

Angelo Goldston

A community college student can be many things. They can be a newly graduated high school student, a senior citizen, a middle aged adult who never attended college, or even a lawyer enrolled in enrichment courses to further and refresh their knowledge on their profession. What we all have in common, however, is that we're looking to improve an aspect of our lives through education. Education is defined as the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life. With this knowledge, questions are raised on how a student enrolled in community college can be successful. A successful community college student uses three tools to ensure satisfaction during their time at their school: discipline, determination, and application. Through the careful usage of these tools, preconceived notions and stigmas surrounding community college students can be broken and redefined.

The first tool is discipline. Discipline in essence, is the training of one to allow themselves to perform in an adequate manner to achieve success in certain areas. This tool is, objectively, the most critical tool when enrolled in higher education. Through the understanding of adult learning, ascertaining material, and assessing one's strength, academic success is achievable. This can be further achieved through the usage of campus resources. An often overlooked area is the library. For me personally, the library serves as a home base for learning. With private study rooms, friendly staff, and an overall academically nurturing environment, the library is an area that often can feel as a home base.

Once discipline is established, consistency and determination are key. By continuously reminding oneself of their goals, the student can have a reason for their academic dedication. No one wants to work and struggle for no reason, rather, it is wise to set an attainable objective, short, medium, and long term. For me for example, I have a short term goal of finishing my first year with a 3.0 GPA, whereas my medium term goal is to be accepted into North Carolina State University. My long term goal is to be a forensic financial analyzer for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. By placing my goals in chronological order, I am able to know that one of my goals will ultimately link themselves to one another over a period of time. For others however, things may not always be so linear or concrete. For example, one of my close friends planned on attending a prestigious four year university immediately after high school. However, an unplanned pregnancy in her senior year threw a curveball for her. She took a year off between high school to raise her child, and returned to education the following year, only to have another child. This time however, she remained in school, and took more rigorous courses than before, ultimately graduating with a 3.8 GPA and being accepted into Duke University, with her goal of being accepted into a prestigious community college complete, she now plans to start a support group for other students with children at her university, and to open up a local nonprofit that provides resources for those in situations such as hers once she graduates. Stories like this show the beauty in diversity of community college students, and how determination and discipline allows academic success, and perfectly introduces the next tool; application.

Application is a tool that allows students to effectively utilize their knowledge and apply it to the world around them. The famous quote "Work smarter, not harder", perfectly encapsulates this idea. Knowledge of a certain area can improve the life of a student in the aspect of surrounding yourself with information you enjoy, and shaping your environment into one that can benefit from your own personal wit. Whether it's starting a club for like minded individuals or providing knowledge on a subject to a friend, you are spreading the beauty of knowledge and education to your university, life, and self, giving yourself a sense of accomplishment.

Through the successful application of these three tools, community college students are undoubtedly setting themselves up for academic and personal success and satisfaction. Through my time at my university, it has become evident that I now know that any barriers or ideas surrounding me can be torn down through my own personal will to make something of myself, and with the right support system, both

internal and external, community college students can do this as well.