

Set High Goals For a Successful New Semester

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Text:

Beep beep beep ... the alarm clock, sharp as always, goes off. It's 8 a.m. ... It's Jan. 14 in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. After the long Christmas break, the Eagles are ready to return to the nest. The dining halls start to fill up again, and Bapst's chairs resume their creaking.

A sense of fear starts invading minds. It's a new semester and students really need to get work done. This thought is common to all Boston College students who, moved by the Ignatian call to set the world aflame, come up with the same new semester resolution: bump up their GPAs.

In fact, it is not as easy as it seems to blend in and to get in the flow of things. There are some tricks, laws, and advice that can guide everyone to a better semester.

First, it is really important to be organized. When you receive your syllabi, don't drop them on the floor. Instead, combine all of them into one master syllabus so you know when the busiest weeks will be and can plan ahead accordingly. As soon as assignments and tests come up, make sure you dedicate enough time to each one.

"What works best for me is writing stuff down," says Traynor Canny, A&S '10. "I like to make a list of what I need to do and try to number it, so I focus on accomplishing it in that order."

Students face challenges in different ways. Kate Casey, A&S '10, says, "I keep lots of calendars with my class schedule, meetings, appointments, assignments, and other important information. This keeps me mostly on task and organized."

As Casey stressed, staying on task is a hard challenge, especially for younger students who can't find a balance between their social life and schoolwork. "At the beginning of each semester, I make a list of things I want to do on and off campus," Casey says. "I keep on top of my work so that I have time to be with my friends without feeling guilty, knowing there's a paper to write waiting for me in my room."

"For controlling social life, I suggest getting involved," says Canny. "For me it's easier because I have a sports commitment every day that keeps me focused and forces me to get my work done."

Classes are a priority of college education. Enrolling in classes that you enjoy makes it easier to succeed because the class will be perceived as "fun" and not "work." An important factor, too, is the way a subject is taught - the professor issue. It is proven that if a student is inspired by his or her professor, he or she will work much harder. To accomplish this, it is important to develop a relationship with the professors that we will look back to one day. "I've learned it's best to [acquaint oneself with] a professor at the beginning of the semester before they have all the work to grade," Canny says.

"Talk during class when the professor asks questions or opens up time for discussion," says Casey. "Also, know your professor's office hours and use them. Dropping by just to talk about something mentioned in class is a good way to build a relationship with a professor."

College, though, is not just about classes. "Getting involved in something or at least staying active is important to meet friends and stay focused and out of trouble," Canny says.

Getting involved in different activities is a huge part of college, and these activities can aid in helping structure your day. But don't be easily attracted to every single activity. Getting involved is a really good thing but only in moderate portions. "Choose only one or two things you're really passionate about and find ways to contribute to those causes," Casey says. "Don't do too many things or you won't be able to give proper time and attention to the tasks that are important to you. Read flyers or look outside of campus, too."

In addition to your mind, your body also needs to be taken care of. Therefore, it is extremely important to schedule a time to work out at least a couple times a week. It is true that BC's campus, with its stairs, is a gym itself, but some extra workouts will make every student feel better. Even though it may seem hard to find a time to dedicate to staying in shape, it is extremely important to do so for two reasons. First, working out is a chance to space out and to relax, to stop thinking about classes. Second, working out will prevent you from wasting time watching TV or playing video games.

Life at BC is always intense. Every semester has new challenges, new things to get involved with, new people to meet, and new classes for which to study. It is essential to start off on the right foot and to set goals as high as possible.