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What Makes a Successful Community College Student?

This being my first year at CPCC, I still have a lot to learn when it comes to being a successful student, but in just two short semesters I feel that I have developed skills that if I continue to follow will guide me into a successful college career. These skills are seeking out counselors, knowing yourself and your own limits, and being open minded.

The first thing that makes a successful community college student is seeking out counselors and advisors. When I began classes, I was hesitant to see a counselor because I did not think that it would help me on my academic path and I thought that whatever they could have said I could do it by myself. I think this is a mindset that a lot of college students have and it is very damaging because what I have learned since the beginning of the year is that counselors are there to help us and genuinely want to, too. Without going to the meetings with my career counselor, I would still be as lost as I was on my first day, now I at least have an idea of what I want to pursue and have made strides towards it. Counseling and advising offer a variety of different services, such as career counseling and transfer advising, and the counselors will go out of their way to help the students that come to them.

Another aspect that makes a successful community college student is the ability to know yourself and your academic and personal limits. This semester I decided to take a few online classes based off of my sister's glowing recommendation of them. I learned fairly quickly that online classes were not for me. I was missing assignments that were posted, not fully understanding the curriculum, and in general not doing as well as I would have had I taken the classes in person. However, it is through this experience that I have learned that I thrive in classroom settings as opposed to an online one, and I can now use this new knowledge going forward when I choose classes for next semester. A successful student is one that is able to learn and grow for their mistakes instead of allowing them to hold them back. While advisors can steer you in the direction of where you need to go, you are the only one who has the in-depth understanding of what you are capable of and what you are willing and able to do in order to achieve your goals. As students go through their own experiences in college and learn more about themselves, I have found that these questions are useful when figuring out if a class is right for me:

- What environment suits you as an individual better? (Online or in-person)
- Am I physically, emotionally, and financially equipped to take this class?
- Am I willing to stick with this class even if it becomes difficult?

Once a student begins their journey through community college they will become better equipped to answer these questions and come up with new ones as they further learn about themselves and their academic and personal limits.

The most important trait of a successful community college student is the ability to be open-minded in the face of change. So many people enter into college having no idea what they want to do, or, in contrast, believing they know exactly what they want to do. While already having a decided career path can be beneficial in some cases, being a successful student entails a desire to keep your options open. Whether a student already knows what they want to do or not, it is very important to keep an open mind. The great thing about community college is the fact that it allows students to explore interests they never knew they had and has many outlets for those interests such as clubs or classes. If someone comes into college absolutely sure about what they want to do and only take classes about that subject, they could miss out on opportunities to explore their interests that may never come up again.

In conclusion, the three main traits that make a successful community college student are seeking out

advising, knowing yourself, and being open-minded. Whether these work for everyone or not or if they have a different approach, these are the things that I believe make a successful student and I am excited to see where these tips take me in my future.