

A freshman's world provides a different perspective on life

Each year since 1998, as traditional freshmen journey off to college, a list of generational facts known as the College Mind-Set List has been published. The list always makes me smile, and it makes me realize that my experience of our world is in many ways vastly different from the experiences of our college freshmen.

The list was created at Beloit College, Beloit, Wis., as a funny but thoughtful way to see the world through the eyes of these 18-year-olds. Last year, the list moved to Marist College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and it is as entertaining and enlightening as ever.

The full list of 60 is at www.marist.edu/mindset-list, but here, just for fun, are my top 10 items from the freshman class of 2019:

- No. 44** Most of them will rent, not buy, their textbooks.
- No. 31** By their sophomore year, their generation will constitute one-quarter of the US population.
- No. 19** They may well not have a younger sibling, as the birth rate in the U.S. has been dropping since they were in grammar school.
- No. 3** The primary use of a phone has always been to take pictures.
- No. 17** Snapchat has become their social media app of choice, thus relieving them of the dilemma of whether or not to friend Mom.
- No. 46** There have always been “smartwatches.”
- No. 20** PayPal has always been an online option for purchasers.
- No. 27** YouTube has become the video version of Wikipedia.
- No. 37** Face recognition technology has always been used at public events.
- No. 43** They have grown up with Big Data and ubiquitous algorithms that know what they want before they do.

As intended by the list creators, these items serve as great conversation starters. When I meet our newest Tigers, I must remember to ask them for tips on taking pictures with my phone!

I love the fact our new freshmen come to campus with more technological experience than those of previous generations. Our hands-on, technologically enriched campus is designed to challenge them and to help them become successful on campus and get them ready for the workforce of tomorrow.

Similarly, I think a lot about how this generation accesses YouTube for everything – including class materials. The impact of YouTube on how our students learn is intriguing to me, as is the growth of artificial intelligence in helping students learn on a very personal level. A couple of years ago, I read about an artificial intelligence tutor that could ask and answer questions on course material to help the students deepen their knowledge base. That sounds like a lot more fun than the way I studied!

What is especially exciting to me is that, as we welcome our new students to campus and to Hays, I recognize how different their world view is from mine and how much fun we will have learning from one another. They are beginning their incredible college learning journey, even as I continue on my own lifelong learning path.