

Surviving Bureaucracy & Red Tape

Adult students often experience some degree of frustration as they prepare to enter college. First there are the meetings with the advisors, then the department heads, then with the Treasurer's Office, then with Financial Aid, and on and on. Here are a few survival tips to help ease the college process:

- Expect delays and challenges. You will be better able to accept if they present and you will be pleasantly surprised if they do not show up.
 - Get the names and titles of all people with whom you talk. If you get bounced from one office back to the same person you began the process with, politely let them know.
 - When you know someone's name, use it! This reduces the likelihood that you will remain a number.
 - Understand that the people you deal with are there to work for you, not against you.
 - Use campus resources.
 - Communicate effectively. Have questions prepared ahead of time and be specific.
 - Keep accurate files and documentation of answers, records, and other information you receive from various offices on campus.
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Tips on Assertive Communication:

- Identify what you want. What are your goals? Identify what you want.
- Keep it short, simple, and specific (The KISS Rule). Get and keep people's attention. Avoid abusive, aggressive language that puts others in a defensive mood.
- Look assertive. Make your face match your words, use confident body posture, make eye contact, avoid threatening gestures or nervous fidgeting.
- Sound assertive. Use a calm, conversational tone of voice. Speak loudly enough to get people's attention but not to the point of frightening others.
- Deal with one problem at a time. Allow the person with whom you are dealing a few minutes to reach a solution.
- Acknowledge and praise others for their cooperation, time energy, and ability. Be appreciative of a job well done.