

Time Management

Time management is important to any student, but it is particularly important to those involved in student organizations. Involvement in an extra-curricular activity or group means that in addition to classes, meals, jobs, and socializing, another significant amount of your time is automatically taken when it comes to scheduling your day. The information presented here and on the linked pages provides some pointers on how to more efficiently manage one of your most precious resources, time!

Managing your time is a highly personal skill. Only you know your peak work hours, your attention span, and your eating and sleeping needs. Using what you know about yourself, you can create an effective time management strategy. Do not pretend to be a morning person if you are not. Be honest with yourself.

The information presented in the links below present general ideas for success and how these ideas might be applied. Whatever method works for you is the right one, so remember to take your own self-awareness into account.

Three steps to time management:

There are three essential steps to efficient time management. They are:

Organizing

In the morning or even the night before, make a list of everything you want or need to do for that day (if done the night before, what you want to do the following day). It is not necessary to prioritize at this time. Don't even think about which jobs are the most important--just write down everything you can think of. Right now you are just brainstorming.

Sometimes, it is good to list tasks or "things to do" over the next 5-7 days. This can help plan longer projects (i.e., more than one day) better. Besides that, none of us is perfect, and there will be days when we may forget or just don't feel like doing some things. Giving yourself more than one day to do a project gives you more flexibility (and more room for error).

Prioritizing

Now that you have written everything down, the next step is to rewrite your list in order of priority, with the intention of doing higher priority tasks first and working your way down the list. You will usually find that a lot of this is done for you if you keep in mind the due dates for the different projects you're working on. How you prioritize is your own business. No one can tell you what is most important to you. Just be responsible with your priorities.

Try not to overestimate your capabilities. Do not leave projects for the last second. We've all done our share of procrastinating, but in the long run it is usually the least effective way of getting work done. It will happen, but try to keep the last-minute scramble to a minimum.

Scheduling

Now that you've got a prioritized list of everything that you need and want to do, you should look at your class-work schedule to fit your projects around what you already have scheduled. Again, this is something good to do for a few days at a time rather than every day. Remember to let your schedule be flexible. Don't get overly ambitious--there's no need to plan out every minute of your day. Make a reasonable schedule that you can be sure to stick to. Be sure to leave room for breaks, socializing, and those little things that tend to pop up.

One main idea to remember in the process of developing your time management strategy is to be flexible in your planning. Allow for the unexpected. The only sure thing in your schedule is that the unexpected will happen.