As the month of May begins, high school seniors are already planning for their first year at college, and their nervous parents are preparing to say goodbye! Between filling out financial aid forms and buying dorm supplies, future college students may have fun taking time to learn the lessons that Minnesota Reflections (http://reflections.mndigital.org) has to teach about college life.

**Lesson One: Finding the Perfect School**
Seventeen colleges and universities (and other repositories associated with the state’s educational institutions) have contributed collections to Minnesota Reflections. Many of these collections contain images that trace the growth and change of the state’s college campuses:

- Carleton College (campus drawing, ca. 1900 – 1920): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?ccn,253
- Concordia University, St. Paul (aerial campus view, ca. 1924): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?ccu,209
- Hamline University (chapel and library, ca. 1898): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?hmu,217
- Minnesota State University, Mankato (Old Main with fencing around building, ca. 1899): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?msu,319
- Bethel University (aerial view of future campus, ca. 1963): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?p15160coll13,8

Reading student newspapers and other publications provides a good sense of a school’s culture.

- St. Cloud State University Archives (‘The Normalia,’ 1904): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?stc,4062
- Winona State University Archives (1925 Student Guidebook): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?winona,607

The community in which a school is located can play an important role in student quality of life.

- Mesabi Range College Library (Souvenir Booklet: Educational, Social, Civic, Virginia, Minnesota, ca. 1925):
Lesson Two: Realities of Dorm Life
Dorm life is certainly an adjustment, but can also be a valuable growing experience.

- Gustavus Adolphus College (A room in Johnson Hall, ca. 1912): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?gust,309
- St. Olaf College (St. Olaf Men’s Dormitory (renamed Ytterboe hall in 1914, ca. 1908): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?olaf,18
- University of Minnesota, Duluth (Dormitory interior at Duluth Normal School, ca. 1920): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?umd,112

Lesson Three: Choosing a Major
Minnesota Reflections offers a historical perspective on a variety of academic disciplines.

- Winona State University (Student in laboratory, ca. 1930): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?winona,687
- College of St. Catherine (Derham Hall botany classroom, ca. 1912): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?csc,70

Lesson Four: Making New Friends
College is a wonderful time to meet people from around the state, region, and world.

- College of St. Scholastica (Students in a Parlor, ca. 1930): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?p15160coll8,92

Lesson Five: Enjoying College Life
It is important to reserve some time for fun between writing papers and studying for exams.

- Macalester College (A.E. Evans, Macalester College student, Class of 1897): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?macal,53
- University of St. Thomas Libraries, Department of Special Collections (Appearing in “Handy Andy,” ca. 1902): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?thomas,146

Lesson Six: Eye on the Prize
Though it may take four or more years, graduation day comes quickly.

- Luther Seminary Archives (Augsburg Seminary diploma from the 1880s): http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?lsm,36

To explore more historic documents and images from Minnesota colleges and universities, do an advanced search in which you limit your query to specific college/university collections. Or, browse by contributor and look for colleges and universities of interest.

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