

Getting Off to a Great Start at SAU

Parking

- Display your parking permit in the bottom corner of your back passenger window.
- Park only in a general student lot — never in a reserved, faculty/staff, or visitor space, even "just for a minute."
- Those spaces get ticketed and can be towed!
- Give yourself extra time the first couple of weeks while you learn the lots.

Crosswalks and Pedestrian Safety

- Always use marked crosswalks.
- Make eye contact with drivers before stepping out.
- Be extra visible walking at night — wear something light-colored or use your phone flashlight.
- Cars don't always see you first.
- As the driver, be aware of the crosswalks and yield to the pedestrians! Stay off your phones while driving through campus. No speeding!

Mulerider ID

- Carry your ID with you at all times.
- You'll need it for the dining hall, library, campus events, and building access.
- If you lose it, get a replacement right away by visiting Student Activities in Reynolds 216.

Declining Balance

- This works like a debit account tied to your student ID for things like food and campus purchases.
- This is loaded with your selected meal plan. The amount varies based on what plan you selected.
- You can add additional DB to your account if you run out.
- This will be available about a week after classes start.

Campus Safety

- Save both numbers in your phone: **911** for emergencies, and **(870) 235-4100** for University Police non-emergency issues (located in Childs Hall).
- Sign up for SAU's emergency text alert system (RAVE Alert) if you haven't already, walk with a friend at night, and lock your dorm room every time you leave, even for five minutes.

Blackboard

- This is where your assignments, grades, and class announcements live.
- Check it daily, not just before class.

- Download the mobile app so you don't miss anything.

SAU Email

This is the University's official way of reaching you — financial aid, registration holds, professor updates, all of it. **Check it every day, even on weekends.**

Post Office / Mail

- The Post Office is located in the Reynolds Center.

Mail can be sent to you at:

Southern Arkansas University
Name or Department
100 E University
Magnolia, AR 71753

- You will receive an email when mail/packages have been received. You will go to the mail lockers and enter the code sent to your email to retrieve your mail/package.
- You can drop off UPS or FedEx packages at the SAU Post Office. You can also use regular United States Post Office services via the SAU Post Office.

Mulerider Spirit

Go to games. Go to events. Wear your colors. Athletic events are free - just go through Mulerider Athletics to get your tickets prior to the event you are attending.

Parents and Family

- This transition is a big emotional adjustment for your parents too, even when it doesn't look like it from your side. Answer their calls and texts, even with just a quick "doing good, talking later."
- If you go quiet for too long, a worried parent's next move is often to call campus, show up on campus, or call campus safety to do a wellness check — a brief text saves everyone a stressful day.

Mulerider Materials

- Mulerider Materials is SAU's course materials program, and if you're eligible, you're automatically enrolled — it's designed to make sure you have every required textbook, lab manual, access code, and digital material in hand on or before your first day of class, usually at a lower cost than buying items separately. Physical books come as rentals, and digital materials are delivered right through Blackboard.
- Watch your email about 30 days before classes start for a notice asking you to choose in-store pickup or home shipment for your physical materials. A

\$24-per-credit-hour charge is applied to your student account automatically; if you'd rather opt out and buy your own materials instead, there's a specific window each semester to do that (mid-to-late summer, before the term starts) through the opt-out portal on the Bookstore site.

- Note that consumable items — things like lab goggles, dissection kits, molecular model kits, engineering kits, and nursing kits — aren't included and still need to be purchased separately.
- If you rented physical books, they're due back by the last day of finals, so plan to return them before you leave campus for the semester.

Your Class Schedule & Our New System (J1)

This year, SAU is still transitioning to Jenzabar One (J1), a new student information system that handles scheduling, financial aid, and payments. Because it's new for staff and students alike, please be patient with us as everyone gets used to it — if something looks off or takes a little longer than expected, it's very likely a system growing pain.

If your financial aid, bill, or schedule looks wrong in J1, don't panic and don't assume the worst — reach out to the appropriate office (Advising for scheduling, Financial Aid for aid, Business Office for payments) so they can look into it. With a new system rolling out, a quick question now is much easier to fix than letting it sit.

Advising - Overstreet 238

Financial Aid - Overstreet 300

Business Office - Overstreet 113

A Few More Things Worth Knowing Early On

- **SYLLABUS - READ THEM! Get the important dates into your time management tools! You are responsible for everything given to you in the syllabus!** Understand your syllabus policies, especially around AI use and academic integrity — “I didn't know that counted as cheating” won't hold up. **Discuss AI and stress to students to protect themselves!**
- Know who your academic advisor is and how to reach them before you actually need something. - Academic Advising Center - Overstreet 238
- Save key numbers in your phone: the Counseling Center (**870-235-4911**), the Help Desk for Blackboard/email issues (**870-235-4083**), and your RA if you live on campus.
- Use your resources before you're struggling, not after: the Academic Enrichment Center, the Writing Center, and tutoring are there for everyone, not just students who are behind. You will get 4 week and 8 week grades for check-points of your academic progress.
- Take care of yourself — sleep, meals, and managing stress matter more to your grades than most students expect.

- **Time Management is key!** Use planners, phone calendar/reminders, Blackboard calendar, other tools - whatever method you like - just stay on top of your assignments! College professors will not be as intrusive with reminding you about deadlines/assignments
- Get involved in at least one club, org, or activity outside class. Students who get involved early are far more likely to stick with college through graduation.

I also do a "Tell me what you notice is different from high school to college"

Some Typical Answers:

- No dress code
- Less supervision from parents and school officials
- More freedom
- More personal responsibility - discuss how to handle this new freedom and make wise choices/decisions - managing your time
- Not as much hand-holding for class responsibilities
- Not as much homework
- More weight on test grades
- Getting up and to class on time without parents reminding you
- Class schedule varies - no more 8-3
- Size of campus