LESSON 3

Week 3: “The Co$t of $kipping Cla$$” (September 12-September 16)

Important Dates/Notes:

Topic A: Let’s face it, there are days none of us want to get out of bed. And while Connecticut weather can be absolutely gorgeous in every season, there will eventually be cold mornings and rainy days ahead. The comfort of your student’s bed may seem like a magnet to them, but there are a number of reasons they should strap on a backbone and head out to class!

When is it okay to skip a class? Never. (Well, almost never.)

Exception 1: If a student is sick, then that student really should stay home and start to heal. It’s probably the one exception to attend-at-all-cost. Your student has a cold? We’ve all got the same cold—students, faculty and staff. However, universities can be hotbeds for the flu because students are in such close contact with each other. And the flu is something we don’t want everyone to have. If a student is truly sick, he or she should head to the Health Center, and they should follow the directions of the physicians.

Exception 2: If something important has come up in a student’s family requiring him to leave campus for a day or two, everyone understands that life happens. But it is important for students to really read each professor’s rules when it comes to attendance. Most professors allot a certain amount of absences a student may take each semester for each course—regardless if a student feels like it’s an “excused” or “unexcused” absence—before those absences will affect the final grade of the class. Professors are not required to consider the differences in types of absences.

Exception 3: Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 10a-50. give students the right to be absent from a class due to religious beliefs. This statute states: “No person shall be expelled from or refused admission as a student to an institution of higher education for the reason that he is unable, because the tenets of his religion forbid secular activity on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study or work requirements on such particular day or days or at such time of day. Any student in an institution of higher education who is unable, because of such reason, to attend classes on a particular day or days or at a particular time of day shall be excused from any examination or any study or work assignments on such particular day or days or at such particular time of day. It shall be the responsibility of the faculty and of the administrative officials of each institution of higher education to make available to each student who is absent
from school because of such reason an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirements which he has missed because of such absence on any particular day or days or at any particular time of day. No special fees of any kind shall be charged to the student for making available to such student such equivalent opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his availing himself of the provisions of this section.”

Why should your student go to class, each and every class?

Reason 1: Monetary Cost.

While the chart below is not definitive by any means, as there are many variables which affect the true numbers outlined, it does give a good idea how some extra sleep may equal a loss of Eastern’s monetary value. A missed hour of class can be worth as little as $22 and up to $90 dollars an hour!

For argument’s sake, let’s consider the 2015-2016 tuition of an in-state, on-campus student with the average 15 credits in a semester. The chart below assumes that 15 credits in the fall semester. The per credit cost is $333.86 based $5,008 (Tuition + University General Fee + University State Fee). A student who only takes the 12 credits, the minimum needed to make themselves full time? It’s $427.33 per credit hour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Credits</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Sessions per week</th>
<th>Weeks in Semester</th>
<th>Total Class Sessions</th>
<th>Single Class Cost</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>$89.02 *</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>$22.25 *</td>
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</tbody>
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*Note: We’re calculating the tuition + general + state fees because even a commuter student pays these fees; for demonstration purposes, the differences in these fees and tuition is not discernable for students; there’s no options to not pay them.

Now include the cost of Housing ($6,642) + Food ($4,968) + other fees like books and supplies ($2,237)….school is a huge investment!

Reason 2: What happened?

Imagine your student missing a class only to have a professor give a pop quiz or give other students some hints about what’s on the next exam. Can your student guarantee he or she will hear about what happened? Will they be allowed to make up the quiz? Did the professor even notice he or she was not there? Will the professor be willing to help them later when they do need assistance knowing their course was being blown off by the student?

Students who don’t go to class miss out on a lot. And it can be difficult to catch up later. The bigger issue is students that blow one class off, often skip another…and another…and another. It adds up. We’ve
already looked at the cost of one class session—imagine the student who is skipping a day of classes or more!

*Reason 3: Grades.*

Professors do consider student attendance when it comes to grades. While some will give credit for class participation, most certainly take away partial credit from students who do not attended all of their classes. If a student’s grade may fall right between a B- and a C+ at the end of the semester, professors calculations when deciding a grade for the course may be just a tenth of a percentage one way or the other; attendance may come into play in the final decision. *Was the extra hour of sleep worth it for your student?* Probably not now! All too often, “I didn’t feel like it,” is a horribly poor excuse to make.

*The bottom line to this lesson is that students need to attend “all” of their classes.* At Eastern, courses are small, and it’s very easy for a student to get to know a professor and the professor to know a student. The majority of faculty at Eastern are very caring for students that try; if it means a student falls asleep once in their course because they were up late, most faculty would probably say that was much better than just not coming to class at all. That student will get the benefit of the doubt.

At Eastern, given these factors, students really have to work at earning poor grades. Faculty will certainly meet them to a point; but, once taken advantage of, they’ll move on to students who are honestly eager to learn and engage themselves in the process. By not attending class on a regular basis, students demonstrate to faculty they simply don’t care.

**Assignment:** Ask your student if they are attending all of their courses. If they say “Yes,” they’re lying. Of course, I’m just kidding. You should touch base with your student—maybe on a regular basis—and ask about their habits and class attendance. It really may turn out to be the best conversation they might have in a semester, and it may convince those that are skipping to start getting back to their original commitment.

**Points:** 10 points for an honest and thoughtful conversation on this topic.