



**ZENIE FOUNDATION**

Helping Students Become Effective Adults

**High School to College Transition**  
HSCT  
**Strategy Guide**

**What really is: “Going to College”?  
You can make it far more than four years  
of advanced high school and have fun doing it.**

Colleges and Universities don't provide an education, they provide students an opportunity to earn an education and invest in their future. It's up to each student to determine how they will use their opportunity. And the schools will charge exactly the same regardless of how effectively you use them.

You will quickly experience a new level of independence and, hopefully, learn how to use it wisely. Later, particularly as you engage in team activities; school projects, sports, and jobs, you will discover the power of interdependence with family, friends, teachers and colleagues.

The Zenie Foundation's (ZF) mission is to help students become effective adults. This High School to College Transition (HSCT) Strategy Guide will help you become an effective college student and achieve as much as possible from your upcoming college experience.

Eighty years ago (1939), we were captivated by the “Wizard of Oz” movie. It's a classic and you've probably seen it. Many say that it's the most watched movie, ever. It's a fantasy about a young girl named Dorothy who is transported by a tornado from Kansas to a magical land called Oz. She teams up with a Scarecrow looking for a brain, a Tin Man seeking a heart and a Cowardly Lion needing courage. Together they travel down the “Yellow Brick Road” toward the Emerald City. During their travels and challenges, they discover the Scarecrow already has a brain, the Tin Man has a heart and the Cowardly Lion is truly courageous. Yes, it's a fantasy, but with a very real message. We all have a brain, a heart and the courage to be effective and be fulfilled. We simply must travel down our Yellow Brick Road to fulfill our potential.

Think of college as the beginning of your Yellow Brick Road, your pathway from kid to adult. Your new world, is far bigger, more exciting and more challenging than the world you know today. As you proceed, you will discover more about yourself, gain knowledge, develop skills, gain new insights, meet new friends and have fun along the way.

Your academic studies are very important, but you will be known and valued by how you live and what you do. Take a minute and think about your cell phone. It's a small, mobile computer and, like all computers, its apps are built on its operating system. The operating system manages the computer resources to enable the function and features of your apps and is mostly transparent to you as you interact with the apps. Most of your academic work is building your personal operating system. And, as with computers, you deliver value through your apps. Going to college begins your investment in yourself as an entrepreneur seeking ways to create value. Someday you will look back and see that your legacy is not what you say or your academic accomplishments, your legacy is how you live and what you do.

It's all about choices; how you manage them and what you learn from them. Good choices earn the right to become habits and help develop personal values that will serve

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you through your entire life. Experience and wisdom will come, while at this stage of your life, you're blessed with energy, curiosity and freedom.

Start thinking now. How will you invest in yourself, allocate your time, spend your money, meet your commitments, live your values and who will you pick as friends, advisors and leaders?

The enemies of good choices are temptation and envy. In economics, Opportunity Cost is defined as the missed benefits from choosing one alternative over another. Choices have costs as well as benefits, so test whether your choices are influenced by envy or temptation for some immediate pleasure or benefit. Sure, you will make mistakes; try to learn from them and not let mistakes become addictive habits.

Never are choices so important as in selecting friends, advisors and leaders. In the Wizard of Oz; Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion shared the vision of traveling down the Yellow Brick Road to the Emerald City. Their commitment to their vision and to each other, using their combined knowledge and skills, overcame the obstacles and challenges presented by the wicked witch. Together they triumphed.

### **Never Underestimate Yourself – The Greatest Generation**

We just celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WWII D-Day (6/6/1944), the invasion of Normandy, France. D-Day was by far the largest and most complex military engagement in history. It began the Allied liberation of Europe and the ultimate defeat of Nazi Germany. We recall D-Day here to emphasize one key factor; D-Day would have failed without the leadership and courage of the young adults who landed on Normandy's beaches. The Generals and Admirals developed the strategy and built huge logistical support for the invasion. On D-Day itself, however, the weather turned stormy and limited the Allied effort to neutralize the enemy defenders prior to troop landing. Visibility was poor and the landing crafts frequently deposited troops at the wrong locations. The beaches were chaotic; enemy fire slaughtered our troops as they landed, our troops were split from other parts of their units, communications were primitive compared to today, and the Generals and Admirals were on ships miles off shore and had no idea what was actually taking place on the beaches.

Leadership and battle choices fell to team leaders on Normandy beach – sergeants, lieutenants and captains – whose ages were generally between late teens to mid-twenties. Their choices were urgent and limited and all with life and death consequences. Enough of these young men knew they must attack; they simply faced the enemy and said "Follow Me". They led the way into enemy fire and the troops followed. The Normandy invasion succeeded because young men had the commitment and courage to say follow me – the purist form of leadership; out front facing danger and risk.

Successful transition to college begins your personal Yellow Brick Road. Your personal leadership and thoughtful choices will keep you on track. Learn from your poor choices and build on the good. Other than meeting modest academic requirements and paying your bills, you set the goals. Don't underestimate your ability and your courage to make

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good choices. Seek help from your parents, your schools, the internet and your trusted friends and advisors.

Build a new relationship with your parents. You will always be their daughter or son, but you are no longer their kid. You are an emerging adult. Treasure their love, support and advice. You don't have to take all their advice and you don't have to justify your choices, but you should thoughtfully listen.

Please re-read this HSCT Introduction once each semester and think about how you're doing. Good luck following your Yellow Brick Road.

We will now focus on four key factors that, we believe, are key to your successful transition.

<b>Me</b>	Self-awareness, values and skills.
<b>Time</b>	Time allocation and bandwidth
<b>Relationships</b>	People and resources that make you more effective
<b>Money</b>	Embracing affordability

These MTRM (me, time, relationships and money) factors should guide us beyond college and throughout our lives. Good choices leading to good habits will pay huge dividends in your ongoing development as effective adults. This HSCT is intended as a framework and guide; you can easily access rich resources on all topics through internet search.

### Me

It all starts with self-awareness. The better you understand yourself, the more effectively you can transition to your new college career. Denial is the enemy of self-awareness and reality. Reality determines the outcomes from our choices. We all make mistakes – learn from them, forgive yourself and move on.

Who knows you better than you? Unfortunately, we see ourselves through filters, some favorable and some not. Seek and welcome help from trusted friends and advisors to develop your self-awareness (See Relationships).

As you gain self-awareness; build your self-confidence, treasure your strengths while avoiding arrogance. Try to improve where you're weak, recognizing that some weaknesses are wired into your DNA and you will learn to manage them. Learn how to assert yourself while respecting others and their rights.

You can't avoid stress, learn how to live with it. Colleges use stress to force learning. When faced with excessive stress; get help. Your counseling center can introduce you to techniques that will help you worry less and manage your stress.

Now ask yourself who am I and what do I stand for? These are your values; are you prepared to live by them? Will you put "I will seek win-win solutions to my challenges?"

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at the top of your list? Someone, I'm not sure who, defined Integrity as doing the right thing even when people aren't looking. Do you want to meet this standard?

Ask yourself why you're going to college? Are you comfortable with the answer? If not, develop new objectives and goals to make more your college experience more valuable. Remember, it's the beginning of your Yellow Brick Road and the path to your Emerald City.

Meet your commitments and stretch for your goals. A commitment is your pledge to do something and defines your credibility. Overachievers, however, set personal goals above what they can commit to. They want to be the best they can be and don't treat shortfall as failure. A sports team, for example, might well commit to winning more than half their games with goal to win them all.

Avoid intellectual envy. Universities are hierarchical and judgmental – titles, publications, seniority, academic degrees and college rankings. When functioning well, the "real world" focuses on your values and actual accomplishments. Think beyond credentials to delivering value.

Commit to lifelong learning and develop core skills.

Develop your listening skills; pay attention and keep an open mind.

Develop your writing skills; write something every day - the more you write, the better you'll write. Read what you write before sharing.

Develop critical thinking skills. Challenge. Ask why. Look for unusual problems. There are few absolutely right and wrong answers in life, but some answers come closer to being more "truthful" than others.

Read – fiction, non-fiction and current events.

Decide how you will use social media. Assume your postings will be viewed by all and will remain forever. Be cautious.

Take your health seriously. How much sleep you get, what you eat, whether you exercise, and the kinds of choices you make about alcohol, drugs and sex, they all contribute to how well or unwell you feel. Find out about the resources your school offers, both for physical and mental health.

### **Time**

Time is your most perishable asset. Once lost, you can never get it back. So many distractions and your parents aren't there to guide you.

We will shortly discuss money budgets, but your time also needs budgeting, it's called a schedule. Begin with a model of how you believe you should allocate your time to meet your effectiveness goals. Be realistic, include time for fun and entertainment.

Do you have a job? If you are attending classes full time don't work more than about 15 hours a week. Try to work on campus. Students who work on campus tend to do better in classes and are more likely to stay enrolled than those working off campus. If you need to work longer hours, consult with school counselors and consider alternatives.

Create a schedule calendar. Paper is ok, but electronic calendars, accessible on all your platforms, are far more useful. Refer to it frequently and stick to it. Make sure truly

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important tasks get done and cancel those that stand in the way. Step back and ask whether you are using your time effectively?

Treat your academics as your job. Try this rule of thumb: for every hour you spend in class or lecture, plan to spend 2.5 hours in outside study. Thus, twelve hours of weekly class time will require up to 30 hours of additional study – that’s already a total of up to 42 hours. Actual times will vary depending on the topics and your capacity. Schedule conservatively and then adjust.

Remember that you have limited bandwidth. So many exciting things to do and so little time. Learn how to say no. Nothing is worse than starting too much and finishing too little. It’s ok, however, to take some breaks from schoolwork and hang out with friends.

Show up for class. Professors tend to test on what they discuss in class, as well as grade in part on the basis of class attendance (and participation). Take your new freedom seriously and responsibly.

Assess and improve your study habits. An integral part of your success in college involves assessing your own learning style, taking better notes in class, reading more efficiently, and doing better on tests. If your campus has an academic skills center (most do), visit it.

Get involved in a least one campus activity outside of the classroom. Work for the campus newspaper or radio station. Play intramural sports. Join a club. Most campus organizations are looking for new students. Check them out during orientation. Remember, however, your bandwidth limitations.

### **Relationships**

You will meet a lot of new people. Some will become friends and a few will become trusted friends and advisors. No matter how appealing your new friends are, they must earn your trust to become advisors; and they do that by demonstrating their commitment to your success. And, you must do the same in return.

We all need community and you will build a new one of friends, advisors, professors and your school’s support resources. You will need them going forward so start building your relationships. Embrace your interdependence. Remember that you are not alone. Thousands of other first year students are facing the same uncertainties as you. There is strength in numbers; create a support network and use it.

Sooner is almost always better than later. Everyone occasionally falls short and effective people seek help quickly. Realistic self-assessment, embracing help and prompt action will smooth your Yellow Brick Road.

Make one or two close friends among your peers. College represents a chance to form new and lasting ties. It also offers great diversity in terms of the people on your campus. Choose your friends for their own self-worth, and not for what they can do for you. Remember in college, as in life, you become like those with whom you associate.

Be proactive; find and get to know one adult on campus who knows who you are and who cares about your success. One person is all it takes. It might be the leader of your freshman seminar class or some other professor, an academic advisor, or someone at the career or counseling center.

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Choose professors who involve you in the learning process. Attend classes in which you can actively participate. You will probably learn more, more easily and more enjoyably. If, after honestly trying, you can't build a productive relationship with a professor, request a change or avoid him/her in the future.

Find a great academic advisor and fight to keep him or her. The right advisor can be an invaluable source of support, guidance, and insight throughout your college years. It's common to switch your advisor, from the one you were initially assigned to one of your own choosing, after a semester or two or three, once you've gotten more familiar with your college's departments and faculty members.

Learn what support resources your school offers and where they are located. Most campuses have career planning offices, personal counseling centers, and academic skills centers, as well as many other resources.

Know how to use the campus library. The library isn't as formidable as it might seem, and it offers a wealth of information and resources.

Visit the career center early – don't wait till your senior year. Even if you think you have chosen your academic major, the career center may offer valuable information about careers and about yourself.

### **Money**

Zenie Foundation urges students and families to make affordable college choices. This is actually a subset of a larger principle of Affordable Life. As effective people, we must learn to manage some of life's most tempting pleasures; nice things, food, booze and drugs, sex and money - or suffer the consequences.

Beware of anyone wanting to lend you money. You will likely borrow for college, buying a home (mortgage) and your first car. Beyond this, you are paying someone to enjoy something before you can actually afford it. The cost of borrowing is the total of the interest you pay plus the interest you lose from not saving. Think of a loan as negative money, in accounting it's a liability not an asset.

All those free credit card offers are from businesses that want you to spend more each day by borrowing the money and paying interest to them. If you have or plan to accept a credit card, commit to paying the balance each month. Don't slip into the easy habit of credit card debt, particularly to buy nice things that you don't need.

You likely won't save money as a student. Once you start your career, however, you need to pay down any loans and begin saving for your future children's' education and your retirement.

Similar to your time calendar, you need to develop a money budget. Again, build a model for the effective use of your money resources and track how close you behave to your model. Adjust your behavior before it's too late.

Start thinking about your career goals. Will they support your money goals? Effective adults are aligned.

Many campus organizations offer free or low-cost activities and events. Check your Campus Activity Board and Libraries.

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### **MTRM: Stay Self-Aware > Learn > Adjust**

We wish you successful travels down your Yellow Brick Road.

#### **Acknowledgement:**

We have incorporated numerous insights from Gary Canter a certified guidance counselor who works with families and consults with scores of schools and organizations assisting students with post-secondary planning. His website [www.collegeplacementservices.org](http://www.collegeplacementservices.org) offers advice for high school students and parents seeking college guidance. You can contact Gary at [gcanter1@maine.rr.com](mailto:gcanter1@maine.rr.com) or (207) 772-9711.

#### **Resources:**

1. Seven Habits of Highly Successful People, By Steven Covey  
If you want one powerful reference for life's journey toward effectiveness, we recommend 7 Habits. It presents a clear, pragmatic and easy to remember model for an effective life. It has sold over 25 million copies in 40 languages.  
Amazon offers new, paperback copies for about \$9.00 with free Prime shipping.
2. Please see ZF's Career Transition Strategy Guide (CTSG) at [www.zeniefoundation.org](http://www.zeniefoundation.org) for some self-assessment tools. You can easily find many self-awareness resources and they probably all work well.