save 20% of my paycheck this week.
  - Ex: My goal is to increase my savings account by $50 this week.
DORM TIPS AND TRICKS

ROOMMATES:

- Keep your things on your side. Don’t be the roommate that flings their clothes and papers all over the room.
- Communicate! Talk about things like keeping the door locked, having guests over, using headphones, bedtime, etc.
- Talk about things you do/don’t want to share (food, paper towels, etc.)

FOOD:

- Sometimes the food in the dining halls just doesn’t cut it. Here are some recipes which don’t require all the kitchen appliances like a stove or oven that you might not have access to.
- Keep all your food in airtight storage bins and sealed containers! You don’t want any rodents moving in!

RECIPES:

NO-BAKE PEANUT BUTTER CHOCOLATE COOKIES
Requirements: mini fridge and microwave
This recipe will satisfy your sweet tooth!

INGREDIENTS:
2 cups sugar
½ cup of milk
8 tablespoons (1 stick) of butter
¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
3 cups rolled oats (not instant!)
1 cup peanut butter
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon salt

1. Melt together sugar, milk, butter and cocoa in a microwave safe bowl.
2. Add oats, peanut butter, vanilla, and salt. Stir until they are combined.
3. Mold teaspoon-sized balls and put them on a baking sheet covered with wax paper.
4. Let the cookies sit for about 30 minutes until they have cooled off. Keep them refrigerated.
CHEESY PASTA & BROCCOLI

INGREDIENTS:
All you need are pasta, broccoli, cheese of your choice, and olive oil!

1. Boil pasta and water in a microwavable bowl. To determine the time, add 2-3 minutes to the time mentioned on the pasta box.
2. Strain pasta and add cooked broccoli.
3. Mix in 1 tablespoon of olive oil (or butter).
4. Finally, add a handful of your favorite cheese. Mozzarella and parmesan are the best.

There are tons of other delicious recipes like these. Try looking at Pinterest or even googling dorm room recipes on the internet.

LAUNDRY:

• Get tide pods.
• Wash in warm water—it won’t destroy anything.
• Find a time when no one else is doing laundry (early mornings or Friday/Saturday night).
• Set a timer! Don’t be that person that leaves their clothes in the machine for two days.
• Stock up on quarters if your college washing machines use them!
• Clean out the lint trap after you’re done drying your clothes and always check the trap before putting a load in. Usually the lint trap is located on the inside of the machine when you open the door.
• Don’t forget hangers!
**BENEFITS OF TAKING A GAP YEAR**

- **COOPERATION:** working on group projects, living in the dorms, following instructions/assignments
- **EMPATHY:** making friends who may be very different from you (i.e., not from Kalamazoo)
- **FLEXIBILITY:** changing assignments after feedback
- **SOCIALIZATION:** talking to professors/Teaching Assistants
- **TIME MANAGEMENT:** starting assignments on time, breaking up big assignments/projects into smaller pieces
- **NEGOTIATION:** working with professors/other students when you don’t understand something
- **MATHEMATICAL SKILLS**
- **TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS**

**JOB SKILLS**

- **COOPERATION:** working on group projects, living in the dorms, following instructions/assignments
- **EMPATHY:** making friends who may be very different from you (i.e., not from Kalamazoo)
- **FLEXIBILITY:** changing assignments after feedback
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- **TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS**

**Benefits of Taking a Gap Year**

- **Gives you more time to choose a major**
- **Chance to refresh after high school**
- **Strengthens your resume**
- **Save money—** for textbooks, room and board, study abroad, and grad school
- **If you don’t know what you want to major in, you can save time and money while you figure it out.**
- **The best option is to get accepted to a college and then defer admission.**
  - It’s easier to go through the various application processes with support from the school (i.e., a guidance counselor).
- **Gap year students may get a GPA up to .45 higher and have better undergraduate performance overall.**
- **90% of gap year students are enrolled in a 4 year program after the gap year is over.**
- **86% of gap year students are happy with their current careers.**
- **90% of gap year students are enrolled in a 4 year program after the gap year is over.**
- **86% of gap year students are happy with their current careers.**
Sometimes your college bookstore is the best place to buy your books, but there are usually cheaper options. There are lots of tools online to help you compare prices at a bunch of online bookstores. When buying books, buy USED books. College bookstores and online stores also allow you to rent textbooks, which can be a lot cheaper than buying them. Also, think about getting the book from a library (Go early! You’re not the only one with this idea). Ask other students if you can borrow books from them. Some books can be borrowed or bought as electronic files. Some books (especially older ones) can be downloaded online for free.
TIME MANAGEMENT

In general, it’s better to get your work done in the morning/afternoon rather than waiting until the evening. It might not always be possible, but you can always sleep, relax, and enjoy yourself at night. Time management skills are crucial in college. While the flexibility and independence that college brings is great, you might realize how hard it can be to manage free-time, class, homework, tests, and/or a job. Here are some tips from experts that should help you adjust to your newfound freedom while still having plenty of fun!

MAKE A SCHEDULE - Start the day by writing down a to-do list. Use planners or calendars and devote certain amounts of time for each task! It is also helpful to put alerts on your phone so you know when to start a new assignment. You can even use color-coded notes to remind yourself of specific plans/tasks throughout the day!

RID YOURSELF OF DISTRACTIONS - Write e-mails in the morning and check them again midday, not every 5 minutes! Try to get rid of any clutter in your study area. Get through small projects quickly. Turn off your phone or at least put it on airplane so you’re not tempted to check social media!

COMPLETE THE MOST IMPORTANT TASKS FIRST - When you first make a schedule, make sure to include the most important tasks first. Focus on projects with the closest deadlines so that you put more energy into finishing them sooner. Setting out time to get these done before other smaller tasks lets you relax and have more free time towards the end of the day.

STUDY DURING SPARE TIME - If you commute to school, a good way to pass the time is pulling out your notebook and reading over course material! Take advantage of any free time during the day. Staying productive will feel great. When you study in different locations you’ll remember more!

AVOID THE SOFA/BED - We know everyone enjoys sitting on the couch after a long day, but it is actually best to avoid the couch or bed if you’re trying to be productive. You will stay more alert if you sit in a chair or desk instead. Make a rule that you can only sit on the couch or lie in bed after the task in front of you is complete!
OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

Look At My Bank Account: Look At The Cash Amount

BEFORE OPENING UP A BANK ACCOUNT, YOU WILL NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE ELIGIBLE BY MEETING THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

• If you are not 18 or older, some banks may require that a parent or legal guardian accompany you to open your account.
• You will need to have a designated minimum amount of money to open your account. For example, Consumers Credit Union requires $25 to be put into your savings account.
• Lastly, you will need to identify yourself and provide your social security number in most cases.

NEXT, YOU WILL NEED TO CHOOSE WHICH BANK TO USE. YOU CAN CHOOSE ONE OF THE BIG BANKS OR A SMALLER CREDIT UNION.

BIG BANKS: OFFER MANY FINANCIAL PRODUCTS TO THEIR CUSTOMERS AND ARE FOCUSED ON RETURNING A PROFIT.

PROS:
• More Options: More financial products than credit unions.
• Convenient: More locations to deposit and withdraw money.
• Cash deposits.

CONS:
• Low or no interest rates: You won’t make as much money on deposits.
• Wide range of fees: Banks tend to charge higher fees than credit unions.
• Can only use their ATM locations without a fee.

CREDIT UNIONS: LIKE TRADITIONAL BANKS, OFFER FINANCIAL PRODUCTS TO MEMBERS SUCH AS CHECKING AND SAVINGS ACCOUNTS, LOAN PRODUCTS, AND CREDIT CARDS. HOWEVER, THEY ARE NOT-FOR-PROFIT AND MEMBER-FOCUSED.

PROS:
• Higher interest rates: More return on deposits!
• Lower loan and credit card rates: Cheaper to get a loan.
• Lower fees: Fewer fees compared to traditional banks.
• Better service.
• Flexibility: You can withdraw from any credit union location without a fee.

CONS:
• Fewer options: Fewer financial products than traditional banks.
• Fewer physical locations.
• Poor online services: Traditional banks have gone almost entirely to online banking.

YOU WILL ALSO HAVE TO CHOOSE WHETHER YOU WANT TO USE A CHECKING ACCOUNT, A SAVINGS ACCOUNT, OR BOTH.

• CHECKING ACCOUNTS: Used for day-to-day purchases
• SAVINGS ACCOUNTS: Used to preserve money over a long time period
AT THIS POINT, IT IS TIME TO OPEN YOUR ACCOUNT. THE BEST WAY TO DO THIS IS IN-PERSON SO THAT YOU CAN ASK THE BANK TELLER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU HAVE. YOU WILL NEED TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY INFORMATION TO OPEN UP YOUR ACCOUNT:

- Identification
- Proof of citizenship
- Proof of address

LASTLY, ONCE YOUR ACCOUNT IS ALL SET UP, BE SURE TO KEEP ALL OF THE BANK DOCUMENTS THAT YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN IN A SAFE AND SECURE PLACE. THESE INCLUDE:

- 4-digit pin number
- Bank number
- Social security number

NOW, YOUR BANK ACCOUNT IS ALL READY. YOU CAN LOOK AT YOUR BANK ACCOUNT, LOOK AT THE CASH AMOUNT, YOU GOT THE CASH, YOU’RE OUT.

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH

WHAT DEPRESSION LOOKS LIKE:
* more than just being in ya emo feels *
- Anger/irritability, lashing out
- Feeling numb rather than sad; emotions feeling flat
- Not getting back to your friends
- Tons (or very little) sleep
- High risk activity
- Perfectionism
- Trouble concentrating
- Self medicating
- Headaches, digestive issues
- More or less appetite than usual

WHAT ANXIETY LOOKS LIKE:
* more than just tripping about the future and the past *

- Anger/irritability, lashing out
- Feeling numb rather than sad; emotions feeling flat
- Not getting back to your friends
- Tons (or very little) sleep
- High risk activity
- Perfectionism
- Trouble concentrating
- Self medicating
- Headaches, digestive issues
- More or less appetite than usual
WHAT TO DO IF YOU’RE ANXIOUS:

Write it out – open up your notes app on your phone, and just write down everything you’re thinking—even if it doesn’t make sense.

• If you’re feeling ambitious, write down what’s bothering you, and then list alternative explanations for why it may be happening.
  - E.G., My girlfriend hasn’t replied to my texts in 7 hours. I think she’s cheating. Alternative explanations: (1) Her phone could have died/gotten stolen/lost; (2) she could have gotten grounded; (3) she could be napping; (4) she could have forgotten to hit send on her reply; (5) she could be out with her friends; (6) she could be upset and might need to be alone.

  - MAKE LISTS – if you have go to school and you’re dreading it, break it up into many different little tasks. You can check a box off for sitting up in bed, for walking to the bathroom, for eating breakfast.

  - FIND SLAPPIN YOUTUBE VIDEOS

  - TALK TO A FRIEND – whether it’s about what’s making you anxious or about if Lil Pump will get time off for good behavior.

  - GUIDED MEDITATION (check out https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA9DrMM41Fk)
FIND A MANTRA:

IF YOU’RE STRESSING ABOUT THE FUTURE:
• “I can’t control everything that happens. But I always get to choose my next steps”
• “Life is 10% what happens to me, and 90% how I choose to react to it”
• “I don’t need to go in my mind to somewhere my body is not”
• “Being scared isn’t being cowardly— if I’m scared, it means I’m about to do something brave”
• “If I spend too much time worrying about something before it happens, I will basically be putting myself through it twice”

IF YOU’RE EXHAUSTED:
• “I have made it this far. If I give up now, I’ll have wasted all the effort I’ve put in so far”
• “I’m more capable than I give myself credit for”

IF YOU NEED TO GET THROUGH A STRESSFUL EXPERIENCE:
• “I will never have to do today again”
• “I can always get through the present moment, and life is just a string of present moments”
• “I’ve survived this before, so I can make it through again”

IF YOU’RE STRUGGLING WITH GUILT:
• “Understand that to be Me, I may have to disappoint You.”
• “I’m doing the best until I know better. Then, when I know better, I can do better”
• “It’s okay to be the villain in someone’s story. I wish I weren’t, but if I am, it’s fine. If I messed up, I can learn from it and do better”

WHAT DO TO WHEN YOU ARE DEPRESSED:

If you have to get up for school and you’re dreading it, it’s better to show up in your pajamas and with unbrushed teeth than not show up at all
- REMEMBER, EVERYTHING WORTH DOING IS WORTH DOING POORLY – any tiny accomplishment is better than none at all!
- BREAK UP YOUR TASKS INTO LITTLE PIECES– give yourself props for each little piece accomplished.
- MAKE A LIST OF THINGS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY– make a list of things you do every day. Compare these lists. Adjust accordingly!
- WATCH SLAPPIN YOUTUBE VIDEOS.
- FIND NEW MUSIC ON SOUNDCLOUD OR SPOTIFY
- SHOWER
- SWEAT – play basketball, run around the block, throw marshmallows against a wall (it works!)

FIND A MANTRA:

IF YOU’RE FEELING IRRITABLE:
• “I have the right to be mad, but if I let my anger get the best of me, I’ll be the one who gets punished.”
• “I am the only one in charge of how I react to this.”
• “I don’t have to waste my time and energy dealing with other people’s ignorance.”
• “I don’t have to give everyone access to me: some people are draining, and I am allowed to say no, to ignore calls and texts, and to break plans.”
IF YOU’RE FEELING LIKE YOU DON’T MATTER:
• “I don’t have to do what everyone wants me to.”
• “It is not selfish to do what’s best for me.”
• “I don’t have to say yes if I want to say no.”
• “I don’t need to pretend I’m different than I am.”
• “I have the right to say, ‘I don’t understand’ without feeling stupid.”
• “I don’t have to minimize my emotions.”
• “I don’t need anyone to approve of me.”

IF YOU’RE FEELING LIKE YOU’RE DISAPPOINTING OTHERS:
• “I don’t have to do what everyone wants me to.”
• “It is not selfish to do what’s best for me.”
• “I don’t have to say yes if I want to say no.”
• “I don’t need to pretend I’m different than I am.”
• “I have the right to say, ‘I don’t understand’ without feeling stupid.”
• “I don’t have to minimize my emotions.”
• “I don’t need anyone to approve of me.”

IF YOU’RE FEELING GUILTY:
• “I carry a large burden, but I am not the burden.”
• “I am not worthless just because someone else failed to see my worth.”
• “If someone does not want me, it is not the end of the world. But if I do not want me, the world is nothing but endings” (Nayyirah Waheed).

IF YOU’RE FEELING DRAINED:
• “I don’t have to maximize the potential of every day—some days are just about getting through.”

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF GETTING WORKED UP OVER A SITUATION IN YOUR HEAD, ASK YOURSELF:
• “What would I tell a friend if they were in this situation?”
• “What are all of the possible outcomes?”
• “Are my feelings or worries based on facts?”
• “Is there another way for me to look at this?”
• Replace “I always mess up” with “mistakes help me learn and grow.”
• Replace “I can’t do it” with “This may take some extra time and effort.”
• Replace “I should be doing more” with “I’m doing my best, and negativity won’t help me get anything more done.”
• Replace “Why am I always so anxious?” with “my anxiety has made me a stronger, more thoughtful person.”
• “Why is this happening to me?” with “what is this trying to tell me?”
YOUR FEED AND YOUR FEELS

Among other things, social media can:
• waste time and money
• increase feelings of loneliness and depression
• promote aggressive behaviors
• damage self image
• increase social comparison

You don’t have to quit it – just use it to your advantage!

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

Audre Lorde
1934-1992

Self-Care is a priority and necessity - not a luxury - in the work that we do.
STAYING HEALTHY

Background

- People often use drugs to try to make their lives feel better.
  - Physically addictive drugs make your body show symptoms when you stop using the drug.
  - Psychological addiction is when your emotions tell you that you need the drug.

- There are many diverse drugs in the world.
  - Some are legal, some aren’t.
  - Some drugs are physically addictive, some aren’t.
  - Some drugs have a high risk of psychological addiction, some have very little risk.
  - Some drugs grow naturally, others are man-made.
  - Some drugs are so popular you can’t escape them, others are very rare.

- A person’s drug of choice depends on the social group and the person.

- Everything that enters your body changes you.

- People who are in physical or emotional pain or are always stressed are more at risk of becoming addicted to drugs than people who are relaxed and happy with their lives.

- Examples of people who might experience a lot of pain and stress are:
  - People with mental conditions/mental illnesses: These conditions are often invisible, and people are afraid to talk about them. This fear is called mental illness stigma, and it makes life harder for people with mental conditions. Each drug changes how your brain works. When your brain changes, how you think changes. Drugs can make mental conditions worse or cause a person to start showing symptoms that they never had before.
  - Traumatized people: Trauma is an emotional response to extremely painful events. Trauma often consists of anxiety (worry), shame, regret, and wanting to hide what happened. Trauma victims often feel unable or ashamed to talk about their painful experiences. Trying to force people to talk about their trauma isn’t cool. If they feel like talking about it, listen to them. Our society is full of many kinds of trauma.

- People are traumatized by:
  - Sexual assault
  - Being physically or emotionally abused or bullied
  - Severe illnesses or injuries
  - Being violently attacked
  - Witnessing violence, pain, or death
  - Natural disasters
  - Dysfunctional households
TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS

When you’re very young, it’s easy to believe that everyone is nice, but that’s not true.

People can hurt each other in ways that last years or decades.

Sometimes, friendships and romantic relationships start off nice and then gradually change over time into something very painful.

One partner can abuse another, or both partners can abuse each other.

When you’re in a relationship, it’s often hard to be honest about what’s really going on.

When you like a person, you feel like excusing them for doing bad stuff to you or others.

• If a friend or lover is hitting you or threatening you, you are being abused
• If a friend or lover keeps treating you like an inferior or saying things that make you feel shame or fear, they are abusing you

If your relationship is abusive, there are several things you may do:

• If you think your friend or lover will discuss it respectfully, tell them that you are hurt by what they do and ask them to stop.
• Tell other friends, family members, counselors, or teachers that you are worried about your relationship. Abusers often expect their victims to be silent about what goes on in the relationship.
• Hang out more often with the other people in your life. Abusers often try to use up all their victims’ time and energy. Don’t get isolated! There are people who love you, people who can help you! Tell someone!
• Just get away from the person. You don’t need to ever talk to them again. Don’t listen to their arguments. Relationships with good parts can still be bad. You don’t owe anyone your life.

STUDYING

• Study for about 2–3 hours for every hour of class you have. If you’re a busy college student and that many hours seems overwhelming, think of it on a smaller scale.
• Study with friends! You can ask questions and quiz each other (just make sure they are putting as much effort into study as you are).
• It’s hard to engage with the material if you only reread. Try highlighting or rewriting key points instead.
• Try to teach someone! This could be your roommate, your pet, or even your stuffed animal. This can often reveal what you do and don’t know. Then you can go back and focus on learning the things you had a hard time teaching.
• Apply the material to your life. Connect with it in some way. Making personal connections helps you recall and understand things on a deeper level.
• Don’t cram! If you know you have an exam on Friday, start on the Monday before and maybe take a half hour every day to study in smaller chunks. This will actually help you remember more things.
• Sleep! When you sleep, the information you learn actually gets transferred to different storage centers in your brain. Sleeping will also help you focus.
• Find where you study best. This could be at the library, in your dorm room, in a park, or in a local coffee shop.
• Take good notes from the start. This can make a huge difference, and you’ll be thanking yourself later and saving tons of time.
• Unplug! This is really difficult to do, but the internet and your phone can be the biggest time suck. Put your phone in your backpack or under your pillow and study for half hour sections before checking your email or your phone.
• Take breaks! Breaks can help studying be more effective, actually saving you time. Make sure to take care of yourself and give yourself little rewards here and there.
Focus less on grades and more on a balance. Take more social science and history classes that give you a better analysis and understanding of the world. –Lynette (Albion ’19)

I would have told myself to go in with 0 expectations because I had a really hard time my freshman year, and I think it’s because I was disappointed when my expectations weren’t what I thought they were gonna be. –Syri (WMU ’19)

The advanced placement offerings in KPS were something I am very grateful for, as they prepared me better for the content and rigor I would encounter in post-secondary study. My teachers in my KPS experience were a major factor in my decision to pursue a degree, I cannot say enough how much these teachers impacted my academic trajectory; these teachers helped me to see what I was capable of and proved that they believed in us. –Zak (MSU ’19)

If I could go back in time, I would love to just tell myself that all of the feelings I will encounter will be normal. The feeling of being overwhelmed or even dejected are unfortunately universal for college students. There were countless times when the challenge of college and becoming independent made me feel like I was failing, but I’ve done well in school and am now months away from graduating with lots of important experience under my belt. –Zak (MSU ’19)

From an academic standpoint, I think KPS gave me a pretty great perspective on how to study and learn. I had some dynamic teachers and diverse classrooms where I was exposed to a variety of learning styles. This allowed me to explore what worked for me and figure out how I could be successful. –Lyric (Michigan ’19)

I would have told myself to get more involved sooner. I think I’ve made the most of my last two years in college, diving into work and into rugby, but I regret taking so long to do so. I feel like I’m just now developing friendships with people that I won’t get to experience entirely because we’re all graduating so soon. –Lyric (Michigan ’19)

I think the most difficult thing about my college transition was having to figure a lot of the real-life stuff out on my own. I’m also grateful for that opportunity though, because I think it taught me a lot about myself and my strengths and weaknesses. –Lyric (Michigan ’19)
If I could go back in time, I would have told myself to dual enroll. I could come into college with more credits and be more prepared for college classes. I also should have done an efa/efe that could help me discover what path I wanted to take towards a career. – Anonymous

I would tell my high school self that it’s okay to feel lost in college but use the resources available, get help if you can, and it’s not the end of the world if it doesn’t work out. –Anonymous

KPS has a lot of teachers who are willing to take students under their wing, & I believe that has helped with creating proper and beneficial classroom environments for myself. – Laura (WMU ’21)

Who you surround yourself/associate with is who you become. – Nikko (WMU ’19)

Sleep management… because rest is very important, and not getting enough rest regularly has negative long term effects. Also better money management!! – Nikko (WMU ’19)

I probably would have told myself not to rush into anything right away and to never settle. There is so much pressure these days to have everything figured out and to have a set plan. – Autumn (Aquinas ’19)

Despite what people think, for a lot of people, it’s hard to graduate in exactly four years and with the exact major/minor combination that’s right for them. It’s okay to trust the unknown and jump into oblivion because we’re young and we’re not supposed to have everything figured out. Even if we do think we have everything figured out, never settle, always look for what else is out there to gain and learn. – Autumn (Aquinas ’19)

If I could go back in time to tell myself one thing before college it would be “Please put yourself first, make your education your own and love yourself in every way possible, every day. Call your parents, they are your best supporters and cheerleaders. Don’t be afraid of your professors, you’re here to learn and they are here to help you, not judge you!” I would say this because it can be hard to shake the feeling that you’re supposed to understand everything right away, and if you don’t, you’re somehow behind your classmates, and that is untrue and harmful to your education as a whole. Use all of the support you’re given from the school, your peers, your family, struggling alone does not help you out of the rut, it only prolongs it. –Anonymous
Almost all colleges offer the following:

- Workshops on everything from time management to being a student of color (you are not alone!)
- Study and writing centers for academic help (everyone needs help sometimes!)
- Mental health and counseling services (talk to someone!)
- Student activities (get involved! have fun! meet new people!)
- Learning and physical disabilities services (know your rights!)
- Office hours with professors (they want you to learn!)
- Career Counselors (it’s never too early to start thinking! and they may help you find and fund an internship!)
- Academic Advisors (you can talk about more than which classes you want to take!)
- Student Events (don’t forget to have fun!)
KALAMAZOO COLLEGE
2019 SENIOR SEMINAR
“COLLEGE BACKWARD AND FORWARD”

photo courtesy of Bill Dolak