JC called her mother for the second time in two hours. She had just created her schedule and visited with her advisor about earning a degree in nursing. She sent a text to her mother that said “Call me,” and her mother called immediately.

“Do you think I can do this?” Juanita asked.

“Juanita,” her mother said with softness and fatigue in her voice, “you always overthink these things. I know you like to be prepared, but things will be different in college. It’s not high school.”

The classes Juanita had registered for seemed different from the ones she had taken in high school.

“Yeah,” Juanita replied, “but I didn’t have to make a life decision in high school. It made me nervous when my advisor asked me to choose a degree plan and write out goals for completing my degree.”

“You did choose electrical engineering, just like we talked about, right?” her mother asked.

“Well, I wanted to talk to you about that,” Juanita said. “I saw a flyer about careers in the health field. I could make a really good salary as a nurse right after I graduate.”

“But you don’t like working with people who are sick, Juanita,” her mother replied. “When you were younger, you were always building things in the backyard.”

Juanita knew her mother wanted her to become an engineer, because Juanita’s mother’s father had been one. Juanita’s family also wanted her to “use her brain” in a prestigious field. But Juanita thought nursing would be a better fit for her, especially because her father’s sister was a nurse and loved her job. Juanita decided to keep her degree plan in nursing and to tell her mother about her choice later.

Like Juanita, you’ll face some important decisions in college that will require you to have a clear sense of why you’re in college and what you’re trying to accomplish. To help you get on the right track, this chapter will help you do the following:

- Incorporate three factors for academic success into your life.
- Analyze the relationship among values, motivation, and goals for academic success.
- Use the characteristics of SMART goals in your goal setting.
- Write your mission statement.

Create long- and short-term goals that align with your personal mission statement.

MyStudentSuccessLab (www.mystudentsuccesslab.com) is an online solution designed to help you ‘Start strong, Finish stronger’ by building skills for ongoing personal and professional development.
Three Factors For Academic Success

Congratulations, you’ve made it to college! Your journey to this point may not have been easy, but you’re here and you’re ready to succeed. We wrote this book because we want to help you succeed.

Do you realize that only about 6% of the entire world’s population has earned a college degree? You have the opportunity to earn a distinction that relatively few people on this planet will experience, and you deserve a lot of credit for pursuing this noble achievement.

What will it take for you to be successful in college? This book is filled with ideas, suggestions, and strategies to help you succeed. In this chapter, we provided the foundational information you will need to start strong and finish stronger. In this section, however, we’ve narrowed our list of ingredients for success to three of the most important elements: know why you’re here; have a sense of personal responsibility; and connect with others.

1. Know Why You’re Here

A popular problem-solving approach in some organizational circles is called root cause analysis. It describes the effort to uncover the root cause, or primary reason, for a particular outcome or circumstance.

One technique for uncovering the root cause of something is to ask “Why?” five times, as shown in the following example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 5 “Whys?”: The First “Why?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why are you in college?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 5 “Whys?”: The Second “Why?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why are you getting a nursing degree?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 5 “Whys?”: The Third “Why?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do you want to care for others?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 5 “Whys?”: The Fourth “Why?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why is caring for others rewarding?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 5 “Whys?”: The Fifth “Why?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why has your family always emphasized the importance of caring for those in need?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let’s start with a simple first question—“Why are you in college?”—and then ask four more “Whys?” after that. For example, if your answer to “Why are you in college” is “I want to get a nursing degree,” then the next question is “Why do you want to get a nursing degree?” If your answer to that question is “I want to care for others,” then ask yourself another “Why?”
As you proceed with asking yourself five “Whys?” you’ll get deeper and deeper into your true motivations for pursuing a college degree. You’ll also have a much clearer understanding of yourself and why you are in college.

Take a moment to complete Activity 1, The Five “Whys?”

**2. Have a Sense of Personal Responsibility**

Exhibit 1 illustrates some of the differences and similarities among going to high school, working at a full-time job, and attending college. As you read down through the column labeled “College” in Exhibit 1, you’ll notice that a pattern emerges: Compared to going to high school or working full time, attending college involves a dramatic increase in the amount of personal responsibility an individual must handle. High school teachers and job supervisors provide clear guidance, about both expectations and how to achieve them. In college, however, students are responsible for understanding the expectations for academic and career success based on information from the college catalog, course syllabi, and class assignments and for developing strategies for meeting those expectations.

During your high school or work experience, you probably wished at times that you had more freedom to make your own decisions and to pursue your own interests. As you step into college, your wishes will indeed come true. The range of opportunities and alternatives that lie before you is so broad and diverse that you’ll find yourself making important decisions every day.
Chapter 1

Having this level of personal responsibility is exciting, but it can also be overwhelming at times. You may even find yourself suffering significant consequences for making poor decisions along the way. To avoid these problems, you should develop a personal approach that you can use as you step into an experience that offers so much personal responsibility and autonomy.

Complete the Meeting Expectations exercise by choosing a college expectation that you will encounter and writing an action statement for how you will meet that expectation through personal responsibility.

3. Connect with Others

Even the most dedicated student can’t do it all alone. In fact, behind every successful college graduate is a good support system, usually comprised of family, friends, and community members.

It’s no secret that succeeding in college will take more than just studying hard. You’ll need to surround yourself with people who encourage you to do your best. At times, you’ll need others for academic, emotional, and even financial support. Recognizing

**EXHIBIT 1 Differences among High School, Full-Time Work, and College**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Full-Time Work</th>
<th>College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance is mandatory to meet requirements.</td>
<td>Attendance is mandatory to stay employed.</td>
<td>Attendance may not be mandatory to meet requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least six continuous hours are spent in class each day.</td>
<td>At least eight continuous hours are spent at work each day.</td>
<td>Different amounts of time are spent in class and between classes each day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate to no outside work is necessary to complete requirements.</td>
<td>Moderate to no overtime work is necessary to complete job duties.</td>
<td>Substantial amount of outside work is necessary to complete assignments and successful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers go over material and expect students to remember facts and information.</td>
<td>Employers provide basic information and expect employees to use it to complete their jobs effectively.</td>
<td>Professors provide concepts and theories and expect students to evaluate ideas, synthesize the ideas with other concepts they have learned, and develop new ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having this level of personal responsibility is exciting, but it can also be overwhelming at times. You may even find yourself suffering significant consequences for making poor decisions along the way. To avoid these problems, you should develop a personal approach that you can use as you step into an experience that offers so much personal responsibility and autonomy.

Complete the Meeting Expectations exercise by choosing a college expectation that you will encounter and writing an action statement for how you will meet that expectation through personal responsibility.

**Meeting EXPECTATIONS**

The college will expect that I …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example:</th>
<th>… read the assigned material before I get to class.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To meet that expectation, I will …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example:</th>
<th>… schedule time before every class to complete the required reading and review my notes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
who in your circle of friends, family, and contacts will be the best resources is part of
the process of creating the support system that will inevitably be part of your college
success.

**Professors**

Perhaps no one will be more important to your college success and possible future ca-
reer success than your professors. They don’t just provide you with access to the content
and challenge you to think critically about the subject matter. They can also be mentors
and resources as you complete your degree and begin your career. One way to start out
on the right path to good relationships with your professors is to greet them with a smile
and a “Hello” when you see them in and out of class.

**Advisors, Counselors, and Administrators**

In addition to professors, some of the most important relationships that you will create
during college will be with people whose sole job is to help you succeed. Counselors
and advisors will be key people in your academic career, so be sure to take the time to
get to know them. College administrators also play an important role.

Your advisor may be the first person you encounter at college. Your advisor will ex-
plain what courses you should take, how many credit hours you should take a semester,
and how to plan your remaining semesters. You may be lucky enough to have the same
advisor throughout your college career. In that case, having regular contact with your
advisor will help keep the lines of communication open. If you have a different advisor
each semester, you may want to find one person who can act as a regular advisor.

**Family**

Whether you live with your parents, are a parent yourself, or fall somewhere in between,
your family is an important part of who you are and what you will become. Your fam-
ily has influenced your values and beliefs, and they may be part of the reason you’ve
enrolled in college. For many students, being able to stay in college and to be successful
depends on having the support of their families. If your family will be an important
part of your life as you pursue a degree, then you will need to consider how they will
support you and what you need to communicate to them about what to expect when
you have to spend more time studying and taking classes than enjoying your relation-
ships with them.

**Friends**

Another important part of your support system is your friends. While you may not be
able to determine how your family members will influence your college experience, you
will have some control over how your friends will influence that experience. If you have
friends who have attended or are attending college, you’ll have a great opportunity to
connect with them on that common pursuit. Even if you and your friends don’t attend
the same college, you can develop a support system with them, since you will all be hav-
ing similar experiences. You can share advice and study strategies, and you can lean on
each other when you feel stressed. Knowing that a friend is having a similar experience
can give you the motivation to continue working hard.

**Roommates**

If you choose to live in a dorm or apartment during your college career, you’ll discover
that your roommates can be either very positive or, unfortunately, very negative influ-
ences on your life. Roommates who share your goals and values and are as committed
as you to being successful in college can provide a strong support system. They can
offer encouragement when you’re feeling discouraged and companionship when you’re feeling lonely. You can provide the same support to them. It will be important for you to have study habits and personal strategies of your own, but at times, you’ll benefit greatly from experiencing college life with roommates, with whom you can share meals, social activities, and household chores.

Complete Activity 2, Who’s in Your Circle? by adding the people from the groups discussed in the previous sections in the outer circles.

**Activity 2  Who’s in Your Circle?**

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**YOUR PERSONAL VALUES AND MOTIVATION CAN HELP YOU ACHIEVE ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

**Your Dreams Are Worth Pursuing**

As you consider your goals, also think about your dreams. Dreams are the big ideas and bold achievements that you sometimes imagine and secretly hope for. What do you want to do or achieve that you have not written down because you feel it is too farfetched?

There are many stories of people who ignored their dreams and took jobs that provided financial security and prestige, only to discover that their lives were not fulfilled because they regretted giving up on their dreams. There are also many exciting stories about people who never forgot their dreams and who achieved them eventually through hard work and determination.

Why don’t more people follow their dreams? First, some people don’t know what their dreams are. Their day-to-day lives take up so much of their time, attention, and energy that they don’t take time to consider their dreams. Second, some people are scared. Pursuing your dreams is a risky proposition. There’s always the chance that circumstances or events will bring disappointment and failure in this pursuit. Third, some people need to make the “safe” choice first before they can feel confident about pursuing their dreams.

You may not be able to fulfill your dreams in the immediate future, but don’t lose sight of them.
Your Mission Statement and Goals

Your Values Drive Your Goals

Your life story will reflect your system of values. Values can be inherited from your parents, or they can be based on what your culture, religion, or ethnicity regard as important. Values can also be formed from both positive and negative experiences.

For example, one of your values may be honesty, which means that you try to be truthful and straightforward and you expect others to be honest with you. You may also value hard work, which means that you strive to do your best in your life. If a friend has treated you with compassion, you may value sensitivity to others. On the other hand, if you have been discriminated against in the past, you may now value open-mindedness in others.

The importance of knowing and understanding your values is that having this knowledge can help you set realistic goals. If you value a satisfying career, for instance, you will set goals that support that value. You will probably investigate fields and careers that are challenging and interesting. If you value a stable financial future, you will set goals that allow you to earn enough money to provide for your needs and wants. If you value your family, you will make spending time with them a priority. Your values should be a true reflection of who you are and what you believe.

Your Motivation Fuels Your Action

Motivation is the driving force behind action. You won’t act unless you are motivated to do so. Your motivation determines whether you will put forth the time, thought, and effort to achieve your goals and dreams.

When was the last time you felt really motivated to do something? Maybe you just watched an inspirational movie, got a raise at work, or received some words of encouragement from a friend or relative. Or perhaps an event or circumstance—such as running into an old friend whose life has turned in a bad direction—has helped you realize that you need to take action to avoid a similar event or circumstances in your life. Regardless of the source of your motivation, you know that when you feel motivated, you are compelled to take action in pursuit of your dreams.

Of course, there will be times in your academic career when you will feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities you have and perhaps unsure of your ability to handle them all. When you feel weighed down by all that you have to accomplish during a particular day or week, try to calm down. If you can, talk with a friend, instructor, or...
counselor and explain your frustration and stress. To stay motivated and to resist the temptation to give up, remind yourself of why you are doing what you are doing. It might be helpful to revisit Activity 1, The Five "Whys?" which you completed earlier in the chapter. Your answers to the fourth and fifth questions may lead you to or remind you of why you are in college, why you want to succeed, and what you want to accomplish.

Internal motivation is the key to success. If most of your reasons for attending college are based on what others have told you or if your motivations for succeeding in college are driven mostly by others’ expectations, you'll need to dig deeper to discover the reasons you want to succeed. Find your internal motivation for college success, even if it takes a while to discover it.

Everyone is motivated by something. Your professors have their own motivations and goals, which you can use to help you understand them better, but they may not give you these details in writing or even tell you what they are. As you get to know your professors in class, during office hours, or as faculty advisors to student clubs and organizations, ask questions and listen for clues to help you understand what motivates them.

Relationships and motivations go hand in hand. If you can uncover and understand what motivates someone and what he or she is trying to accomplish in life, you’ll be better equipped to have a good personal and working relationship with that person. A great way to have good relationships is to understand people and to know what drives them.

The only way to know if are successful is to have a goal to aim for.

SET SMART GOALS FOR YOUR SUCCESS

Your Goals Set the Bar for Achievement

To build on your mission statement—and to fulfill that mission in the process—you’ll need to set goals that you can achieve. A goal is something that you work toward. It may be to learn how to cook macaroni and cheese, to quit a bad habit, or to write a novel.

Whatever your goals, they should be reasonable and attainable in the time frame that you have assigned. For instance, if you want to lose 10 pounds in one week, you may need to rethink the time frame in which you can achieve your goal. A more reasonable goal would be to lose 10 pounds in four months. Reasonable goals are more likely to be met.

As you begin to think about your goals, consider dividing them into long-term goals and short-term goals. Certainly, one of your long-term goals is to earn a degree. Achieving this goal may take a year or more, depending on how many degree requirements you need.
Your Mission Statement and Goals

to complete or how many other responsibilities you may have.

When you write out your goals, use the acronym SMART. Your goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time specific, as outlined in Exhibit 2. Following are three goals that a college student might set. Let’s apply the SMART approach to improve each one:

“Get good grades in college.” This is a noble goal, certainly, but it’s neither measurable nor time specific. “Achieve a 3.4 GPA at the end of my first term” specifies how you’ll measure the goal (GPA) and by when (at the end of your first term).

“Earn extra money to pay for college.” A lot of students will have this kind of goal for their college experience, but the goal needs to be measurable and time specific. “Generate an extra $2,000 in income before the beginning of fall semester” establishes a specific amount and a timeline.

“Build a network of people who can help me get a job.” Business students, in particular, are often told about the importance of networking, but expressing that activity as a goal can be challenging. It might be helpful to break the activity into some specific action items and to use them to establish goals. For example, a first-year student could start networking successfully by setting the following goal: “Personally meet and obtain business cards from at least 10 business or community leaders by the end of this academic year.”

Goal-Writing Tips

Here are a few other tips for writing effective goals:

■ Write down your goals. No matter what you want to achieve, be sure to write down all your goals. Then review them every few months to assess your progress.

■ Break larger goals into smaller goals that will lead to fulfillment. Smaller goals are easier to achieve and can build quickly into a larger, long-term goal.

■ Review your goals regularly and make changes as necessary. Circumstances and events beyond your control may require you to adjust your goals from time to time.

Exhibit 2 SMART Goals

Specific—A goal should describe one specific outcome, such as losing 12 pounds.

Measurable—A goal should describe an outcome that is observable and measurable. For example, weight loss can be measured on a scale.

Attainable—A goal can be challenging but also something that you believe you can achieve or attain in the timeframe that you give it.

Realistic—Losing 12 pounds in two weeks is probably unrealistic and even unhealthy, but losing 12 pounds in twelve weeks is more realistic.

Time specific—A goal should specify the timeframe for achievement, so that you can gauge your progress and success. If your goal is simply to lose 12 pounds but you don’t specify a timeframe, you won’t know whether you’re on track or what your deadline is for achieving it. Establishing a measurable deadline will allow you to celebrate your accomplishment on that day or time!
seven hours of television a week and aren’t achieving the desired short-term goal of relaxing or becoming more informed, then spend that time doing something that contributes to your goal.

Complete Activity 3, Three SMART Goals for the Semester, by identifying three goals you would like to meet this term. Be sure to follow the guidelines for setting SMART goals.

Activity 3 Three SMART Goals for the Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SMART Goal 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART Goal 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART Goal 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WRITE A PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

Your Mission Statement Defines Your Purpose

A mission statement is a statement of purpose. Most companies and other organizations develop a mission statement to define a purpose and to answer crucial questions such as “Why do we exist?” and “What do we want to achieve?”

Your personal mission statement should explain your purpose in life from a very broad perspective. It should describe how your values, motivations, and goals will create your life’s mission. Once you’ve identified your values, motivations, and goals, your next step is to craft your mission statement, which will establish your purpose. As you meet your goals and learn new things, your purpose will likely change and your mission statement will need to be revised.
The following is an example of a personal mission statement that you can use as a model for writing your own:

**Sample Personal Mission Statement**

As a nurse and educator, my life’s mission is to work in a large research hospital and teach future nurses. By supporting my values of compassion, education, and job security, I work toward my life’s mission by completing my nursing degree, working in different hospital environments, and training other nurses.

Practice writing your own mission statement in Activity 4, My Mission Statement, by filling in the blanks with the information that is suggested. Use your work in this activity to revise and refine your mission statement as you begin to meet your goals.

**Activity 4  My Mission Statement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Mission Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a ________________ (dream/career/job/role), my life’s mission is to ________________ (long-term goal). By supporting my values of ________________, ________________, and __________, I work toward my life’s mission by ________________, ________________, and __________ (short-term goals).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because your mission statement describes your purpose in life, it’s a very personalized statement—one that captures your dreams, values, and goals. Your mission statement should serve as a guidepost that you review on a regular basis to help you evaluate your life and determine whether the activities you are investing in on a daily basis are contributing to or hindering achievement of your purpose in life.

Take some time to write your personal mission statement, and share it with people in your life who are trustworthy and supportive of your success. Invite their input and make changes as needed, and then keep the final version somewhere you can access it regularly to remind yourself of your purpose in life.
CASE SCENARIOS

1. In Jennifer’s literature class, she is reading Tim O’Brien’s novel *The Things They Carried*. Although she understands that the novel is about the Vietnam War, she doesn’t know why she has to read a book that contains so much profanity and graphic images of death. Jennifer has made an appointment to speak to her professor about the assignment, because she wants to get out of reading a book that is so depressing and discomforting. She is prepared to suggest that she read and write a paper on a Shakespearean play instead—a paper that she did in high school and got an A on.

Use the following scale to rate the decision that has been made (1 = Poor Decision, 5 = Excellent Decision). Be prepared to explain your answer.

```
Poor Decision ← 1 2 3 4 5 → Excellent Decision
```

2. Jai-Ling is taking a biology class. One of her assignments is to create a group presentation on an assigned topic. Her group’s topic is the theory of evolution, a theory that Jai-Ling finds fascinating, even though all she knows about it is what little she learned in high school. When Jai-Ling meets with her group to begin work on the presentation, two group members express deep concern about being asked to study something that they don’t believe in. They refuse to help with the project, even though they know their lack of participation will lower the whole group’s grade. Jai-Ling tells these group members that they are being immature and ridiculous, because one of the purposes of being in college is to be challenged in one’s thinking. She goes straight to the professor to complain and to ask to be assigned to a new group.

Use the following scale to rate the decision that has been made (1 = Poor Decision, 5 = Excellent Decision). Be prepared to explain your answer.

```
Poor Decision ← 1 2 3 4 5 → Excellent Decision
```

3. Paul has just started college and is surprised by some of his professors’ expectations. One professor told the class that she didn’t care if they attended or not; she would post all the lectures, notes, answers to homework, and study guides online. Another class has 300 students, and Paul feels lost in the sea of fellow classmates. Only his first-year orientation class is small, and that professor demands that he attend regularly. A couple of Paul’s classmates have approached him about taking turns attending classes and sharing notes. He will attend one week, and the two classmates will attend the following two weeks. Paul won’t have to attend some of his classes for two weeks, which will allow him more time to do other things, like work and get involved in student activities. Because two of Paul’s professors don’t take attendance and won’t know if he attends class, he decides to agree to the arrangement.

Use the following scale to rate the decision that has been made (1 = Poor Decision, 5 = Excellent Decision). Be prepared to explain your answer.

```
Poor Decision ← 1 2 3 4 5 → Excellent Decision
```
REFERENCES
