



Members of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society chapter at the Quad-Cities Campus are writing PTK Posts for their 2021 College Project. College Projects are a way for PTK chapters to engage and give back to their colleges.

The goal of PTK Posts is for Quad-Cities Campus PTK members to share student stories and information to help current and prospective BHC students be successful and happy with their college experience.

In this post, Black Hawk College alumna and former Phi Theta Kappa officer Alexa Mahoney shares what she wishes she had known when she was a Black Hawk student.



Name: Alexa Mahoney

Hometown: Colona, Illinois

Program: Associate in Arts (2019 graduate)

BHC activities: Phi Theta Kappa, Sigma Kappa Delta, and All-USA Academic Team

I attended Black Hawk College from the fall of 2017 to the spring of 2019. I graduated with my Associate in Arts degree by taking a mixture of both in-person and online classes. In my two years at Black Hawk, I was an officer for Phi Theta Kappa, a member of Sigma Kappa Delta English honor society and a member of the All-USA Academic Team. I transferred to Northern Illinois University in DeKalb and earned my Bachelor of Arts degree as an English major. I enjoyed my time at both college institutions, but looking back on my four-year undergraduate journey, there are some things I wish I would have known to make my transfer process and overall college experience smoother.

One: Prepare to transfer

When I was attending Black Hawk, I focused on meeting the degree requirements necessary to graduate and did not put much thought into my transfer school. I knew I was going to transfer to a four-year university when I started Black Hawk, but I did not think about streamlining my current education with my future education.



Black Hawk College advisors can help you make sure the classes you are taking meet your [transfer](#) needs, and you can even explore the [transfer guides and agreements](#) Black Hawk has in place with four-year colleges and universities online.

In addition to making more use of BHC transfer info, I also wish I had connected with advisors at potential transfer universities while I was still taking classes at Black Hawk. This would have helped me learn about what course tracks are available, what will or will not transfer, and what each college offers compared to others.

Two: Utilize BHC resources

Black Hawk offers many free services to its students to help promote better learning and career opportunities. Between the Career Services Center, tutoring and TRIO, there are a lot of services that target specific needs. Black Hawk also hosts career and college fairs where different vendors and universities come in and make themselves available for questions and resources. I wish I had been more attentive to these fairs, where information about options of what to do after Black Hawk was easy to obtain, instead of having to search for all of this information by myself.

Three: Get involved sooner



Although I became an officer for Phi Theta Kappa and a member of Sigma Kappa Delta, I spent my whole first year – which was half of my time at Black Hawk – not involved. I didn't attend any hosted events by PTK or the SGA, and I didn't participate in any club meetings or special events. I just focused on showing up, going to class, and going home.

In reality, I was too scared to get involved my first year at Black Hawk because I didn't want to overcommit. After being involved in these organizations, I realize that these events and organizations put on by students are for the students. Attending one meeting or fun event does not mean that you are committing all of your time to said organization, but instead, it is a great way to connect with new people who may have the same interests as you, as well as a way to feel like part of a school community.

In summary: know what your educational and career goals are, find the resources necessary to help, and capitalize!

Phi Theta Kappa is the largest honor society for two-year college students. Black Hawk College has a PTK chapter at each campus. The honor society focuses on leadership, fellowship, service and scholarship. Our members lead the chapter each year, hold meetings

and activities to help students build a network with other students, participate together in service opportunities on campus and in the community, and are recognized for their high academic success. PTK has many scholarship opportunities for members, whether they are transferring to another college or joining the workforce after BHC. For more information about PTK, visit www.ptk.org or email our Quad-Cities Campus Chapter Advisor [Nicole Banks](#).

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