

# Sophomore Slump: What is it? How do I deal with it?

Sophomores experience a whole new set of stressors as they return to the college campus. Unlike freshman, they receive fewer warnings about the do's and don'ts of college life; they are expected to know how things work. Combine this with the push to declare a major, find an internship, and decide whether or not to study abroad can lead sophomores to fall into the "sophomore slump". This new found set of expectations can lead to challenges for the second-year student. There are three general areas that cause sophomores the most stress.

## **1. Academics-**

- pressure to choose a major
- taking upper-level classes with juniors and seniors who may have formed closer relationships with the professor.

## **2. Personal-**

- uncertainty about the direction of their life
- feeling guilty about the time and money gone into college when they are uncertain about the direction of their life.
- changing and challenging of previously held family values

## **3. Relationships-**

- desire for intimacy increases
- friendship ties at home decrease
- desire to not go home on breaks

The sophomore slump is a time of uncertainty and a time for growth. How will you know if you are experiencing symptoms of the sophomore slump? Answer the following questionnaire to find out.

Do you find yourself wondering....

1. What am I doing here at Muhlenberg College?
2. Why do I have more questions now than when I first got here?
3. Who are these people I hang around with that I thought were my friends?
4. Why am I majoring in this, if I don't even like it?
5. Why am I constantly overwhelmed?

6. Why do I only find the negatives in my life?
7. Why don't I find time to relax?
8. Why am I so uncertain about my future?
9. Why am I not having as much fun as last year?
10. Why am I ready to cry if the smallest thing goes wrong?
11. Why do I feel like my parents are constantly pressuring me to know what I want to do with my life?
12. Does everyone have this all figured out but me?
13. Why am I so unmotivated and/or anxious?

If you find yourself answering **yes** to **three** or more of these questions since arriving at Muhlenberg College this semester, you could be suffering from Sophomore Slump.

**Now what?** If you think that you might be experiencing the Slump, there are many things you can do to cope.

1. Take care of your general physical well-being by:
  - eating regularly
  - sleeping regularly
  - exercising
2. Talk to your academic advisor:
  - explore classes that look fascinating
  - take a class for fun or self-expression
  - make a personal connection with a faculty member
  - explore need for academic support
3. Find interesting extracurricular activities:
  - volunteer
  - join interest group
  - renew high school activity (join intramural sport, band, etc)
4. Talk to someone from Counseling Services:
  - Sophomore Slump is normal
  - identify if your schedule is too demanding
  - identify underlying stressors

-learn means to assert your growing identity

**5.** Visit the Career Development Office:

- explore opportunities
- ask questions
- talk with others who have experienced the Slump

**6.** Talk with Religious Life:

- explore meaning and purpose
- develop a meaningful relationship
- increase interaction with college personnel and services

**7.** Explore Greek Life:

- learn leadership skills
- form lifelong friends
- explore philanthropic opportunities

**It is important** to recognize that the Sophomore Slump can really exist for students. However, it can be resolved! This resolution will bring greater growth and self-recognition.