

# Creating Academic Success

Your success in college depends on a combination of factors: your behaviors in and out of class, your attitude about working hard, your awareness of key learning strategies, and your commitment to apply and assess these strategies in your daily life. The following checklist contains elements that directly relate to success, satisfaction, and ultimately, graduation from college. As the year progresses, periodically review the checklist with the goal of accomplishing academic success.

## Keys to a Successful Year

1. **Be aware of *why* you are attending college as well as *what* you expect to get out of college.** Whose decision was it to attend college (your decision or someone else's?). Are you attending the college of your choice? Do you intend to graduate from the college you are attending? Another college? What do you expect to accomplish in college? Be honest with yourself and clear in your goals.
2. **Know what is *expected of you* in each subject.** Read each syllabus. Make an appointment with each instructor. Attend all classes. Go to review sessions or form your own study group. Ask questions and then write down the answers.
3. **Manage your time *wisely*.** Establish a routine; be aware of the dangers of too much free and unstructured time. Muster the self-discipline to say “no” to tempting people and activities. Create a balance among your academic, personal, and social/leisure lives. Periodically assess your priorities: Do you typically place your academic responsibilities *before* your social aspirations? Do you allow yourself fun time between the academic and personal demands on your time?
4. **Develop and *use* effective methods of study.** Create a study system that works for you; choose, use, and evaluate recommended learning strategies. Form good study habits *early* in the year.

5. ***Involve yourself in college life.*** Students who participate in academic, social, and personal campus activities tend to do better academically. Create a link between yourself and other people within the college community. Make a commitment to:

- Join a student organization or club related to your interests or major.
- Obtain a campus job.
- Participate in academic support services, such as tutoring, group study sessions, and workshops, or become a tutor or peer educator.
- Go to campus cultural events, such as guest speakers, fine arts productions, and museum exhibits.
- Participate in intramural sports and other extracurricular activities.

6. ***Avoid these hazards:***

- Mishandling of your personal freedom and time.
- Misuse of drugs and alcohol.
- Mishandling your personal health.
- Mishandling *your best interests*.

### **A Personal Action Statement**

- Should be a commitment to action.
- Should be manageable.
- Should identify a specific step or strategy to implement.
- Should identify hurdles and strategies to overcome them.
- Should identify rewards (either intrinsic or extrinsic ones).
- Should be thoughtful.

**Example of a Personal Action Statement:**

1. I will become *more involved in campus life by obtaining an on-campus job.*
2. My greatest hurdle to achieving this is *not knowing where campus jobs are advertised.*
3. I will eliminate this hurdle by *(1) asking my advisor about job listing during our meeting on Wednesday, and (2) inquiring at the Career Center.*
4. My time frame for completing this is *Thursday of next week.*
5. My reward for achieving this is *the self-satisfaction of knowing that I began looking for a job EARLY in the semester! (And a paycheck!)*

**Develop a personal action statement:**

1. I will...
2. My greatest hurdle in achieving this is...
3. I will eliminate this hurdle by...
4. My time frame for achieving this is...
5. My reward for achieving this is...

From Lipsky, Sally. (2004). *The essential ingredients: college study*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, pp. 11-12.