

Lesson 3 of 5: “Avoiding Freshman Fumbles In Academic Management”

ABSTRACT

As high school or college leaders you have provided assistance to students in various facets of their lives. Of course that help is concentrated in the area of academic management. Once students leave high school and enter college the scene changes significantly. It’s important to make them aware of this shift in order to achieve academically and avoid fumbles in their early college years. This lesson is to assist if you need help with this.

College Is Not High School

Be Proactive: In college, professors are not going to call home when problems arise or seek out absent students. Students must get to know their professors by attending class and utilizing their office hours. They must be active in the classroom by asking questions and showing initiative. Professors are a great place to seek tutoring. Most professors have teaching assistants that provide tutoring services. Getting professors to notice them this way can help them get more assistance and possible recommendations later.

Advisors are also an excellent source of help particularly in the direction of degree work. They help students locate the aspect of their major that might fit them best. They also have access to professional contacts that may help with obtaining internships.

Suggest students join study groups even if they prefer studying alone. Group interaction can provide better understanding of a particular area or a different view on the subject matter. Also, some students may have taken the course before or have access to old exams that allows the group to review the format.

Double the class hours: While college can be a time of self and social discovery, they must maintain good studious habits to obtain a degree and position themselves for a job after graduation. Students often don’t realize that even though fewer classes are taken in college, they demand more work than the typical high school course. Research indicates that two to three times as many study hours are needed for every college hour taken. So, if a student takes 16 class hours, at least 32 study hours are needed to keep up with the workload.

Maintain Integrity: When faced with papers and deadlines to meet every week, many students feel pressure to cheat. Cheating may seem like an easy way out but, unlike high school, it is considered a very serious offense in college often leading to expulsion. Even if the student is not kicked out, their reputation will be ruined in the eyes of professors, advisors and peers. When credibility is destroyed, they will find it very difficult to secure recommendations, mentors, or internships when it is time to graduate and find a job.

Wise Class Scheduling

There are a multitude of factors to consider when determining course load and schedule. Proper course selection can often seem complex and perhaps frustrating. Here are eight practical tips they should remember:

- 1- College allows flexible scheduling so that classes can be planned around other activities they wish to pursue (employment, involvement in campus organizations, extracurricular activities).

- 2- Figure out what time of the day is most productive and schedule classes at that time.
- 3- Try not to schedule too many classes on the same days. This will prevent work from piling up and being due on the same day.
- 4- Scheduling too many classes in one subject at one time can be overwhelming. Mix up reading intensive classes with writing intensive classes to break the monotony.
- 5- Twelve credit hours (4 classes) are considered a full load. Taking all hard classes one semester to knock them out not generally a good idea. This can become a challenge to even the most studious.
- 6- Keep other classes in mind in the event that first choice classes aren't available. Many times the most popular classes will be full. Make a list of alternate classes that's needed for core requirements or for exploration.
- 7- Know the classes needed each semester. This may seem obvious, but many students get off track. The course catalog is an invaluable source for determining when required classes are due and the prerequisites needed for future classes.
- 8- Many advisors excel in class scheduling and have a lot of experience and forethought in creating a good and balanced schedule. Even if the student feels they have it figured out, suggest they have the advisor review their schedule before finalizing it.

Summary

As your students focus on the goal of college they will begin to seriously examine their academic milestones and achievements. They can fumble on their own and awaken to these simple truths at some point in time, but as good counselors we lecture until this awaking happens.