

How to Succeed in College

GO TO CLASS. It is easy to "skip" class citing boredom, lack of relevancy and/or interest. Well not everything in life is interesting and college is not a matter of your being entertained. If you learn to handle the "grunt work" and show a pattern of good attendance and participation, you will develop the essential habits of collegiate success.

LEARN THE CAMPUS. It is amazing just how many students get lost on campus. One campus tour seldom provides the geographic knowledge a student needs to get from building to building. So become an explorer and spend some time learning where all the departments are.

KNOW THE COLLEGE'S ACADEMIC RULES available in the Catalog. Ignorance of what is required is no excuse for failing to perform. If the students who frequently state "But nobody told me..." realized just how dumb they sounded, they would be mortified. Confusion on a rule is one thing, but ignorance of a rule makes a statement about a person.

IGNORE RUMORS. Do not act when in doubt. Rumors abound on the campus and most, if not all, have a particle of truth. Most have an abundance of fiction. So when you hear "A friend of mine heard..." or "someone told me..." **BE CAREFUL.** Acting on rumors could prove embarrassing if not disastrous.

BUDGET TIME. This includes having a social life, but if you do not learn to plan properly, you could flunk out in a few terms. And the bromide "I work best under pressure" is a silly excuse for the lethargic at heart. Your lack of foresight is not going to be your advisor's or professor's emergency.

ACCEPT CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM. The best way to overcome academic deficiencies is to face them head-on. Constructive criticism is not meant to be personal and it will help you reach your potential. But that "masterpiece" of the night before it is due research is going to be held up to severe scrutiny, fully examined, and incontinently booted around.

BEING A STUDENT IS A FULL-TIME JOB. You cannot work hard one day a week and hope your grades will be acceptable. You must focus not just on academics, but on good social skills, interacting with others in university sponsored activities and still know when to study.

DEVELOP AN APPRECIATION FOR AND A DESIRE TO OBTAIN A MASTERY OF THE LANGUAGE. The single most important skill for life success is communication. It is how you communicate your skills that demonstrates the depth of your education. There are many "illiterates" who have degrees.

BECOME INVOLVED IN UNIVERSITY LIFE. Becoming part of the university or college community is just as important as going to class, writing papers and taking exams. This doesn't mean you should join every group, but be selective and participate. Being involved will only enhance your university experience.

GET TO KNOW SOME PROFESSORS. They are people and should not be looked upon as the "enemy" or little tin gods. They are the individuals who will evaluate your work, supply references, and guide your intellectual development. Should you develop a bond of friendship, you will find they are invaluable during the rough periods of your academic career.

REALIZE THAT BEING INITIALLY CONFUSED IS NORMAL. Some students get upset when they realize they haven't mastered all facets of college life during the first term. College is a way of life. You will be learning how to cope with it every day and that is as it should be. So if you are worried about being initially confused by all the activity, you are really quite normal. Being normal is a state you work for, not assume it will transpire automatically. By the way, seniors about to graduate frequently exhibit a greater degree of "abnormal" behavior than do freshmen who are just about to enter school.

BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF. You will make some academic and social mistakes during your collegiate career. Please be assured that you are not doomed. When you realize you've made a "goof," set out to correct it. If you don't, it can fester and create problems.

MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS. Seeking advice is always wise. Trying to play it safe and avoid making choices leads to disaster. You must learn to take a chance (not a needless risk) when options are available and accept responsibility for your decisions.

YOU ARE IN SCHOOL FOR YOUR EDUCATION, NOT SOMEONE ELSE'S. If you go to college to please everyone else or anyone else, you end up pleasing no one, least of all yourself. While parents, guardians, and friends should be concerned about your academic welfare, it is your education and your degree. If you let others decide for you, you have abnegated your responsibility to yourself.

KNOW YOUR ACADEMIC SITUATION PRIOR TO MIDTERMS AND FINALS. If you have any question of concern about how you are doing in a class, go to the professor and discuss it. If you wait until after midterms, or even worse, the day before finals, to "see how things are going" and experience failure, playing academic catch-up will prove to be a no-win situation.

LEARN TO COMMUNICATE IN THE CLASSROOM. There are no dumb questions concerning subject matter. If you don't know or don't understand something, chances are several of your peers don't either. Learning to ask questions is a real skill and you need to develop it.

SAFEGUARD YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING. When exhausted, rest. Eat proper food and know when to relax. No one is going to thank you for working yourself to a frazzle or getting ill by ignoring your body's or mind's basic needs.

ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR BEHAVIOR. If what you say and do is prompted by others, or if nothing is ever your fault because others allegedly "pushed" you, you really cannot claim to be an adult, just a poor follower.

DO NOT BLAME OTHERS FOR YOUR ACADEMIC PROBLEMS. This is closely related to #18, but a large number of students blame others for their failure. This is a cop-out for ineptitude.

LOCATE AND USE ALL COLLEGE SERVICES. Contrary to what some believe, the UNIVERSITY DOES WANT YOU TO SUCCEED and will help you by means of all its services. Let the university serve you.