

TOP 10 SECRETS OF COLLEGE SUCCESS

- 1. Take Control.** The most striking difference between college and high school is that at college there's no one there to stand over you and tell you what to do. Getting to class, doing the homework, getting your papers in on time – all of these are things you're going to have to do without a family member or teacher to remind you. Step up to bat and take responsibility. You're in charge of this thing.
- 2. Get to Class.** Many students have a "cutting budget": the number of classes they think they can miss and still do pretty well in the course. If you miss a few classes you might think: "No problem, I'll get the notes." But when you miss class you're missing a significant amount of course content. This can do major damage to your final course grade.
- 3. Adjust Your Attention Span.** You may be used to getting your content in short, entertaining blasts: one- to three-minute YouTube videos, hyper-abbreviated text messages, and 140-count character tweets. Your instructor is thinking in terms of a 50-minute lecture (or longer), divided into perhaps two or three segments. Retrain your attention span to process long units of content (rather than zoning in and out as things strike you).
- 4. Study.** At college, most of the work is done outside the classroom. Rule of thumb: one hour of lecture, two hours of preparation. As soon as the quarter starts, find a quiet place to study and block out the times of the week you're going to study. Read course material before it's covered in class. That way, you've read it once, you hear it for a second time, and you can review it after class. Three repetitions with each piece of information makes it much easier to retain.
- 5. Take Each Test Three Times.** Before the exam, construct a pre-test (use questions from the study guide or from hints the instructor dropped in lecture) and take it under "test conditions" (write it out, under strict time limit, with no looking at the book). At the actual exam, write full answers that draw on all the course materials (lectures, readings, discussions) and that would be clear to any intelligent reader. Then, when you get your test back, go over any comments your instructor has written and do the question again in your head, given the new information.
- 6. Connect With Your Instructors.** The single most underutilized resource at college is your instructor's office hours. Your tests and papers will go better if you've had a chance to ask about things you're confused about and receive guidance from the instructor about upcoming test material. Faculty care about your success.
- 7. Use the Placement Office From Your First Quarter.** From the first day on campus until you graduate, the SCC Placement Office will help you achieve your career goals. The Placement Office can help with part-time jobs, internships or co-ops, as well as your full-time career search. This office also helps with interview preparation and resume assistance.
- 8. Take Advantage of All SCC Campus Events.** Involvement in student organizations, speakers sponsored by your department, service learning opportunities...all of these are opportunities at SCC. These experiences can connect with and broaden your academic study and also offer excellent networking opportunities.
- 9. If You Are Experiencing Difficulties, Seek Out Resources.** A visit to your instructor, the Tutoring and Learning Center, or perhaps our Retention Specialist may make a huge difference in your classroom success. Asking for help is a sign of maturity and demonstrates awareness that you know how to take action.
- 10. Make Time Each Quarter to Reflect on Why You Are Here and What You Hope to Accomplish.** As yourself, "Am I making the most of my SCC experience? What are my goals for learning?"

