



# COLLEGE SUCCESS

# 101

A Professor's Simple Strategies  
for Success in Your First 101 Days

**Bill Leamon, MBA/MOD/MHR**



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# LAKE ERIE

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## COLLEGE

A Lake Erie College student enters their freshman year with an eagerness to learn and grow, an interest in the world around them, and a desire to make a difference. During their time on our beautiful campus, we instill in our students the values of self discovery, creative problem solving, personal development and ethical balance. They emerge as a graduate with relevant professional skills, a broadened perspective, and tools they will use to lead an impactful life.

The Pathway to Empowerment signature program takes students on a journey of transformation that leads to a life of personal significance and professional success. This program is designed to empower our students to reach their full potential at Lake Erie College and beyond. Our long and proven commitment to the liberal arts, leadership development, and lifelong learning continues to benefit students today, both undergraduate and graduate.

If you are looking for a close-knit learning community just minutes away from all the amenities of a big city, and want an education that cares about character development as much as career preparation, then it's time to check out Lake Erie College.

See [www.lec.edu/office-of-admission/](http://www.lec.edu/office-of-admission/)  
or call (440) 375-7050  
for more information and to schedule a tour.



I am Bill Leamon, founder of CollegeSuccess101.org, and my passion is helping students successfully navigate their college experience. As a professor and college coach, I wrote this book to share what I have learned over the past 10 years as to why some students graduate while others do not. The content is based on a talk I have given to over 15,000 students at almost 100 high schools. If you are reading this book, you are likely a recent high school graduate who is heading off to college this fall. By the end of this book—which takes less than an hour to read—any anxiety you have about college will go away and you will be left with only the excitement of what is to come as you begin the next chapter of your life.

*Professor Leamon*

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# HOW MUCH IS A COLLEGE DEGREE WORTH

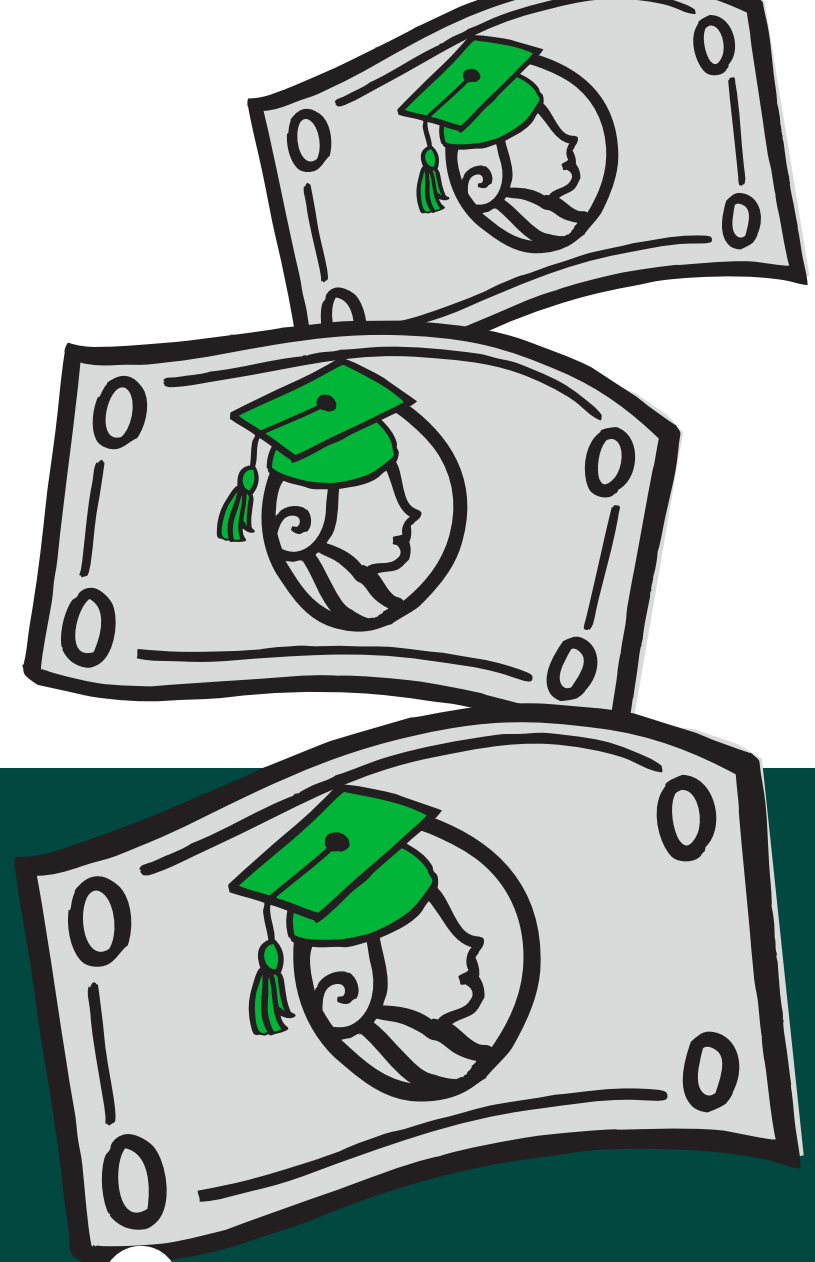


With so much talk in the news about rising college debt, it is no wonder some people are questioning the value of pursuing a degree. But the most expensive degree is the one you don't get.

**On average, college graduates earn \$1 million more than high school graduates over their lifetime.**

College is a big investment, and taking on debt is often times necessary, but the returns are significant and justify the sacrifice. The earning premium of having a college education has risen over the past 20 years by 10%.

Now that you have a million more reasons to go to college, I hope you will take the time to read the rest of this book to make sure you are prepared to graduate—and do so within 4 years.



\$1 million



50%

I've had the pleasure of watching more than 1,000 of my students walk across the stage at graduation, receive their diplomas, and go on and do great things in their careers. Unfortunately, there have been some along the way who did not graduate. In most cases, while not altogether surprising, failure to graduate was completely avoidable.

**Only 50% of students who go to college actually graduate from college.**

Both failure and success in college originate from within. The student you will become ultimately comes down to choice—not chance. You must make the decision—today—to be part of the 50% of students who not only go to college but graduate from college. If you do make this decision and put into practice the strategies I share in this book, you will not only graduate from college, I expect you will do quite well, and be well positioned for career success.



**Think about your freshmen year as being the 13th grade.**

There is a popular misconception that college is so much harder than high school. If you have finished the 12th grade, guess what? You're ready for the 13th grade. What makes college more challenging is that you are essentially on your own to make good decisions—day in and day out.

**Every day you decide to go to class or not.**

About 50% of all freshmen make the wrong choices when it comes to attendance. No longer do you have a parent waking you up or dropping you off at school.

**Every day you decide to study or not.**

About 50% of all college students make the wrong choices when it comes to studying. No longer do you have teachers or parents nagging you to prepare for a test, write a paper, or complete a project.

It is important to get off to a strong start. The first 101 days of college—the average length of a semester, from first class to final exam—is critical to your success.

**How you start is often how you finish.**

**START STRONG. FINISH STRONG.**

MOTIVATION



MATURITY



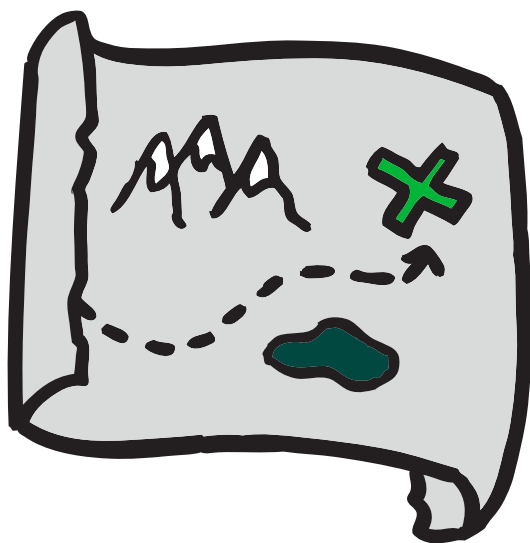
PLANNING



PREPARATION



SUCCESS



**YOU MUST READ YOUR**

# syllabus

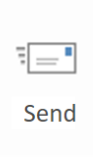
**EARLY AND OFTEN**

I want you to imagine that it is August 1st and you're 30 days away from starting college. You will know where you are going to college and what 4 to 5 classes you will be taking. Would you like to know what to expect from each of your classes? Where would you find that information? The syllabus. It is the most important document for your college success. It maps out all the learning outcomes, expectations, assignments and due dates.

Despite its importance, about 50% of college freshmen don't read their syllabi (plural for syllabus) in their entirety. Not surprisingly, what percentage of students who go to college don't go on to graduate? That is correct, 50%. Clearly there is a connection because if you don't know what is being expected of you, how can you expect to do well?

You can get a copy of the syllabus for each class from your professors. Send them a formal, professional email requesting a copy. I am always surprised by the informality in which students, especially those whom I do not know, will communicate with me by email. It is as if they are sending a text to their best friend—with spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and incorrect punctuation—and it is never a good reflection on the student.

With every communication to your professors you want to make a positive impression, especially that very first email you send. How might this email requesting the syllabus sound? Here is my recommendation:

 Send	To	Prof@CollegeSuccess101.org
	From	Amy.A.Adams@gmail.com
	Subject	Syllabus Request & Textbook Confirmation

Dear Professor Leamon,  
 I am registered for your College Success 101 course. I am writing today to ask you to do me the favor of sending me the syllabus and confirming what textbook is required. I look forward to seeing you in September.  
 Sincerely,  
 Amy A. Adams

The professor will reply back with an attachment, which will be the syllabus. Save it and print it (get in the habit of printing out important documents and not relying solely on information from your smartphone or computer), and of course, read it. If you do this for each of your classes, you will be in the top 50% of all incoming freshmen from a preparation perspective.

# TWICE AS LIKELY TO GET AN



Before the start of the fall semester, confirm what textbooks are required and order them. Textbooks are expensive and you want to make sure you get the right one and the correct edition. Some students, in an attempt to save money, will try to get through a college class without the benefit of a textbook, and it always ends badly. Why? Because in college, the questions on the exams don't typically originate from the professors, but come from the publishers of the textbooks.

So you can go to every class, pay attention, and take notes, but if you don't have the textbooks, or haven't read the textbooks, failure is your most likely outcome. Studies show that students who have their textbooks by the first class are twice as likely to get an A, and those who don't are twice as likely to get an F.

If money is tight, you can talk to the librarian on your campus to see if there are loaner books in stock, or request an inter-library transfer from another college library. This must be done before the start of the semester or any books available will be long gone.



# Read

## THE FIRST CHAPTER OF EACH BOOK



If you read the first chapter of each book before the first day of class, and read your syllabi, you will now be in the top 1% of all incoming freshmen from a preparation perspective, well positioned to get off to a strong start during those critical first 101 days in college.

Think about how much more comfortable and confident you will be walking onto campus on the first day of classes, having made an email connection with each of your 5 professors, having read the syllabus for each of your classes, and having read the first chapter of each of your books. No longer will you be anxious, you will just be excited about the start of your first semester at college.

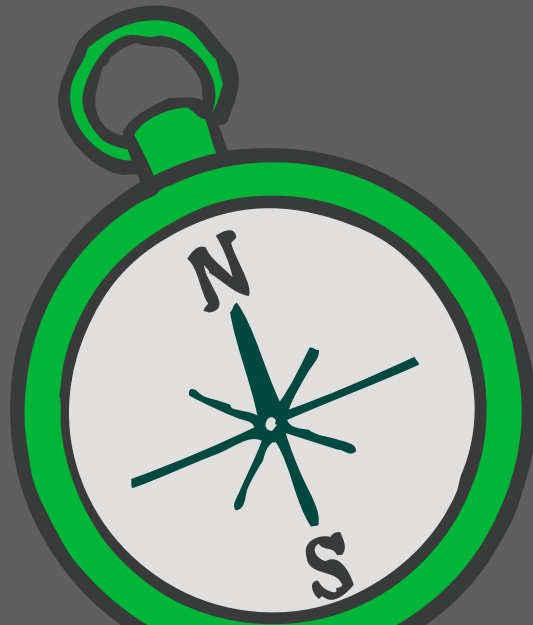
Often times, how you start is how you finish, so don't risk your college career by delaying your preparation. Get started 30 days prior to the start of your first semester, and you'll be glad you did.

Let's now imagine that it is now the first day of classes. How academically prepared do you feel for college? The two most important foundational subjects you need to be proficient at for college success are English and Math. If you are not as prepared as you think you need to be in English and/or Math (or any other subject or course for that matter) find a tutor on your very first day. Every college has a tutoring center whose sole purpose is to match students with qualified tutors, and they do so at no cost.

**Don't wait until you fail your first paper or test to get the help that you already know you need.**

But if you do fail your first test or paper—as I did my freshman year of college—don't panic. Put together a plan, starting with talking to your professor about what adjustments you need to make to your overall approach and study preparation. Don't waste your time and credibility challenging the grade that was given. Professors care more about how you finish than how you start, so failing your first paper or test is not the end of the world.

Many students wait until mid-term, when they are failing a class, before seeking any help. At that point it is too little, too late. Get help early and often. Being proactive will pay off when final grades are given.



get  
help  
early  
and  
often

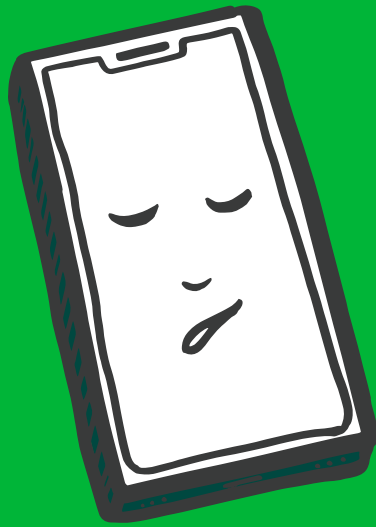
Time to head off to your first class! How many minutes early should you be for your first class, and for every class thereafter? 15 minutes. I call this “The 15 Minute Rule.”

I had a professor once tell me that if I was 5 minutes early for class, I was 10 minutes late. How can that be? Because he knew what I now know: the time before the start of each class is the best time to connect with your professor and other students. If you make only one connection or meet one friend, you will be glad you invested the time. Arriving 15 minutes early to your first class allows you to confirm you are in the right place, and if not, you still have plenty of time to find the right building or room—and still be on time.



“THE 15  
MINUTE  
RULE”

TURN OFF  
YOUR PHONE



ZZZ

ZZZ

What is the very first thing you do before you enter the classroom? Don't know? You are not alone. I have given my College Success 101 Talk to over 15,000 high school students and not one has ever gotten the right answer to this question. The answer?

**Turn off your phone.**

Notice I didn't say, "Put your phone on silent" or "Put your phone on vibrate." I said "TURN OFF YOUR PHONE." Why am I so insistent upon you turning off your phone during class?

**Because there are 5 ways to insult a professor:**

1. Miss class
2. Show up late
3. Talk while he or she is talking
4. Fall asleep
5. Check your phone

What does it say about you that you are in class, the professor is talking, and you are looking at your phone? It says you think you have something more important going on outside of the class. With your phone off, you can completely focus what's happening in class and on learning.

There are some students who won't graduate from college for the simple reason they don't know when to turn off their phones. Don't let that be your story.

**Turn off your phone.**

ZZZ



# hello

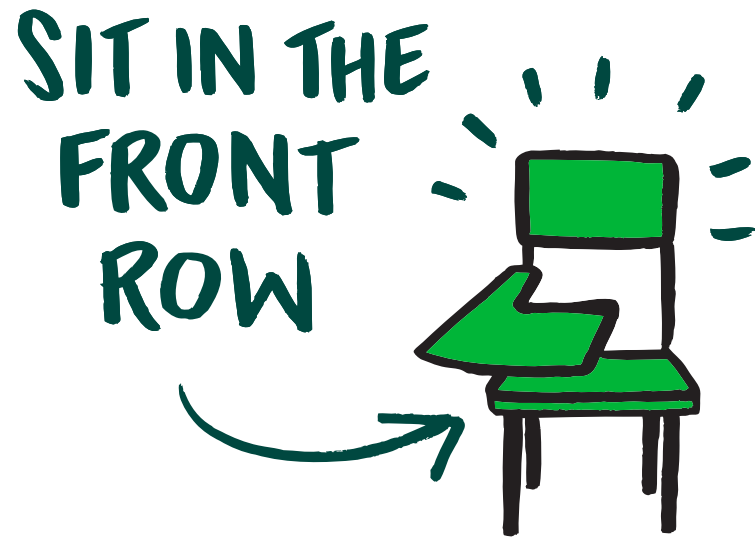
**Introduce yourself to your professor.** I am always surprised by the number of students who walk by me on that first day—as if I am not there—avoiding eye contact, wearing ear buds and looking at their phones, and then taking a seat in the back of the room. I don't take it as a personal slight, I just find it difficult to imagine how these students will succeed in the real world with such self-absorbed mindsets and underdeveloped social skills. Keep your head up, back straight, and walk in with confidence to meet your professor.

**GREET YOUR PROFESSOR**

**How do you introduce yourself to a professor?**

1. **First name**
2. **Last name**
3. **Firm handshake**
4. **Eye contact**
5. **Smile**
6. **Thank the professor for sending the syllabus**

Don't succumb to any perceived peer pressure and not introduce yourself. You're not in high school anymore, and your professors are your best hope for college success. You are in college to build your personal and professional network—starting with your professors—and making a good first impression is a great way to start.



Sit in the front row. When you go to a game or a concert, where do you want to be sitting? The front row. Well, you have paid a lot more money for the opportunity to be here, so get the best seat you can, in the front and center.

**You can hear better, see better, and there are fewer distractions.**

Where you sit says a lot about you: your level of motivation, your maturity, and whether you are a leader or a follower. Don't worry about what other students, who may or may not be there next semester, think about you.

I have 5 rows in my classroom. On the first day, I assume what grade the students will earn based on the row they pick.

- The 1st row? A
- The 2nd row? B
- The 3rd row? C
- The 4th row? D

Well, you certainly don't want to be sitting in the last row in my class, now do you? Of course, you can get an A from the back row just like you can from the front row, but studies show that students in the front row will out-perform students sitting elsewhere in the classroom, especially compared to those in the back row. In fact, students sitting in the front row are twice as likely to get an A in a class, while students sitting in the last row are twice as likely to get an F. Who would have thought where you sit in class would have so much impact on college success?





Now, imagine there are 5 to 10 minutes before the first class starts. Students will start to sit down around you—to your left, to your right, and behind you. You don't know anyone, and no one knows you. What should you do? Introduce yourself. Not in the formal way you did with your professor, but break the ice by asking a couple basic questions like:

1. What's your name?
2. Where are you from?
3. What are you planning to major in?

Everyone is a bit nervous on the first day, hoping to fit in, make a connection or begin a friendship. A simple hello and a quick conversation will go a long way to making you, and them, more comfortable and confident. You never know who you are sitting next to. I have had students who met in their first class who are now business partners, and two students who are now married. As you transition from college to career, your connections with classmates will expand your networking possibilities and increase the number of job opportunities in the future.

introduce  
yourself

every  
class  
should  
be a  
review



On the first day, the professor will review the syllabus in detail so you know exactly what will be expected of you this semester.

**The good news for you?**

**You have already read it, so for you this class is a review.**

During the first or second class, the professor will present the first chapter of the textbook as a way of introducing the subject that will be talked about all semester.

**The good news for you?**

**You have already read it, so for you this class is a review.**

Every class will be a review for you. Why? Because you will have read each chapter prior to the class in which it is covered. Reading the chapter before class enables you to learn more, the class will go by more quickly, and you won't spend the entire class avoiding eye contact with the professor hoping he/she doesn't call on you and find you to be unprepared. You will also be better prepared to participate.

Learn to become a very active and engaged listener in college. If you happen to be a student who is easily distracted, maintaining consistent eye contact with your professor will help you pay attention in class.

**MAKE EYE CONTACT**



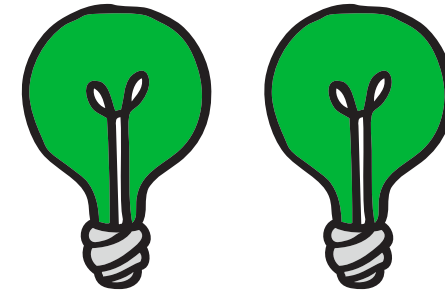
# take BY HAND notes



While the professor is talking and you're listening you should also be taking notes. It tells the professor you care and you're paying attention. Taking notes also allows you to review and recall what was talked about in class, and be reminded of the most important points in preparation for the exam.

But the real reason for taking notes is simply to stay awake and pay attention for an extended period of time. Professors are educators, not entertainers, and it can be challenging to stay engaged and focused for the full length of a college class, typically 75 minutes in length. Given the average attention span of a college freshmen is only 15 minutes, this means you are potentially missing 60 minutes of every class. You can't expect to essentially miss an hour of every class and do well in college.

**So take notes.**



**2x MORE LIKELY  
TO REMEMBER**

Students will typically make one of two mistakes when taking notes. Either they will take no notes or take too many notes. Trying to write down every word the professor says is missing the fundamental point of taking notes. Take notes to listen, to learn, and to summarize what has been learned into key words, phrases or short sentences.

Take notes by hand, and not using a computer. Studies show that notes taken on a computer are half as effective for learning as hand-written notes. The slow pace of handwritten notes, having to summarize what is being heard, is what leads to learning.

What you write down, you are twice as likely to remember. Taking good notes takes some practice, and the act of doing so is actually more important than the process of reviewing them later.

# Raise your hand



So the professor is talking, you're listening, and you're taking notes. What else are you doing? Actively participating.

Ask questions, answer questions, and make comments—be an engaged learner. Participation is absolutely critical to your success in college. You need to make your name known and your presence felt, and the best way to do that is to contribute to the conversation. For a typical 75-minute class, I recommend the following frequency of participation:

**1X = GOOD, 2X = BETTER, 3X = BEST**

The first time you know the answer to a question the professor poses, raise your hand. You may not know the answer to the next 5 questions. Don't worry about getting the answer wrong. Professors don't actually care. All they really care about is that you are making an effort to contribute to the conversation.



**PARTICIPATE AT LEAST ONE  
TIME EVERY SINGLE CLASS**

# #1 PREDICTOR OF COLLEGE SUCCESS: ATTENDANCE,



# NOT INTELLIGENCE

I have never met a student who went to every single class who did not graduate from college. I have never met a college student who went to every class who did not graduate with a 3.0 or above. But I have met many “smart” college students who frequently made excuses not to go to class who did not graduate.

The most common excuses students give for missing a class are:

1. They were sick
2. They were tired
3. The professor was boring
4. The class doesn't relate to their career path

Some students will look at the syllabus and determine that “nothing important is being covered in class.” Well, guess who thinks what is being covered is important? Your professor, the person who determines your final grade.

What do you do if you're sick, and I don't mean hospital sick, I mean you have a cold?

**Take medicine and go to class.**

You're tired?

**Drink a coffee and go to class.**

Professor is boring or the class doesn't relate to what you want to do after graduation?

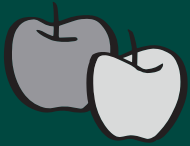
**Suck it up and go to class.**

If you miss a day, you miss a lot. If there is the exceptional reason you must miss a class, be sure to communicate to your professor well in advance, and ask a classmate, not your professor, to bring you up to speed and share with you what you missed.



# GO TO CLASS

# participate



Why is attendance and participation so important in college? Because professors use a lot more discretion when determining grades than high school teachers. Yes, professors weigh your performance on assignments—homework, quizzes, papers, projects, presentations and exams—but attendance and participation can make a big difference, as much as 2 full letter grades.

Here's an example. Two students both earned an 85 on all their assignments. In high school, they could confidently expect to earn a B. In college, it might be a B, an A or C. How could that be? One student attends and participates in every class. They get an A. The other student never participates and has poor attendance (more than 1 unexcused absence). This student earns a C. Do this for 4 years and one student will graduate with a 4.0, while the other will graduate with a 2.0.

The student with the 2.0 will have fewer opportunities upon graduation. When employers come to campus and go to Career Services, they ask to see the resumes of the students with a 3.0 or above.



STAND  
OUT

Employers use GPA as a predictor of future performance. It is the easiest, most objective way to determine who they should interview for an open position. The best candidate might be a student with a 2.5 GPA who has worked full-time and put him/herself through college. But employers don't have time to go through a tall stack of resumes to find that person.

How do I know? I was a corporate recruiter earlier in my career and I now work 1 day each week in Career Services, helping seniors transition from college to career.

The key to success in college—and in your career—is to get yourself into the short stack. More opportunities mean more choices, and more choices mean more money. What's the best way to get yourself into the short stack?

**Keep it simple. Go to every class. Participate in every class.**

# THE POWER OF 3



While it is important to maintain a GPA of a 3.0 or above, there are other factors employers use to make a hiring decision. If you don't excel academically, there are ways to tilt the odds back in your favor. When college begins, everyone is starting in the same place—with a blank resume. You have four years to develop skills, grow your network, acquire an education, get involved, and gain relevant work experience. Active involvement on campus and in the community, and demonstrated leadership experience in the clubs, teams, and organizations, is the easiest way for you to differentiate yourself from other applicants. Be a joiner, and then, become a leader.

What really separates good candidates from great candidates? The quantity and quality of recent and relevant internship experiences, either paid or unpaid. An internship can be a 1-week shadowing experience, spending 1 month working on a specific project, or investing 1 semester or 1 year working part-time for a company, and everything in between. Remember, 1 internship is good, 2 are better, and 3 are best.

If you graduate with a 3.0 GPA, were engaged with 3 campus and/or community activities, and had 3 internship experiences, don't be surprised if you walk across the stage at graduation with 3 competing job offers.

3.0 GPA



3 ACTIVITIES



3 INTERNSHIPS



3 JOB OFFERS

## CREATE A SOLID STUDY PLAN

So now the class is coming to a close. You need to know what chapter(s) need to be read, what assignments are due, what needs to be done in preparation for future classes. You find that information in the syllabus. But it is hard to manage your schedule and put together a study plan based on 5 different syllabi located in 5 different places. You need to summarize all your assignments and due dates in one place, and that one place is your planner.

Many students succeed in high school without a planner as teachers provide daily reminders as to what is due. Not so in college, as professors expect students to keep track when assignments are due on their own and may not remind the class of an upcoming due date. There are too many assignments and due dates to keep track of without a hard-copy (not electronic) 30-day planner. At a glance, you can see what is due today/tomorrow, this week/next week, this month/next month, and plan accordingly.

**If you don't have a planner, you're planning to fail.**

Much of your success in college is based on proper planning. College students without a planner end up spending hours going over each class in their mind, trying to recall what is due and when. If students simply update their planner at the end of each class, they could avoid all this unnecessary stress and anxiety.

Start with each assignment's due date and work backwards in your planner to write out goals for each study session—by class, by chapter, by hour.



# PROPERLY PREPARE

The planning horizon in college is different than in high school. In high school, most students are concerned about what is due that day. Some students show up to school unprepared and scramble throughout the day to get their assignments done before the class in which they are due. These students may give some thought to what is due for tomorrow when there is an exam or paper due, and they will cram for the exam or crank out the paper the night before.

In college this type of reactive planning and last-minute preparation will not suffice. If you have a team-based project due in 3 weeks, you better have already started it, otherwise you won't likely be prepared to earn an A. If you have a paper due in 1 week, you better have already started it, as you will have to:

1. Research the topic
2. Write an outline of the paper
3. Write a rough draft
4. Review the paper
5. Make major revisions
6. Give it to someone in the writing lab to review
7. Make all necessary final edits
8. Give it a careful final review
9. Print the paper
10. Hand it in or submit it online

Count on it taking at least 10 hours over 10 days to write a research paper that results in a grade of A.

An exam in college usually covers 3 chapters and about 120 pages of material. Assuming it takes 4 minutes per page to read, multiply that by 120 pages it comes out to 480 minutes, or 8 hours of reading, which means more than 2 hours of studying per day for 4 days leading up to an exam.



## RESEARCH



## WRITE



## REVIEW



## REVISE



## BUILD RAPPORT

On the way out of class, say goodbye to your professor. In the workplace, greeting your supervisor is common courtesy, and your professor is the closest thing to a manager you have while in college. But the real point of greetings before and after class is to build rapport through regular conversation in order to make a connection with your professor, one that may last the duration of your college experience, or even a lifetime.

Why is developing a personal and professional relationship with your professors so important? Because in 4 years you will be graduating from college and applying for jobs. Employers will require you to provide 3 professional references who can speak about your past performance and future potential. Who better to speak on your behalf than your professors, who have known you throughout college?

**If your professors don't know you, they can't help you.**

You may decide to continue your education and pursue graduate school. As part of your application, schools will expect you to provide 3 references from your professors who will attest to your past academic performance and convey your future academic potential.

**But if your professors don't know you, that can't help you.**

Take the time to get to know your professors, interact with them early and often. In 4 years, you will be rewarded when they provide you with the glowing reference or recommendation you need to transition to the next phase of your life.



# READ MORE



It's time to talk about how to approach studying in college, as it differs from high school in many essential ways.

## HIGH SCHOOL

- Skim the chapter
- Scan for bold words
- Review the definitions
- Read the chapter summary

Do the above and you were good to go for the exam.

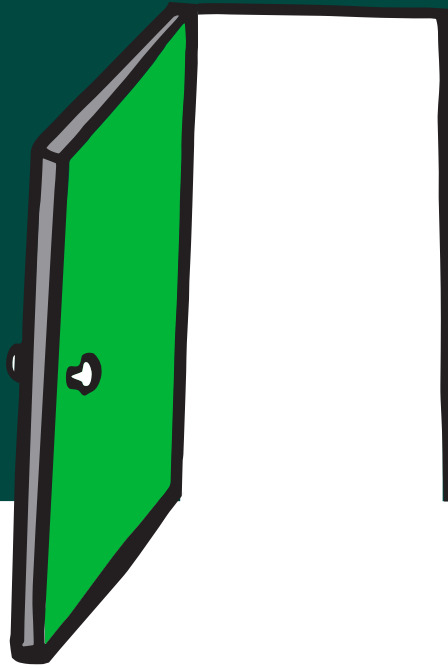
## VERSUS

## COLLEGE

- Preview the chapter, gain high-level overview of content
- Go back and carefully read the chapter, in its entirety
- Reflect upon what you just read
- Ask yourself "could I teach this to someone else?"
- If not, go back and read the chapter again
- Reflect again on what you have now learned
- Review the night before and day of the exam

This process obviously takes a lot of time. The average college student is required to read 1 chapter each week per class, so 5 chapters per week, or up to 75 chapters in total over the 15-week semester. If each chapter takes 2 hours to properly read, this equates to 150 hours per semester, or 10 hours of reading each week.

**Get ready to read!**



I recommend after the first class to schedule office hours. These are the times that a professor is in his or her office, hoping that a student like you will stop by and talk about the class, and how they can help. Or talk about your career, and how they can help. Very rarely do students ever take advantage of this valuable opportunity.

Why should you meet with your professors in their office? Because you want to be the first person who comes to mind when a professor finds out about a scholarship opportunity, a networking event, an internship experience, or even a full-time job opening.

Attend each professor's office hours twice during the semester, once at the beginning to talk about the class, and once at the end to talk about your career. The investment you make in connecting with your professors will pay rich dividends for years to come.

# ATTEND OFFICE HOURS TWICE A SEMESTER

Here are some good conversation starters to consider during your initial meetings:

- 1. What was your college experience like?**
- 2. What strategies should I use to be successful in college?**
- 3. What is the best way to study for and succeed in class?**
- 5. What resources or people on campus should I connect with?**

Relax and be yourself.

Attending office hours may also make a difference in your course grade, as it is a form of participation. But don't wait until the week before the semester ends to make the effort as your motivations for doing so will be suspect and won't convey a genuine interest in making a connection.

# STUDY 18 HOURS PER WEEK

How many hours per week will you have to study in college in order to get yourself into the short stack?

18 hours. Before you freak out by the prospect of going from studying 3 to 18 hours, let me explain a fundamental difference between high school and college.

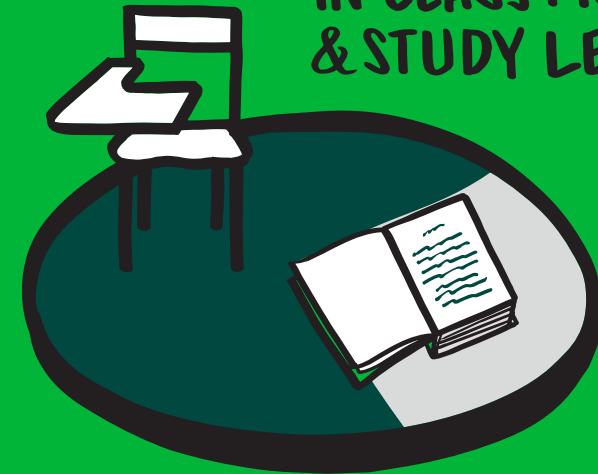
In high school, you go to school 5 days per week, 6 hours per day, 30 hours total. If you studied 3 hours per week in high school, you invested a total of 33 hours in your education.

The average college student takes 5 classes per semester, each worth 3 credits, for a total of 15 credits. Taking 15 credits means you are in class 15 hours per week in college. Add the 18 hours of study time to the 15 hours of class time, and the total is 33—the exact same time invested in your education as high school.

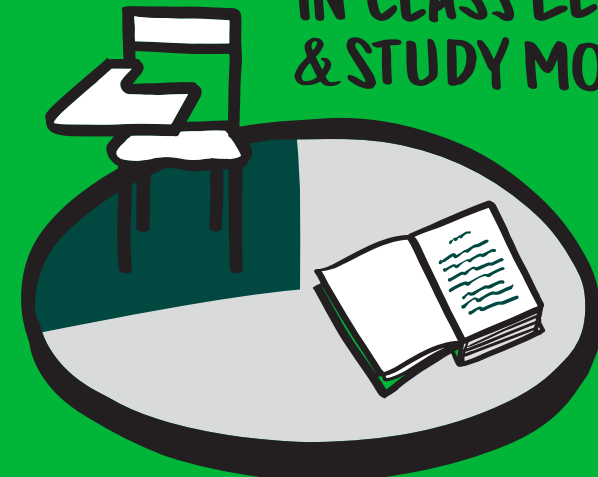
In high school, you are in class more and study less. In college, you are in class less and study more. But the total amount of time dedicated to learning is essentially the same. I recommend studying 3 hours per day, 6 days per week, every day but Friday. On Friday, you go to classes, rest, relax, and go out, make friends, make memories. You will likely stay out late, go to bed late, wake up late, and eat late.

On Saturday, from 2pm to 5pm, take out your planner and refer back to everything I already told you about how to approach planning for success. Saturday afternoon is a great time to reflect upon the past week, get caught up in a class in which you need to improve your grade, and plan for the upcoming week or two.

## HIGH SCHOOL IN CLASS MORE & STUDY LESS



## COLLEGE IN CLASS LESS & STUDY MORE





# EVENING STUDY PERIOD



## 7-10 PM = PRIME TIME


For the rest of the week, Sunday through Thursday, study from 7pm to 10pm, which is after you eat dinner and before you go to bed. I call this time ESP, or Evening Study Period, which is prime study time in college. Before you head down to the dining hall, pack up your backpack with everything you need to study for the night; your planner, textbooks, notebooks, laptop, calculator, pen and pencil. When you grab dinner, throw your backpack under your chair and hang out with your friends. Afterwards, as your friends are heading back to the dorm, to waste between 1 to 3 hours, you go to the library.

## DORM = DISTRACTION

So why not study in your dorm? I will tell you why. Because dorm equals distraction. Some of the distractions are of your own making, including spending time on Instagram, binge-watching Netflix, playing PlayStation, etc., but now you have to also contend with your roommate or suitemate, or the guy or girl across the hall who is making too much noise. Get out of the dorm and get to the library. Arrive at the library at 7pm to 10pm sharp and sit down somewhere quiet and comfortable. Take out your planner to review what you need to accomplish during this study session, pull out your textbook, notebook, and pen.

## LIBRARY = LEARNING



STUDY  
ON  
  
OFF  
STUDY

What is the first thing you do before you start to study? You got it, turn off your phone. Not for the full 3 hours. I know you can't do that. But you can turn off your phone for the length of a class: 75 minutes, or for 50 minutes in order to be completely focused on your studies.

How do you study?

READ  
REFLECT  
RE-READ  
REFLECT AGAIN  
REVIEW

Study for 50 minutes then take a break for 10 minutes. Check social media, send a text or two, make a quick phone call, use the restroom, get a drink of water, sit back down, turn off your phone again and study for 50 more minutes.

**50, 10. 50, 10. 50, 10.**

Follow this approach Sunday through Thursday, and by the time you go to bed on Thursday, you will have studied 18 quality hours, and be doing quite well in all your classes.



Many of you will have to work to help pay for college, and it may require you to work in the evenings, during ESP. You will have to find another 3-hour block of time to study during the day, ideally in the afternoon from 2pm to 5pm. When you arrive to campus—or even better, during the summer prior—seek out on-campus employment as it is more convenient and more flexible than off-campus employment. Work shifts are almost always between 9am to 5pm, and campus supervisors are more inclined to accommodate your school schedule.

Whether on campus or off, it is important that you are not scheduled to work more hours than you are committed to be in the library focused on your studies, which means 18 hours per week is the maximum number of hours a student should work while going to college full-time. More than 18 hours and it becomes a slippery slope, and what usually slips is your grades.

Some of you will play a sport in college. The time commitment for athletes is demanding, sometimes up to 33 hours per week in-season for practice, training, travel, and games. If the time spent on your sport is greater than the combined time, 33 hours, you should be spending in class and studying, you run the risk of not graduating from college. Make the most of your travel time—time on busses and hotel rooms—and make sure you're keeping up with missed classes. Maintain close communication with professors regarding upcoming expected absences. Remember, student-athletes graduate from college, athlete-students don't.

# FIND A 3 HOUR BLOCK



For all students, but especially student-athletes and working students, it is a best to schedule all of your classes back-to-back and in the morning from 8am to 12pm. Typically classes meet 2 times per week, for 75 minutes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, or 3 times per week, for 50 minutes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. It is best to complete all your classes before noon, giving you the afternoon to go to work, grab a workout, attend athletic practice, participate in campus activities, or just take a nap in preparation for a productive ESP.

Students sometimes believe that having extended breaks, an hour or two, between classes will allow them time to study, but this time is often wasted on unproductive endeavors. So much of your success in college is based on planning and time management. Chunk your time: schedule class time in the morning, free/work/practice time in the afternoon, study time in the evening, and sleep time at night.

Taking a class that meets only once per week for 3 hours straight, or online classes that are only 8 weeks long and don't offer face-to-face interaction, are not recommended—especially for freshmen. In my experience, it doesn't end well in either scenario.

class

SCHEDULE  
CLASSES  
BACK TO  
back

# SUMMER BEFORE ...

Preparation for college actually starts before the August 1st date I had you imagine at the start of this book. Don't wait until 30 days before the beginning of the fall semester to lay the groundwork to get off to a strong start in college.

Here is a list of things you need to take care of before your first day:

1. **Have you set up your college email?** If you haven't yet opened your college email, do it immediately. Colleges start sending important information to your email as soon as you are accepted to attend school. You will most likely find information on the topics below already in your inbox.
2. **When is new student orientation?** Orientation is a very important step in transitioning to college. Many colleges offer a session specifically for freshmen, and offer a lot of valuable information and tips on how best to navigate the resources at your campus. Make sure you find out when you can attend an orientation—some happen before the start of school.
3. **Is your financial aid in order?** Check to make sure that your financial aid package is finalized, and that you have a plan to pay any remaining balance. Contact the financial aid office at your college if you have specific questions.

4. **When do you register for classes, and do you need to complete any placement testing?** Some colleges have students register for classes quite early. Find out the deadline and make sure you are registered and ready to go as soon as you can. Some colleges may require you to take a placement test in one or more subjects—check and see if this will apply to you, and what you need to do before you can complete your schedule. Contact the registrar's office at your college if you have questions.
5. **Do you need to register for housing?** If you are living on campus, you will need to choose where you will live, and possibly select a roommate. Also check to see if you are eligible for early move-in, which can make the process a lot easier.

The summer before college is a busy time full of change and preparation. It's also an exciting time. Get started—now.





## PRAISE FOR COLLEGE SUCCESS 101

“Professor Leamon’s presentation to our senior class was engaging and entertaining, as much as it was informative. He was right ‘on point’ with identifying the many challenges college freshmen often encounter, as well as offering concrete solutions to achieve college success.”

—Linda Gabor, *Director of College Counseling, Saint Ignatius High School, Cleveland, Ohio*

“Professor Leamon’s College Success 101 Talk is thorough, interesting, and relevant. We saw a new confidence in many of our students at the end of the session as Professor Leamon had given them the secrets to success and they were eager to put his strategies into practice.”

—Alison Brennen, *English Teacher, Bedford High School, Bedford, Ohio*

“Professor Leamon’s presentation was engaging from start to finish and students actively participated throughout. All the teachers in attendance asked me to bring Professor Leamon back next year, feeling it is exactly what our students need to know to succeed in college.”

—Dawn Ruebensaal, *Guidance Counselor, Berea-Midpark High School, Berea, Ohio*

“Professor Leamon’s College Success 101 Talk was a refreshing change for our students. The step-by-step, no-nonsense approach to navigating college he shared will be easy for the seniors to remember and follow, and our juniors can apply his tips to their last year in high school.”

—Mary Jane Loushin, *Guidance Counselor, Amherst High School, Amherst, Ohio*

“Professor Leamon offers very practical, actionable advice that students can use in college. He discusses topics that educators often assume students should already know – but seldom do. I have no doubt our students will use his strategies to reach their full potential in college.”

—Eric Frei, *Principal, Eastlake North High School, Eastlake, Ohio*

