

## **Guide to Success as a Science Major in College**

- 1) **Commitment.** Being a student is a full time job; expect to work between 40 and 60 hours per week as a science major. A general rule of thumb is that you need to work between 2 and 3 hours outside of class for every hour in class.
- 2) **Attendance.** Science has its own language that you can only learn if you hear it, see it and practice it. Lectures and laboratories are where this happens; don't let these opportunities to learn slip by. Consistently missing class will usually decrease your grade for the course by one or two letter grades, if not more.
- 3) **Preparation.** Read ahead in the text. Read the syllabus so you know what's coming; mark important dates on your calendar (and mark a reminder two weeks before the due date). Start studying for exams at least two weeks beforehand. Get to class early with everything you need for class. Athletes don't show up at game time and expect to play. They take time to warm up and check their equipment, and so should you.
- 4) **Work Hard.** Do what you need to do and do your best. Go beyond what is required. Work problems every day (even if not assigned).
- 5) **Work Smart.** You want to be able to do any problem in your text book in five minutes, or less, but you probably won't be able to perform at that level at first. If you can't see how to start a problem after five minutes, stop! Flag the problem and then ask about it. In the same way, if you can work a problem but get the wrong answer, don't spend more than five minutes trying to find your mistake. Schedule your time so that you spend at least two hours per night on chemistry (adjust as needed for weekends).
- 6) **Use all your Resources.** See your instructor during their office hours to ask questions. Find and use a tutor. Use study guides, posted old exams, on-line help, etc. as a source of extra practice problems.
- 7) **Don't Make Excuses and Don't Grub Grades.** If you made a mistake, or did poorly on an exam, own up to it. Learning from one's mistakes is the hallmark of a conscientious student. A reputation as a whiner will hurt you in the long run (think letters of recommendation!).
- 8) **You are not Alone.** If you run into serious trouble (illness, death in the family, etc.) do not try to get through it by yourself. Talk to someone (friends, residence hall assistants, campus counselors, etc.) and then talk to your instructor. They are all there to help and want you to succeed, but they can't help you if you suffer in silence.