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Online 24

What makes a successful community college student?

As I read through this question, I pondered and concluded that several factors contribute to the success of a community college student. There is not a clear-cut approach that guarantees the “success” of a person. However, the factors that I would be discussing below have tremendously helped me in maintaining a 4.0 GPA since I started classes at Central Piedmont Community College in the summer of 2019.

The first factor would be having academic goals for the semester. Typically, prior to the start of a new semester, I write down my academic goals and read it to myself at least twice a week. By doing this, I remind myself to be consistent especially while taking a challenging class that semester. For instance, when I took a math class last summer, I had to persevere despite the challenging material. Instead, I focused on additional resources from the library and also used YouTube as a study tool. Most importantly, I internalized my goal for that semester and as a result, I was able to pull through.

Secondly, in order to be successful in a community college, it is essential to develop good time management skills. As a student, there are so many activities that you have to juggle, including going to class, studying, attending social activities, getting assignments done, and perhaps, working in or outside school. Therefore, it becomes imperative to create a balance to avoid going crazy or being overly stressed. I soon realized that creating a calendar and scheduling all my activities helped to keep me sane. I also had to learn to prioritize my activities from most important to least important. For instance, I schedule times for studying and stick to them because I know procrastinating will likely force me to cram during my exams and elevate my stress levels especially if I have two exams on the same day. Outside of academics, I also know how many hours that I can spare for work (20 hours per week) and when to pass on a social activity if it were to negatively impact my academics.

Thirdly, as a student, it is important to practice self-care since it is impossible to pour out from an empty cup. Typically, I make it a habit to engage in activities that I enjoy on the weekends. Some of these activities include journaling my thoughts, listening to music while lying in bed, and binge-watching a movie on Netflix just to regain all my spent energy on school, work, and other social activities. Quite recently, I made use of the free counselling sessions that my community college provides and it was super helpful because I was going through a hard time. Moreover, working out in the school gym is a good escape for me since releasing the endorphins makes me feel better not only physically but also mentally.

Lastly, keeping a cordial relationship with your instructors is a key tool for success. It is paramount to communicate respectfully and professionally with your instructors. I learned this trick while taking a class last year. Unfortunately, I failed my first assignment simply because I felt intimidated as an international student with a foreign accent and did not ask for clarifications from my instructor. There are several ways a community college student can communicate with an instructor either via emails, texts, or one-on-one meetings outside of class. As I stuck to this new trick, I saw a huge difference in my grades and successfully built better rapport with my instructors. Fortunately, they are willing to write recommendation letters for me since I developed relationships with them.

In conclusion, setting academic goals, effective time management skills, healthy self-care routines, and forming pleasant relationships with my college instructors have made me a successful community college student. I also believe consistency, dedication, and tenacity are values that can propel anyone, especially a community college student to excel in their academic journey.