



STRATEGIES FOR COLLEGE SUCCESS at Cal State L.A.

Adapted from J. N. Gardner & A. J. Jewler (2005). *Your College Experience*, 6th ed., Thomson Learning, Inc.

PLAN AHEAD!

- #01. **Show up for class.** When you miss even one day, you're missing something—lecture notes and important announcements. Some instructors may take attendance.
- #02. **Have work done on time.** Avoid the possibility of a grade penalty, of instructors not accepting your late work, or of irritating your instructors with perpetually late assignments. Keep up with your reading and assignments. The 10-week quarter system goes much more quickly than a traditional semester system.
- #03. **Learn to manage your time.** Learning how to manage your time can make the difference between success and frustration. Attend a time management presentation or pick up a variety of free schedules and handouts at the University Tutorial Center. Buy a planner at the University Bookstore, (323) 343-2500.
- #04. **If a full-time student, limit work week to 15 hours.** Need to work to earn money? Consult a financial aid counselor at the Center for Student Financial Aid (Student Affairs 124), (323) 343-6260. Look for a job on campus at the Career Development Center (Career Center upper level), (323) 343-3237. Students who work on campus less than 15 hours a week have a higher graduation rate than those who work off campus and/or more than 15 hours a week.

TAKE CHARGE OF LEARNING!

- #05. **Develop your reading and math skills.** Read often; read not just your textbooks but different kinds of reading material. Build a strong foundation in math; most jobs today require some type of quantitative skills. Take the appropriate math courses. Expect to devote more time to math courses than to other courses.
- #06. **Discover how you learn best and improve your study habits by attending workshops on how to study.** Use effective methods for taking notes in class, studying, and taking exams. Attend the University Tutorial Center's presentations or download handouts at www.calstatela.edu/centers/tutorctr.
- #07. **Develop critical thinking skills.** Listen and read carefully. Ask questions. Seek and evaluate evidence to support beliefs, assumptions, and opinions. Never accept something as fact simply because you found it on the Internet or someone tells you it's true. Don't be swayed by your emotions; think logically and objectively.
- #08. **Improve your writing.** Instructors—and employers—want people who can think and write clearly. Learn to organize your thoughts, put them on paper, and revise until your words clearly state exactly what you want them to state. Remember, the more you write, the better you'll write. Take the appropriate writing courses. Visit the University Writing Center (Library Palmer Wing 1039A), (323) 343-5350 to see a writing tutor or to attend a writing workshop.

HONE YOUR SKILLS!

- #09. **Participate in class.** Ask questions and share your ideas. Research indicates that students who involve themselves in class discussions usually remember more about the discussion than students who do not. As a result, they usually enjoy the class more and earn higher grades.
- #10. **Learn from criticism.** Criticism can be healthy and helpful. If you get a low grade, ask to meet with your instructor to discuss what you could do to improve your work.
- #11. **Learn how to use library and computer resources to conduct research.** Know how to do a library search and know to use electronic databases and the Internet. Ask librarians who are there to help you. Know how to cite your sources and not plagiarize another person's words. Attend a library database workshop,

(323) 343-3988. Plan to attend a free computer workshop offered through the Information Technology Services Training Program, (323) 343-5369.

GET CONNECTED!

- #12. **Study with a group.** Research shows that students who collaborate in study groups with classmates often earn the highest grades and survive college with fewer academic problems.
- #13. **Get to know at least one person on campus who cares about you.** It might be an instructor, your academic advisor, a counseling or career center staff member, or a student organization advisor. You may have to take the initiative to establish this relationship, but it will be worth it.
- #14. **Get involved in campus activities and become engaged in campus life and work.** Visit the Center for Student Involvement (University-Student Union 204), (323) 343-5110, to find out about campus clubs and activities. Engage in a practicum, an internship, field experience, or research through your major department. Perform community service as a volunteer by visiting the Educational Participation in Communities Office (Career Center Lower Level), (323) 343-3380. Become involved in student government by visiting the Associated Students, Incorporated (University-Student Union 203), (323) 343-4780. Students who are involved on campus and engaged with their studies report they have more beneficial college experiences.
- #15. **Learn about campus resources.** Successful students use academic and personal support services. Visit the University Tutorial Center for free academic tutoring and study skills presentations, the University Writing Center for free writing tutoring and writing workshops, the Career Development Center for career counseling, the Student Health Center (Health Center upper level), (323) 343-3237, for personal and health-related issues counseling, the Academic Advisement Center (Library Palmer Wing 1040A) or faculty adviser for course-related advisement, the Office for Students with Disabilities (Administration 127), (323) 343-3140, for services available to students with disabilities, and the Veterans Resource Center (Physical Sciences Building 112-113), (323) 343-5080, for services and resources available to veterans and their dependents.
- #16. **Meet with your instructors.** Plan to meet with an instructor during their scheduled office hours if you have something to discuss. Students who do meet with their instructors tend to stay in college longer.
- #17. **Visit your campus career center.** Do this your first year. A career counselor at the Career Development Center can help you learn more about your academic major or find another major that suits you better as well as help you explore career options.
- #18. **Take advantage of minority support services.** Visit the Cross Cultural Centers (University-Student Union 206), (323) 343-5001. Find out about minority support services (mentoring, tutoring, etc.) offered through programs affiliated with your major department.
- #19. **Enlist support of your spouse, partner, or family.** Let others know when you need extra time to study. You may need to adjust household routines and duties. A non-supportive partner or family can threaten your success in college. Sit down and talk it over, or seek counseling at the Student Health Center.

KNOW YOURSELF!

- #20. **Take your health seriously.** How much sleep you get, what you eat, how much you exercise, and what decisions you make about drugs, alcohol, and sex all will affect your well-being and class performance. Find healthy ways to deal with stress. Your Student Health Center can help.
- #21. **Have realistic expectations.** At first you may be disappointed in the grades you earn, but remember that college is a new experience and things can, and probably will, improve. Millions of other students have faced the same uncertainties you may be facing. Stay positive and seek out help. It makes a difference.
- #22. **Be proud of your heritage and embrace diversity.** Respect yourself and others. Be tolerant. Remember that most of the college population embraces tolerance. Read books, take ethnic studies classes, join clubs, visit the Cross Cultural Centers, and attend campus programs to learn about your own and other students' cultures and history.