GRADUATING FROM

R·I·T

The Comprehensive Guide for New Undergraduates

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Contents

Introduction

Every year, millions of young men and women across America embark on the incredible journey from high school to college. This is not merely or necessarily a physical journey — whether you are staying in the town you grew up in or going from coast to coast, you will be exposed to a new social environment, new ideas, and new people, and no one goes through this process entirely unchanged. The expanded degree of self-responsibility, including responsibility for your own academic and personal success in addition to more mundane matters like dressing and feeding yourself, is something many are unprepared for. But with proper preparation, it is possible — indeed, both feasible and not all that difficult — to make the journey and to come out the other side a fully-fledged adult, ready to take on the world.

This document offers some advice on how to make the journey to RIT. It includes both official requirements for graduation and, more importantly, suggestions and warnings for what to do (and not to do), how to succeed academically and socially (or not), and how to maintain a healthy balance between academic, social, and internal (i.e., personal well-being in the broadest sense) life. This last bit is no small task, and there is no one-size-fits-all answer: you may wish to focus primarily on social and internal life, and settle for modest academic success; or, you may choose to limit your social life to a few close friends and aim for academic excellence above all else. Whatever the appropriate balance for you is, it is certainly not to try for a 4.0 GPA while devoting most of your free time to socializing (and none to yourself) — this tends to lead to the situation of "burnout", and, in the long run, fails to achieve *any* goals, academic, social, or internal.

Definitions

AS Associate of Science

AAS Associate of Applied Science

AOS Associate of Occupational Studies

BFA Bachelor of Fine Arts

BS Bachelor of Science

CET College of Engineering Technology

COLA College of Liberal Arts

college one of the degree-granting institutions of RIT

cooperative education a sometimes required paid position in a field related to one's degree program; also **co-op**

degree program a program of required coursework in pursuit of a specific degree; also **major**

dining dollars part of an RIT meal plan that can be used to purchase food at participating locations on campus; also **debit**

GCCIS Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences

Gracie's the "cafeteria" of RIT, featuring all-you-can-eat buffet-style food; most freshmen are required to eat here as part of their meal plan

Gracie's swipe part of a meal plan that allows one meal at Gracie's

KGCOE Kate Gleason College of Engineering

meal exchange part of an RIT meal plan that allows you to buy up to $8 worth of food items at participating locations on campus

meal plan a system of dining dollars, meal exchanges, and Gracie's swipes that enable you to eat on campus

NTID National Technical Institute for the Deaf

public safety the campus security force; also **campo**

residence halls the place where most new students are required to live for their first year; also **res halls** or **dorms**

resident advisor an upperclassman resident of a floor who serves to manage, guide , and supervise freshmen in the dorms

RIT Rochester Institute of Technology

SIS Student Information System, the system that allows you to register for classes (among other things)

Tiger Center a third-party website that allows you to register for classes and view your schedule, as an alternative to SIS

Chapter 1

Academic Life

Introduction

One of the cornerstones of a successful college career is your academic life — that may sound obvious, but plenty of students neglect this aspect of college, and suffer for it. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the overall graduation rate for RIT, which measures the proportion of students who successfully complete their degrees in at most 150 per cent of the expected timeframe, is 67 per cent. In order to successfully navigate your academic career at RIT, you first need to know what is minimally expected of a graduating student. This chapter goes over the different degree programs offered at RIT, the kinds of degrees offered, and the minimal requirements to successfully complete one. At the end, I include a list of insider tips to make your academic life easier, and "unofficial" requirements for successful completion of a degree program at RIT.

1.1 Degree programs

The bulk of your academic life at RIT will be devoted to the pursuit of a **degree program**, or major. Each degree program has a set of required classes and focuses on some particular field, such as computer science, mechanical engineering, or accounting. Degree programs can vary in size and scope — some degree programs, like computer science, have many students, while others, like biomedical sciences, have relatively fewer. Similarly, some degree programs will be very broad in scope, while others will focus on narrower subspecialties.

Degree programs are generally offered through a particular **college**, of which RIT has nine:

- College of Art and Design
- Saunders College of Business ("Saunders")
- B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences (GCCIS)
- Kate Gleason College of Engineering (KGCOE)
- College of Engineering Technology (CET)
- College of Health Sciences and Technology
- College of Liberal Arts (COLA)

- National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)
- College of Science (COS)

Each of these colleges focuses on a very broad field, e.g., GCCIS focuses on computing in general, and offers degree programs in more specialized aspects of that field (computer science, software engineering, computing security, etc.). In addition to these colleges, the Division of Academic Affairs includes the School of Individualized Study, which allows students interested in an interdisciplinary degree or a program of study that does not closely match any of the existing degree programs to create their own degree (subject to certain requirements).

Upon successful completion of a degree program, a degree is granted by the college offering it, not RIT itself. However, there are some basic requirements of all full degree programs offered by any RIT college, including the following:

- A minimum of 120 to a maximum of 128 required credit hours
- At least 60 credit hours of general education electives (see Section 1.3)
- At least 6 credit hours of free electives
- For BFA degrees (see Section 1.2), two courses of "scientific, mathematical, and technical literacy"
- Expected completion in four academic years (up to five actual years including cooperative education requirements)

Credit hour requirements are reduced for non-bachelor's degrees; see also Section 1.2.

1.2 Degrees

RIT offers a variety of degree types, including both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Due to the intended scope of this manual, only the undergraduate degree types are presented in this section. The degrees offered by RIT fall into three broad categories:

- **Bachelor's degrees** — generally four- to five-year programs designed to foster intensive study of a particular field
- **Associate's degrees** — generally two- to three-year programs designed to teach concrete and marketable skills for immediate entry into a job market
- **Diplomas** and **certificates** — smaller degrees designed to be completed in either one or two semesters, giving immersion in a highly specialized field or skill

A diploma can typically be extended into an associate's degree program, and an associate's degree program can in turn typically be extended into a bachelor's degree program, allowing students some flexibility in planning their academic schedules to suit their own individual needs.

Bachelor of Science

A **Bachelor of Science (BS)** degree is the most common type of undergraduate degree at RIT. It includes "hard science" degrees with degrees like Physics and Biology, as well as more theoretical degrees like Applied/Computational Mathematics and Computer Science, all the way to Philosophy. Most undergraduate degrees offered by GCCIS, KGCOE, CET, and COS fall into this category.

Bachelor of Fine Arts

A **Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA)** degree is offered for completion of a degree program in the broad areas of the visual and performing arts. This includes "design" in its broadest sense (indeed, most of the degrees of this type end in "design", e.g., Graphic Design, Industrial Design, Interior Design, etc.).

Associate of Applied Science

An **Associate of Applied Science (AAS)** degree is, roughly speaking, the associate's degree equivalent of a BS degree. AAS degree programs, however, typically focus more on applied or "hard" sciences and less on more theoretical degrees. This category includes degrees like Accounting Technology, Business Administration, and Computer Aided Drafting Technology.

Associate of Occupational Studies

An **Associate of Occupational Studies (AOS)** degree is an associate's degree designed to foster specific skills relevant to a workplace environment. Many degree programs can be awarded either as an AAS or as an AOS, e.g., Computer Aided Drafting Technology. Examples of AOS-exclusive degree programs include Design and Imaging Technology and Furniture Design.

Associate of Science

An **Associate of Science** degree is an associate's degree focusing on a broader speciality than AAS or AOS degrees. There are only five degree programs in this category: Applied Computer Technology (also available as an AOS), Applied Liberal Arts, Business, General Science, and Hospitality and Service Management.

Diploma

A **diploma** is only granted for one degree program — Applied Arts and Sciences. This program requires 24 credit hours, generally to be completed in one year, and can be extended to the equivalent associate's or bachelor's degrees.

Certificate

A **certificate** is the "smallest" type of degree granted. Certificates are generally designed to be completed in a single semester, and give immersion in a particular specialty like Exercise Science, Integrated Electronics, or Performing Arts.

1.3 General education

A full degree requires at least 60 credit hours of **general education**, or GE, electives. This requirement is designed to expose students to a wide palette of intellectual pursuits via *perspectives*. In order to satisfy the general education requirements, you must take at least one class in each perspective: Ethical, Artistic, Global, Social, Natural Science Inquiry, Scientific Principles, and Mathematical. In addition, the class First Year Writing (FYW) is a required class for *all* students[1], and is an introduction to writing at a college level. The other perspectives introduce students to broad areas of study to which they might not otherwise be exposed and which are deemed important to the development of a well-rounded student.

[1] This requirement may be waived due to transfer credits.

Students are also required to declare an **immersion**, which is a focused study of a field outside the student's own degree program. Immersions consist of at least three classes related to some other degree program — for example, if you are majoring in Biology, you may nonetheless declare a mathematics immersion and satisfy the immersion requirement by taking three classes approved by the math department to become an immersion in Mathematics.

1.4 Minors and double majors

All students at RIT are required to have a major (degree program); students may in addition pursue a **minor**, which is a focused study of another field, more extensive than an immersion in that a minor must consist of at least 15 credit hours (immersions require only three classes). A minor confers no additional degree, but is noted on the degree awarded for the student's major as a recognition of significant intellectual accomplishment in another field. Unlike immersions, minors are not required, and students may minor in a field other than their immersion.

Students wishing to pursue an especially extensive study of a field other than their original major may in addition opt for a **double major**. A double major combines the requirements of two distinct degree programs into a single degree; the degree programs must be of the same degree type. A double degree requires at least as many credit hours as the larger of the two source degrees, but requirements shared between the degrees are double-counted towards both, including general education requirements.

1.5 Cooperative education

Many degree programs at RIT require the successful completion of one or more semesters and/or summers of **cooperative education**, or co-ops. Co-ops present a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a field relevant to your degree program.

A co-op is not merely an internship; for one thing, co-ops *must* be paid positions, and in order to count towards degree program requirements, a co-op must be related somehow to the field of study. A co-op must be a full-time job, and must include a formal documentation and evaluation of your performance (to be submitted at the end to the co-op office by your employer). Although students are considered full-time while on co-op, RIT does not charge tuition and most forms of financial aid do not apply[2]. Generally, you can not "end on a co-op", that is, your last semester at RIT must be an academic one, and co-ops can not typically be counted back-to-back (except that a summer co-op can be counted adjacent to a spring/fall co-op).

The benefits of co-ops are numerous; in addition to gaining valuable experience applying what you learn in the classroom, a co-op can help to refine and redirect your career path before you actually begin your career (if you discover that you cannot stand the typical job in your field, that may provide an impetus to find a program that better suits you). Co-ops also provide valuable networking opportunities, and provide a way to grow your résumé in a way that sets you apart from students at most other universities. Although it can seem daunting to go in search of your first co-op, RIT has an excellent support system: the Office of Cooperative Education provides a number of resources, including résumé reviews and career fair preparation. And of course, the career fair is an unparalleled opportunity to search for co-ops in a conveniently accessible environment wherein RIT students are in high demand.

[2]The details of financial aid are well outside the scope of this document; consult your financial aid advisor for more information.

1.6 Tips, tricks, and how not to pull your hair out

The preceding sections have gone over in some detail the "official" requirements for completion of a degree at RIT, including what kinds of degrees and degree programs are offered and the differences between them. But this is not enough to really be successful at RIT — there are a host of less-than-official and intangible concerns that must be taken into account. In this section I present an incomplete account of these concerns which, hopefully, can serve as a springboard for your own understanding of what a successful academic career means to you.

Choosing the right course load

With some asterisks, in order to be considered a full-time student at RIT you must be registered for at least 12 credit hours. Generally, this means four 3-credit classes, but some degree programs also have 1- or 2-credit classes (which, in my experience, typically behave like 3-credit classes in all but name) which will necessitate taking another class to reach the minimum threshold. There are also wellness classes which do not count for credit but still represent some time commitment, and in theory one could take three 4-credit classes, but there aren't enough 4-credit classes around to actually do this.

The target average course load for all students (as specified by RIT's policy on degree programs) is around 15–17 credit hours. The maximum amount of credit hours you can take per semester (without incurring additional costs), is 18. Taking 18 credit hours is generally considered a heavy course load, but it is definitely possible — just keep in mind that it *will* detract from other concerns, and you will have to balance that out yourself. It's more important, however, to think critically about how many credit hours you want to take than to try for an "optimum" schedule: any amount of thought you put into your schedule is better than blindly filling it up with as many (or as few) as possible.

Registering for classes

Incoming students do not register for classes; their academic advisor handles this for them. Generally, all incoming students except those with some significant transfer credit will have the same "boilerplate" first-semester schedule for their major, which will consist of a few introductory major-specific courses and some general education electives, as well as Year One, a required course for all incoming students that goes over some RIT basics. However, as an incoming student it *is* possible to change your schedule — simply talk to (or email) your academic advisor, and they will likely accommodate whatever changes you have in mind.

Towards the end of the first semester, it will come time to register for spring courses. Course registration is often a hassle, even for upperclassmen. For starters, you will have to (or at least, should) use the dreaded SIS. In years past, SIS was all that was available, and incoming students learned how to use it in Year One. However, SIS must now compete with a third-party website called Tiger Center; in general, Tiger Center's user interface is far friendlier, so I recommend using it to *plan* your schedule by putting classes you want to take in your shopping cart there. It is not, however, designed to handle the load of some significant chunk of the RIT student body all registering for classes at once, and is often slow or non-functional during enrollment appointments. For that reason I recommend using SIS to enroll all classes from your shopping cart when your enrollment appointment arrives — SIS is more capable of handling a large load than is Tiger Center, so you won't be left in the dark if you were planning on using Tiger Center and it is suddenly down at your appointment.

Making the most of your advisors

As an RIT student, you have an entire group of dedicated administrative professionals working behind the scenes to give you the best chance at success, both academically and otherwise. These are your advisors, and you have more than you might think.

You should hopefully have met your academic advisor, or at the very least know they exist. Your academic advisor is an invaluable source of information and knowledge about the ins and outs of RIT academics, so I recommend you get to know them well. Ask them any questions you have about your academics — whether this or that class fits in better with your schedule, whether some elective satisfies a requirement you need to fill, which classes from your major go well together in a single semester (and which don't), and so forth.

Chapter 2

Social Life

Introduction

Humans are social animals, and college students are no different. An active and rewarding social life is key to success at college, but just what that means will vary from person to person.

2.1 Roommates

Your roommate may well be the first person you meet on campus — you may even have met them before arriving, at least digitally if not in person. Living with a roommate (or roommates, if in a quad or triple) is a new experience for most incoming students, and it requires a certain adjustment in attitude for many.

As in all relationships, communication is key. Your **resident advisor**, or **RA**, will likely give you a roommate agreement to read through and sign with your roommate. This is a 'contract' that you both agree to and lays out some common questions about how you want to collectively use the space of your room. It is generally best to fill this out together, in the same room, and actually talk about the questions; many of them are quite helpful and can elicit potential points of disagreement before they become a problem. If and when you discover such a point of disagreement, it's crucial to talk through it and reach a compromise. The roommate agreement will help you talk through the following areas:

- **Environment and safety** — deals with environmental concerns such as temperature and noise level, how these interact with sleep schedules and when the door should be locked
- **Cleanliness** — deals with how and when the room should be cleaned
- **Sharing** — a helpful chart to indicate which items are to be shared, which are not, and which require prior request; I recommend adding to their list, which includes some common items but may not cover everything you'll want to talk about
- **Use of room** — deals with what the room is to be used for, distinguishing four categories: sleeping, studying, socializing, and gaming; this section only requires that you rank these activities in order but I recommend talking these through with your roommate(s) more thoroughly
- **Studying** — deals with study habits and what the ambient noise level should be while studying
- **Guests** — deals with when and if visitors and guests should be allowed in the room, including of a romantic nature; this section often gets overlooked but merits serious discussion as it *will* come up at some point

- **Communication** — deals with how any issues that arise are to be resolved

This agreement can serve as an excellent jumping off point to start a discussion about how the room should be used. However, if you both fill it out on your own and never talk about it, it will provide no help. It is crucial to actually talk about it in person so that differences of opinion can be dealt with *before* they become issues. Waiting until they become issues makes the whole situation more awkward and difficult to deal with for everyone. For serious differences, you may want to consult your RA for mediation or consider changing roommates. This should be a last resort, however; keeping an open mind to compromise can go a long way to deal with and preempt issues with roommates, especially if you are willing to have a discussion early on.

2.2 Dorm culture

As living with a roommate is likely to be a new experience for you, so too is living in a communal space. Sharing a bathroom — and a wall — with your neighbors can be taxing at times, but the culture of a college dorm is fairly unique in both annoyances and opportunities.

The social environment of a residence hall is pretty much unmatched anywhere else, and it can be a great place to make friends that last a lifetime. But you only get out what you put in — sitting in your room with your door closed all day, you won't experience any of that social environment. Even just opening your door (and taking your headphones out) can open you up to a lot of social interaction with your neighbors. Even better, going around your floor (or other floors) and saying hi to people with their doors open lets you meet a large number of people, at least some of which you can probably get along with!

2.3 Clubs and extracurricular activities

Clubs are a great way to make friends, explore new and old interests, and just have fun. There are so many clubs to choose from at RIT that most people have more difficulty choosing between which clubs they want to go than finding clubs to join.

The club fair provides a great way to see all the clubs RIT has to offer, and I definitely recommend you go. Many clubs also advertise around campus. In order to make the most out of your club experience, it's best to join both clubs about topics you're already interested in (allowing you to meet people with similar interests) and clubs you might not have otherwise thought of. These allow you to explore a diversity of topics, and might even lead to new interests and new friends.

Chapter 3

Internal Life

Introduction

The preceding two chapters have talked about various strategies for how to manage your academic career and your social life while on campus. However, beyond these two topics, it is important to take time for yourself, even if it's just eating and sleeping. The former can be a social activity as well, but chances are you won't be eating all your meals with friends. This chapter deals with some considerations for how to manage the time you spend on yourself, and how to make the most of it in order to have a successful college career.

3.1 Living away from home

Whether you have travelled across the country (or from a different country!) or ten minutes from your childhood home, living on-campus is still a new experience. You will (presumably) have to do your own laundry, cook (or buy) your own food, dress yourself, manage your own schedule, and so on. For most students this will be a new experience and it will be an adjustment no matter how "independent" you were in high school.

There are the obvious consequences of not having anyone to do things for you around the house (or dorm, in this case): you have to clean up after yourself, make (or buy) all your own food, do your own laundry, etc. This may be more or less of an adjustment depending on how many of those things you already did, but few students will have actually been fully independent before coming to college, so nearly everyone will have *something* to adjust to. The most important thing is to have a plan, and put some forethough into it. For example, decide on a single time and place to do your laundry many do it on Sundays, but choosing a less popular time can be beneficial, and having a schedule will create a natural rhythm that you should eventually do without having to put much thought into it.

3.2 Eating: on and off campus

Most freshmen are required to have an RIT meal plan. A meal plan consists of three separate components:

- **Gracie's swipes** — access to Gracie's, the buffet-style cafeteria
- **Meal exchanges** — can be used *either* as a Gracie's swipe *or* for up to $8 worth of food from any RIT dining location
- **Dining dollars** — can be used for food from any RIT dining location

Note that dining dollars used to be called “food debit” (or just “debit”), which you will still hear from many upperclassmen. Table 3.1 shows the different meal plans available to freshmen.

Table 3.1: Freshman meal plans.

Name	Gracie’s Swipes	Meal Exchanges	Dining Dollars / Semester
Tiger 10	5	5	$725
Tiger 14	8	6	$525
Tiger 20	13	7	$325

Because dining dollars are the most general (and can be used at Gracie’s as well), it is generally considered best to have as many dining dollars as possible if you must have a meal plan; that is, you should pick Tiger 10 if you must pick among the freshmen options. There are also upperclassmen meal plans: the Tiger 5 has no Gracie’s swipes but 5 meal exchanges and $1,325 of semester dining dollars, while the Orange has only $2,900 of semester dining dollars. You can get access to these as a freshman if you have upperclassman status, which means you have at least as many credits to count for two full semesters at RIT; if you come in with transfer and/or AP credit you may qualify in your second semester (students with a lot of credit may even qualify in their first semester). If you can choose an upperclassman meal plan, it is generally advisable to do so as you will be less tied to Gracie’s.

Even if you must have a meal plan that requires you to eat at Gracie’s, all is not lost. Gracie’s can be surprisingly good, if you know what to look for and what not to do. Most importantly, the importance of *variety* cannot be overstated. Get food from the rotating chefs as much as possible, as this will force you to eat different kinds of food. Otherwise, try all the different areas and try as much different food as possible from each. The problem with Gracie’s is that you have to eat there a lot, and if you eat the same thing it will get boring quickly — choosing different kinds of food, different meals from the different stations, etc. and introducing variety will help to stave this off and make Gracie’s as enjoyable as possible.

However, you should eventually aim to eat on-campus as little as possible. This is obviously more difficult in the dorms, as you don’t have a kitchen to cook with. And it’s less important if you have a meal plan, since they all include enough to eat adequately on campus. But I recommend you ditch your meal plan as soon as possible, since they force you to eat on campus; buying groceries off-campus that you can prepare with what little you have will save you a lot of money in the long run, as on-campus food (including groceries) is massively marked up.

3.3 Personal health

As a college student, you are now responsible for your own physical and mental health much more than ever before. There are a whole slew of resources on campus to help you maintain your health, both physical and mental.

Exercise

Those looking to exercise on campus have a variety of options. The Gordon Field House includes not only an excellent and easily accessible gym, but also pools, an indoor track, indoor courts for a variety of sports (basketball, tennis, and racquetball), and several dance studios. Most wellness classes are also in the Field House, and can be a great way to expose yourself to new activities that you might not otherwise do.

Besides the Field House, there is the Frank Ritter Ice Arena, a popular destination for skating. If you have your own skates, there are often times you can skate there for free. There's also the Clark Gymnasium which has another indoor court, and there a variety of outdoor courts around campus — a few tennis courts behind the next to the Polisseni Center, a field across from the library, etc., so anyone looking to play sports will have plenty of opportunities. Finally, there is the Red Barn which is somewhat removed from the rest of the areas; it is located past Golisano by the Global Village parking lots. The Red Barn can provide a unique and quite fun experience and is a great way to stay active and have fun at the same time.

And of course, there is the simplest option, requiring no facilities whatsoever: running. In the winter you may choose to go indoors (though the paths around campus are typically pretty free of snow year-round except right after it snows), but there are a variety of routes to run on campus. This is also a great way to see more of campus, especially if you mix up your route a bit.

Diet

An often-overlooked component of health, but the Freshman 15 is no myth. You are now responsible for making sure you get your own food, and that means keeping track of what you eat. It's easy (and often tempting) to get fries and a burger pretty much anywhere on campus, but there are also many healthier options — even at Gracie's!

A full description of dieting is obviously beyond the scope of this manual, but as always it is more important that you recognize this as something that will require thought than that you immediately get the right answer — you won't. Some amount of trial and error is to be expected, but the good news is that eating healthy is not all that much harder than eating whatever you want on campus. Some suggestions might include:

- smoothies from Beanz; a variety of healthy options (and delicious!)
- salad options are almost as ubiquitous as generic 'burger and fries' unhealthy options, provided you like salad
- granola/fruit/protein bars are sold at most places, including Sol's, Bytes on the Run, and Crossroads, and can be a great and healthy snack

Mental health

Even more often overlooked than dieting, mental health is ironically perhaps the most important aspect of health, especially to an incoming college student. This is also where health comes into conflict with academics most prominently — it's easy to get stressed out over the five homework assignments and two group projects you have due the week before finals. But as before, there are a variety of resources on campus to help you.

Perhaps the most important thing you can do to preserve your mental health is *sleep*. College students are notorious for not getting enough sleep, but the medical concensus is clear: sleep deprivation of any sort can wreak havoc on your life, and has been implicated in not just stress but a number of more serious mental health issues. Aim to get at least seven hours of sleep a night. This is actually quite achievable: even if you have an 8AM class and want to get up at 7, you only need to get to sleep by midnight. And if you know you won't be doing that, avoid 8AM classes in your schedule when you choose it so you can get an adequate amount of sleep.

Taking some time to de-stress can also be very beneficial, and conveniently, physical exercise can be a great way to do just that. Even just taking a fifteen minute walk can be a great stress reliever, and as for

running, there are lots of interesting places to walk on campus. This also gets you some fresh air, which again can be surprisingly effective; one more member of this category is drinking water (perhaps replace a sugary soda that won't actually quench your thirst with a glass of water!). For more serious mental health concerns, the counseling center has professionals available free of charge, though the wait times can sometimes be long.

3.4 Time management

Time management is perhaps the most important skill you can learn in college, the most important for successful completion of your degree, and the most likely skill an incoming freshman will be missing. If, like many incoming college students, you 'floated by' in high school and didn't have to put much effort in, this section is for you. Odds are, your old habits won't give you much success in college.

Successful time management consists of two separate concerns: *when* you spend your time and *how* you spend your time. Some of your schedule will be dictated by your classes, and some by the clubs you choose to join, but the majority will be free for you to allocate. How you decide to allocate this time comprises *when* you spend your time. But even then, if you decide to spend two hours a day doing homework and then spend most of that two hours getting distracted by Twitter, that is still a failure of time management. Making effective use of the time you do allocate comprises *how* you spend your time.

There is no right answer to when you should schedule your time. The amount of study time required will vary from person to person, and even for a single person will vary depending on how much academic work you're taking on in general and on how much work you have assigned at a particular time. But in general, you should spend at least *some* time every day working on homework or studying. You should also spend some time with friends, perhaps some time alone if you need it, some time exercising, etc. To reiterate, it is more important that you recognize the necessity of scheduling your time accurately than it is that you get it right the first time. Periodic self-reflection on your schedule and what is and isn't working about it can go a long way towards improving your schedule; I recommend you do this at least bi-weekly. Keeping a journal, diary, or time log can also be helpful in tracking your time and how effectively you're spending it, and can be a great way to get some data to use to improve your decision-making process.

Making effective use of the time you do select for a particular task is perhaps even more important than when you schedule those tasks. The more effectively you study, the less time you have to allocate to it. There are resources on campus to improve your study habits, like the Academic Support Center, and you can also do some research on your own. As with scheduling your time, it is important to self-reflect on how effectively you study (or do other activities) so that you can recognize what needs improvement and then make those improvements.

Chapter 4

The Zen of College

Introduction

Now that we have some understanding of what academic, social, and internal life look like while at RIT, one final question remains: how to put them together and, crucially, how to resolve conflicts between them when they inevitably arise. This chapter explores that question in detail.

4.1 Prioritizing

At the end of the day, there is only so much that a single person can do. Success in each of the three domains (academic, social, and internal) requires some amount of effort, and this must be split between how much effort you can put in. Putting more effort in does not evade this problem, though it may increase the amount of success you experience overall. Thus, you will have to decide for yourself where your priorities lie. Unfortunately, there is little general advice to give for how to make that decision, and what little there may be is contentious and far outside the scope of this document. Ultimately, only introspection and honest self-reflection can serve to help you find the balance that is right for you.

4.2 Resolving conflicts

It will often happen that one of the three domains will come into conflict with another; perhaps you agreed to go out with your friends but need to spend more time on a paper due that day, or you must decide whether to skip your regular exercise routine to work on the paper or go out with friends. There are an endless number of potential scenarios in which two domains might impinge on another. Your priorities will set a baseline for how much time and effort to put into each domain, but the key insight to have is that these not — indeed, should not — be rigid quantities. Rather, they must be able to stretch somewhat to accomodate the needs of the situation.

Consider in more detail the problem of deciding whether to improve a paper or go out with friends. A number of factors might come into play, including as a baseline how much relative importance you assign to your academic and social success. Even if you assign a high relative importance to social success, if the paper is important enough you might consider foregoing time with your friends. Your decision at that moment need not affect your overall priorities, however; even if you choose to focus less on one particular domain at a certain juncture, your overall priorities can remain the same. Thus you can resolve simple conflicts like this by temporarily 'stretching' your priorities, safe in the knowledge that your overall priorities remain. More

complicated scenarios may require more thought, but hopefully this basic principle will assist you in both recognizing and resolving such conflicts where they occur.

Conclusion

The transition from high school to college and beyond can be difficult, but also tremendously rewarding. This manual has given a short overview of some of the major points to consider in making that transition. It has not covered everything, and the reader has much to do in order to fully prepare themselves for life at RIT. In many cases, it is impossible to give concrete advice, as the needs of each individual student will be different, and thus it is up to the reader to self-reflect and determine what the best solution for them is.

The preceding chapters considered three separate domains of success: academic, social, and internal, and finally looked at how to combine them and manage conflicts between them. Chapter 1 looked at the academic domain, including not only 'official' academic requirements but also unofficial requirements as well as some tips and tricks that most students might not otherwise have access to through the 'official' channels. Chapter 2 looked at the social situation of an incoming college freshmen and what challenges and opportunities it provides. Chapter 3 looked at the 'internal' domain, including personal health in its broadest sense as well as self-fulfillment and time management skills that may be new to many incoming freshmen. Finally, Chapter 4 provided some intuition for how to manage these domains and, more importantly, the conflicts between them. This is perhaps the most individual of the chapters, as everyone will have different goals which will warrant different degrees of attention to be paid to each domain. Hopefully, it has given the reader some general idea of how best to manage conflicts as they arise.

Armed with this information, you should now be more prepared than before to have a successful and rewarding career at RIT, and to graduate therefrom.