

Dear future students,

Most of the time older students will tell you things like how amazing it is to live on your own and the freedoms that come with that. While that is nice, it's not exactly useful to prepare. I want to make sure that next year's students know how much more homework there is compared to highschool. The way the classes are structured is a lot different than highschool, meaning that while you're only in class for maybe 4 hours per day at most, you make up for the other time by doing lots of studying on your own. Make sure you get on top of it and use that time to your advantage, because the assignments will just keep piling up if you ignore them.

Many people will tell you that the first year of college is going to be hard. However, it actually isn't, as long as you have self discipline, and know the reason as to why you are attending. For people with an undecided major, if you don't already have most of your credits, I would highly suggest you attend a community college for financial reasons, but if that is not one of your concerns, by all means stay here. Also, keep in mind that this is an education that *you* are *paying* for. Don't be afraid to say no to friends, or clubs. With that, don't be afraid to ask questions, or even help (but if you are just going to ask for answers, at the very least make sure you understand the content, and cut to the chase), again you are *literally paying* for this school, and its resources--so get your money's worth-- this ain't cheap. Keep in mind that you applied to go to school, your application wasn't for friends, jobs, or extra activities. Know your values and purpose, and start prioritizing.

This semester, I have found that staying organized is extremely important in order to be successful. I've done this by keeping an agenda along with making daily to-do lists. Using these together has allowed me to figure out what I have to get done and to check things off as I do them. Another important factor in my success thus far in the semester has been not procrastinating. I know it's easier said than done, but setting a plan of when things need to get done and from there executing said plan is very important in order to make sure everything is done by, if not before, the due date. I tend to make sure everything is done the night before it's due at the latest, that way I don't have to worry about rushing to get it done the day it's due and can instead worry about other things, such as other assignments and anything else I want/have to do in my free time. Organization is the number one factor that has influenced my success this semester, combining organization with not procrastinating is the key to success.

The best resource I discovered this semester was Geogebra. This is an online resource that has so many different resources available in it, including different kinds of calculators along with geometric models and note-taking resources, it's a great math resource. This is similar to Desmos, but it has more options and I think it's easier to navigate than many other similar resources. I also learned how to better use a spreadsheet, which is a fairly useful skill to have. Being able to utilize spreadsheets is important in many ways, but especially for people interested in becoming teachers in the future because I know some teachers like to keep a second copy of students' grades in case something happens with the online grading used by the school. The resources I've discovered in this class will be extremely useful for me in the future.

When I look back on these past few months, there are certainly many things that I either did or didn't do that I regret. These actions ended up causing me to have a slightly more difficult time than I had originally thought. I surely wish that I did not procrastinate as much as I did. I ended up pushing assignments too far back and not having enough time to complete them fully or complete them correctly. This ended up causing my grades to suffer a little bit. I also wish I had taken the time to use the resources that were available to me like tutoring or math help. I undoubtedly feel like I would've had an easier time in my classes if I had used those resources. In my classes, I definitely regret not trying to make more friends. I feel like friends in my classes would've made it easier to study and get motivated to do school work because we could do it together and help each other when needed. Obviously, many different people regret many different things, or at least wish they could redo some parts, but for a first year at college, being aware of these three actions would've definitely helped my time here.

- A group of fall 2020 math students