

*Success doesn't come to you, you go to it.*

—Marva Collins, educational reformer

## *It Is Ultimately Up to Me to Succeed*

### *Meet Eric*

My name is Eric Krivensky. I am eighteen years old and attend Florida State University. I plan to major in biochemistry. In high school, I was a little above average student, took advanced placement courses, and had a little above average SAT score—but I struggled with the English section.

### *My College Challenges*

I am going to be faced with many challenges as I start my new life on campus.

- As I transition in to college I am faced with this difficult challenge: I am moving away from my home, my family, and my life that I have always known. It is going to be difficult to move away with just a couple friends. I am going to have to



**Eric Krivensky**

First-year student, four-year university  
Major: Biochemistry

# Choices for Priority Management

learn to become a more independent and responsible person.

- Another challenge will be time management. There are numerous activities I want to get involved in as well as attending the major sporting events at my new school. I am going to be a full-time student and it's going to be hard to find time for everything and still keep good grades.
- The third challenge will be to take care of myself (eat healthy, work out, go to church) and continue with the spiritual and moral values I have now. There will be many temptations trying to lead me away from what I know is right.

## My Choices to Address My Challenges

It is going to be a great and exciting year. But it is also going to be difficult to address these challenges.

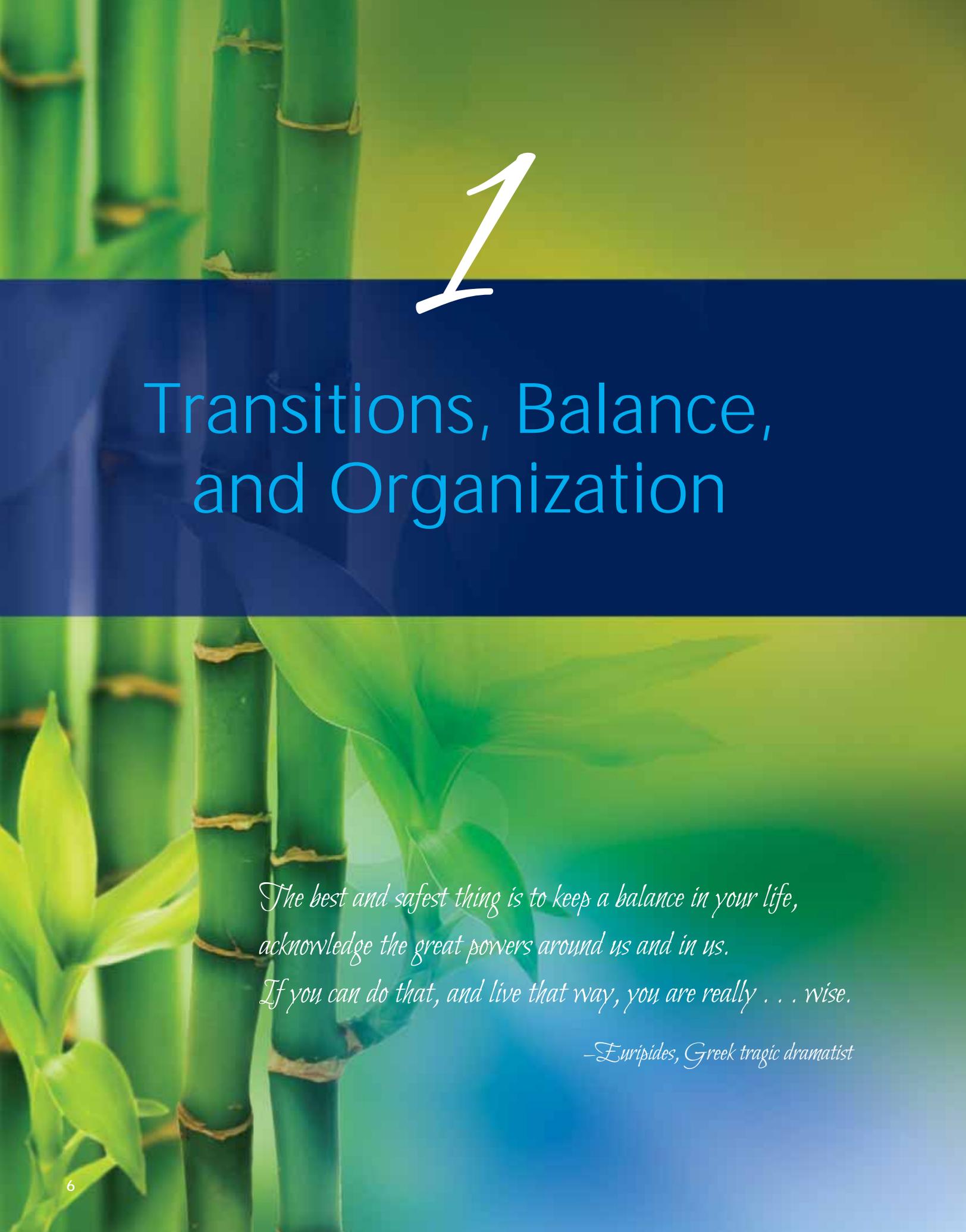
- I will not have the usual people to depend on. I will be in a different environment with a different lifestyle. I will have some friends that will be there with me and I know I can always call home to my parents, grandparents, even my youth minister or priest. I can go to counselors and academic advisors with problems. But, it is truly up to me to take advantage of this opportunity I have and do something with it.
- I have to have the right attitude. Neither my parents, professors, nor anyone else can do it for me. It is ultimately up to me to succeed. It is going to be difficult to keep my mind set on this. I have to look at the big picture and remember it is all worth it in the end.
- It will be difficult making the decision to study instead of going to a game or party. It will be difficult when a friend knocks on my door or calls my

phone to invite me to do something else rather than write an essay, study, or complete an assignment. Especially if it is last minute. There will be less of a temptation to do this if I have all my work done ahead of time. That will allow me to go to the football games with my friends. I have to keep the mindset that no one will be doing this for me and grades are the reason I am here in the first place.

These are the types of decisions I am going to have to make. It is up to me to choose the ones that are right and give me the best opportunities to succeed and survive while attending college.

## Challenges and Choices

1. Eric says, "I am moving away from my home, my family, and my life that I have always known." Whether you are moving across the country or driving to the other side of town, a support group will be an important resource for you to have. These are people who will encourage you, guide you, and listen to you as you move toward your dreams. Who is your support group—and how do you plan on staying in contact with these people?
2. Eric is setting priorities when he talks about getting his work done ahead of time so that he can do things with friends. How are you prioritizing your days so that you can complete your school assignments *and* have time for recreation?
3. In addition to concentrating on his schoolwork, Eric also reminds us that we must pay attention to all of our life dimensions. What have you been doing since the beginning of the school term to help you with your overall well-being and health?



1

# Transitions, Balance, and Organization

*The best and safest thing is to keep a balance in your life,  
acknowledge the great powers around us and in us.*

*If you can do that, and live that way, you are really . . . wise.*

*-Euripides, Greek tragic dramatist*

## CHAPTER *Objectives*

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Keeping the following objectives in mind will make this chapter more meaningful:

**Explain** two ways a college education will be valuable to you.

**Describe** two college transition issues that you have already experienced or you think you will have to experience before the end of this term.

**Provide** two examples of how knowledge of your life dimensions will help you be successful in school and balanced in your personal life.

**Explain** two examples of how honest, responsible, and respectful actions have improved your well-being since you have been on campus.

**Identify** two organizational strategies you can use immediately that will help you achieve academic success.



## Introduction

You have made it! You have purchased your books and hold the class schedule in your hand. With confidence from your prior experiences—and, yes, perhaps a bit of anxiety—you have arrived for the first week of classes. Your road to this point may have been short, leading directly from high school graduation to the college campus. Or perhaps the road first carried you through significant life events such as marriage, children, military service, or a stint in the workforce. Whatever the route, you are here and ready for a fascinating and challenging new stage of life.

Regardless of your personal history, your life experiences can serve you well in college. Reflect and draw on those skills as you tackle the new challenges in front of you and discover how much you have to offer yourself and those around you.

The Marva Collins quote introducing Part One reminds all of us that success in any endeavor involves work on our part. The question “What are you doing to get what you want?” reminds us that we have to work to reach our dreams. Success is a journey that requires dedication. Obviously, students do not purposefully start their days saying, “I will look for ways to be disorganized. I want to be unhealthy and unhappy.” But even students who think they know what to do to be successful may make ill-advised choices that create frustration and difficulties.

*Choices for College Success* will demonstrate how organized action on your part will help you achieve academic success, create a healthy and balanced life, and reach your dreams. In short, this is a book that will help you get what you want from school and life.



## Organizing Your Thoughts

- **Transitions.** A **transition** is a change that occurs as you move from one phase of your life to another. Enrolling in college is a major transition. Each school term will introduce you to new instructors, course work, and classmates. It will be exciting and, at times, anxiety producing. Your school offers many resources to help students get the most from their college experiences. However, before you can identify the correct resources, it will be helpful to ask yourself two questions: “What do you want from school?” and “What are you willing to do to get what you want?”
- **Balance.** How you handle the transitions in front of you will have an impact on your health and well-being. The reverse also is true. The level of your health and well-being will have an impact on how you handle your college experiences. Do you show respect for yourself by caring for your mind, body, and spirit? Do your priorities reflect honesty, fairness, and trustworthiness?
- **Organization.** College life offers a great deal of freedom of choice and unstructured time. The successful student understands she must use this unstructured time for positive results. Assignments, exams, group projects, social engagements,



## Reflection

What do you do to maintain a healthy balance in your life?

and personal responsibilities will all compete for your time. How effectively you schedule your time will have an impact on your academic success and your stress level. And organization goes beyond keeping a calendar. Do you have a designated area (space) where you can study? Have you organized your finances so that you will be able to support yourself through the semester—and beyond?

## P RE-ASSESSMENT

### What can you already do that will help you get what you want?

Read the items that follow and place a check mark in front of each skill you already possess (or have at least practiced in the past).

**1. Right now, I can**

- ..... Clearly explain my reasons for attending college.
- ..... Focus my energies so that I can accomplish goals (such as participating on an athletic team, playing in a band, or applying for college admission).
- ..... Organize my day so that I can accomplish four or five tasks.
- ..... Meet a deadline (such as paying a bill, filing taxes, completing a college application, or registering for classes).
- ..... Prioritize a series of tasks so that I concentrate on the important issues in my life.
- ..... Get along with different types of people.
- ..... Assist group members to accomplish an assigned task.
- ..... Sleep an appropriate number of hours so that I feel rested when I awake each morning.
- ..... Exercise my body regularly.
- ..... Responsibly manage my income and spending.
- ..... Others: What other skills do I have that will help me in college?  
List them here.

.....  
.....

**2. Now, carefully examine the items that you checked. What does this inventory tell you about skills you already possess?**

.....  
.....

**3. Based on your answers, in which areas do you need to improve?**

.....  
.....

# The Value of a College Education



There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self.

—Aldous Huxley, author

*By the time you complete reading this section, you will be able to explain two ways a college education will be valuable to you.*

A college education represents a huge investment of time, money, and emotion. When you made the choice to enroll in school, you sacrificed something. To be here, you have given up the opportunity to be somewhere else or do something else with your precious resources. Innumerable sources tout the “value of a college education.” A recent Google search for this phrase found more than 33,700,000 sites! A few have been referenced in this section for your continued reading.

Economists frequently refer to the concept of **opportunity costs**. Each time you make a choice to do one thing, you eliminate, or at the very least, postpone another option. For instance, if a student decides to drop out of high school so that he can get a job, earn money, and buy a car, the opportunity cost of buying the car is the loss (or postponement) of his high school graduation.

Likewise, if a student decides to skip an evening with her friends so that she can study for a test, the opportunity cost of studying for the test is the lost time with her friends. If you decide to work additional hours at your off-campus job, you sacrifice time with your family and studies. For everything we do, there is a cost of some sort. It is not always directly related to dollars and cents—but something is gained and something is lost.

Students sitting in class or completing a homework assignment could have chosen to earn money in the workforce. The amount of money that they are *not* making because they are in school is an opportunity cost. If a student could be earning \$20,000 a year, and he stays in college for four years, his opportunity cost equates to \$80,000—the amount of money he could have earned in that same period of time. Add in the direct expenses of education—tuition, books, transportation, room, board, fees—and the cost to attend college increases considerably.<sup>1</sup>

With those kinds of numbers to consider, why do people decide to attend college? One explanation is that the value of a college education is greater in the long term. Whenever you feel emotionally drained, or may be thinking of giving up on college, consider that the opportunity cost of a college education is an investment in you. What you are doing now will help you get what you want in the future.

**TABLE 1.1** Income Differential According to Level of Education

	Less than a high school diploma	High school diploma	Community college degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate degree
Mean income per year*	\$ 20,873	\$ 31,071	\$ 34,650	\$ 56,788	\$ 82,320
Income earned in 30 years	\$ 626,190	\$ 932,130	\$ 1,039,500	\$ 1,703,640	\$ 2,469,600

\*Does not calculate inflation.

Source: "Mean Earnings of Workers 18 Years and Over, by Educational Attainment, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex: 1976 to 2006," U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey (noninstitutionalized population, excluding members of the armed forces living in barracks)*, March 15, 2007, [www.census.gov/population/socdemo/education/cps2007/tabA-3.xls](http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/education/cps2007/tabA-3.xls) (accessed February 17, 2009).

## Dollars and Cents

Consider the opportunity costs of *not* pursuing a college degree. According to the *U.S. Census Bureau News*:

Workers with a bachelor's degree earn an average of \$51,206 a year, while those with a high school diploma earn \$27,915. Workers with an advanced degree make an average of \$74,602, and those without a high school diploma average \$18,734.<sup>2</sup>

Another state study reports that a community college education equates to \$21,000 per year more in income compared to not having a degree.<sup>3</sup> Even as income figures change from year to year, the positive relationship between years of schooling and potential income remains. Do the math (see Table 1.1). If the "accumulated earnings" (the amount that would be earned over the career span of a worker) are considered, the numbers are staggering. A person with a college degree can expect to earn at least *\$1 million* more than someone without a degree. Calculate the additional value of graduate degrees, and the money differential continues to widen.<sup>4</sup>

## Beyond Dollars and Cents

A college education has value beyond your savings account. A liberal arts education, for example, provides a broad base of knowledge to prepare you for many types of jobs. It exposes you to differing viewpoints, and it helps you critically analyze material. Higher education provides advanced knowledge of history, politics, and culture. You discuss issues with like-minded individuals as well as debate issues with those who hold opposing beliefs. A college education allows you to broaden your knowledge base, reaffirm your beliefs, and, at times, change your positions.

The value of a college education *is* dollars and cents—but it is so much more.



# Choices

## PRIORITIES

### What do you want from college—and what can you do to get what you want?

*A note to the student: You will find these Choices activities throughout the book. Use these as journaling exercises to help you reflect on your values and personal choices. Please take your time. In other words, slow down and think. In this way, you will help yourself to think about what you are doing with different aspects of your life—and evaluate what you still need to do to stay balanced and healthy while moving toward your dreams.*

Students enroll in college for a variety of reasons.

- Advance in a current job
- Develop a sense of independence
- Earn a lot of money
- Explore areas of interest
- Find a job
- Fulfill a lifetime dream
- Train for a skill
- Learn about the world
- Make a better life for family and self
- Reach specific goals
- Participate in intellectual discussions
- Play college-level athletics
- Socialize with peers

Consider what you want from college and reflect on why you have decided to spend your time and money in college at this point in your life.

List the top three reasons you came to college. That is, what do you want from college?

.....

.....

.....

For each of the three items you listed, what action (beyond enrolling in college) can you take right now that will help you get what you want?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Key Transitional Issues Facing Students



The best performance improvement is the transition from the nonworking state to the working state.

—Author unknown

*By the time you complete reading this section, you will be able to describe two college transition issues that you have already experienced or you think you will have to experience before the end of this term.*

People experience change when they begin their first job, when they move into their first apartment, or when they become involved in their first serious relationship. Life brings change—transitions from one place to another.

At times, change can cause fear of the unknown. It also can be quite energizing as it brings elements of excitement and vitality to your life. Change, therefore, can bring life. Change is invigorating and passion producing.

Where you are now physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially is different from where you were at this time last year. Whether you are a full-time student fresh from high school or a part-timer taking classes after work a couple of nights a week, your new surroundings—the campus, the classrooms, the diverse mix of students and professors—may look and feel different compared to what you are used to in your life.

As you face new challenges, you may be anxious about stepping outside of your comfort zone. Be willing to use your old skills in new situations—adjust and change as needed—but never forget that you have a great deal of experience on which to draw. For instance, you can use note-taking skills from previous classes while also experimenting with new strategies. Perhaps your college instructors post notes or Power-Point slides online. If they do, find them to use for a guide. You will need many resources as you face some of the more common transitional challenges for college students.

### **Physical Transitions: Diet, Exercise, and Stress Release**

You may have heard of the “freshman 15.” It refers to the fifteen pounds students reportedly gain in their first year of college. Whether because they consume fatty fast foods, alcohol, or late-night snacks (see Figure 1.1) students often find their waistlines



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**FIGURE 1.1** Do You Monitor What Goes into Your Body?

When it comes to diet, college communities offer a variety of tempting but dangerous choices:

- Alcohol
- Caffeinated drinks
- Fried foods
- Late-night pizza deliveries
- Super-sized meals
- All-you-can-eat buffets
- Fast foods
- Junk or snack foods
- Sugar-filled drinks
- Sweets

expanding. Exercise also may suffer when getting used to a new college routine. For others, increased stress levels might even cause weight loss. Whether you gain, lose, or maintain a healthy weight, the college environment can present temptations that may lead to unhealthy habits—habits that can create challenges for the rest of one’s life. Making the time to balance class expectations and a workout regimen will require discipline on your part.

### Intellectual Transitions: Expanding Your Knowledge Base

Many nonacademic reasons can lead students to drop out (leave with no plans to return to college) or stop out (leave with plans to return in the near future) of college. Finances, time factors, family concerns, and emotional issues can cause a student to withdraw from school.<sup>5</sup>

Having said that, college success *will* depend on how well you do in the classroom. Even with appropriate finances, time, and family support, you will need to perform academically if you expect to remain in college. Your transcript will reflect your performance on assignments, group projects, exams, and class discussions.

For now, use the following basic academic organizational checklist.

- Read each class syllabus carefully (and regularly) and transfer due dates to your calendar, digital planner, or cell phone calendar.
- Come prepared each class to ask appropriate questions and participate in discussions.
- Find and use the campus library.
- Complete all assignments on time. Put due dates on a calendar (paper or electronic).
- Visit your professors during office time for clarification of course material and expectations. Begin to build a positive relationship with each instructor.
- Review your class notes immediately after each class. You can do this on your own or as part of a study group.
- Be curious! Ask questions; seek answers.

### Emotional Transitions: Managing the Freedom and Responsibility of College

College life provides a great deal of personal independence but also requires a corresponding level of emotional responsibility. Because no one will constantly be

watching over you, you will need self-discipline and emotional intelligence to fulfill your obligations. The emotionally mature (or emotionally intelligent) person is aware of her emotions, can manage her emotions, understands the emotions of others, and can have an “adult” relationship with another person.<sup>6</sup>

As stated earlier, college life places demands on your time. You must attend classes, read extensive assignments, complete research projects, involve yourself in lab work, and possibly engage in community service activities. Additionally, you may have to balance family, work, and cocurricular responsibilities. At times, it may seem as though there are not enough hours in the day. For now let us examine the responsibility you accepted when you walked on campus.

College is different from high school, family life, and the world of work. Even though rules and procedures vary from college to college and from instructor to instructor, the responsibility for getting to class and completing assignments rests squarely on the student’s shoulders. If you miss an 8:00 a.m. psychology class every Monday, there is a better-than-average chance that no one on the campus will come looking for you. You will have to make it to the class or scramble to get the notes and instructions you may have missed.

Perhaps you are taking only one course, slipping away during your lunch break at work to take an English class. If your boss requires you to take a different lunch shift and it interferes with your schooling, it will be your responsibility—not your instructor’s—to handle the conflict. There will not be a counselor or some other person to intervene on your behalf. Moreover, when it comes to absences, you will encounter instructors who will not make a distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. Their view holds that a missed day of class participation is a *missed* day—there is no way to make that up. The class discussion occurred and cannot be repeated. Also, remember that the dynamics of the class will change without your presence. Your input in class discussions will add an important dimension to class discussions.

Family life also will have an impact on how a student adjusts in college. Consider the different circumstances of the following students.

- *Student 1.* Coming from a family where rigidly enforced rules were common, this student can go in a couple of directions. On the one hand, always having had the rules explicitly stated and enforced, he may not know what to do in college because no one is directing his every move; he is not used to making his own decisions. On the other hand, once away from the strict family rules, he might “go wild” with his newfound independence.
- *Student 2.* This student has enjoyed more freedom than Student 1, but with somebody always available to help in times of difficulty. For instance, her parents were constantly on the phone to the high school guidance counselor, seeking assignment extensions. It comes as quite a shock when she enters college and must live with the consequences of her actions that cannot be “fixed” by someone calling the school.<sup>7</sup>
- *Student 3.* Our third student has had a great deal of responsibility placed on him to raise siblings, care for an elderly relative, or work to help support the family. Such responsibilities may continue during college. He will still be accountable for his home-based duties while finding time to tackle the expectations of college. This overly responsible student may have a stressful time balancing everything he must do.

## Social Transitions: A Balancing Act

You might be actively involved in cocurricular activities like student government or intramural sports. Alternatively, you may only be on campus a short time each day, leaving immediately after class in order to go home or to work. The time you spend with family and friends may need to be adjusted so you can meet your academic obligations. You might find the following general strategies helpful now:

- On average, budget two hours of study time for each hour spent in a class.
- Commit to work and cocurricular activities once you have scheduled appropriate time for class, study, and sleep.
- Consider how you will maintain your health.
- Be sure to schedule time for physical, emotional, and social renewal.

How you use time is your *choice*.

**Developing Supportive Relationships.** A successful transition to college can be enhanced by the right people—and there are many on campus waiting to help you. To name all of the key people on campus would require its own chapter. Moreover, a key person to one student might not be as important to another student. For instance, a student needing financial assistance (grants, scholarships, or an on-campus job) may find the financial aid office initially to be the most important stop on campus. An athlete might find his coach to be the key contact.

Educators often mention the same “top three people to know” for a student to have an increased chance of college success:

**C**lassmate  
**A**dvisor or counselor  
**P**rofessors

Note that the first letter of each name forms the acronym CAP. When you follow the **CAP principle**, these three key people can help you connect with the physical campus, adjust to the college experience, and persist to graduation. In fact, do not settle for knowing just one of each; get to know as many as you possibly can. Make it a goal, for instance, to visit the office of each of your professors each semester.

## Balance and Success



Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

—Robert Fulghum, author

*By the time you complete reading this section, you will be able to provide two examples of how knowledge of your life dimensions will help you be successful in school and balanced in your personal life.*

Think of **balance** as being a condition of contentment in which you feel intellectually alert, emotionally stable, and physically strong. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle will help you adapt and thrive in your new environment. For that reason, the chapters of this book will address the major issues of your school experience with an emphasis on your personal well-being.

## Dimensions of Wellness

Dr. Bill Hettler, cofounder of the National Wellness Institute (NWI), developed the Six Dimensional Wellness Model.<sup>8</sup> This very simple yet powerful model reminds us that a balanced life needs more than three good meals and a restful night's sleep. Each of the six **dimensions of wellness** has an impact on the other five. According to the NWI, no single category operates by itself; all six—social, occupational, spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional—affect each other for a balanced or unbalanced life.

The transitions we reviewed previously match up with Hettler's dimensions. That means successfully navigating each of the transitions you face is critical not only to your success in college but also to your overall sense of balance in life. And your health and well-being will have an impact on how well you handle each transition you encounter. As you review each category in Table 1.2, think how your daily activities and lifestyle measure up to each description.

**TABLE 1.2** Dimensions of Wellness

Dimension	Description of a "balanced person"
Physical	You maintain a healthy lifestyle (diet, rest, exercise, strength, and muscle flexibility). You are able to recognize and appropriately respond to warning signs of ill health.
Intellectual	You actively seek to expand your knowledge base and skill base and to develop your creativity and critical thinking skills.
Emotional	You have the ability to manage and express emotions appropriately and handle stress effectively.
Social	You maintain positive relationships with people around you and build a support network of family, friends, classmates, and coworkers. You have an awareness of your impact on society and the environment—and their impact on you.
Occupational	You are involved in a profession or course of study that is personally satisfying. You learn new skills and develop career-oriented goals.
Spiritual	You stress the importance of finding your life's purpose by reflecting (meditating, praying) on the purpose of life, and then you act on your beliefs and values to reinforce your discovered purpose. You acknowledge and understand that "you are connected to the universe . . . [and] woven into the fabric of this universe."*

\*Robert M. Sherfield, *The Everything Self-Esteem Book* (Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2004), 94.

Source: Adapted from "The Six Dimensional Wellness Model," National Wellness Institute, [www.nationalwellness.org/index.php?id\\_tier=2&id\\_c=25](http://www.nationalwellness.org/index.php?id_tier=2&id_c=25) (accessed October 28, 2008).



**FIGURE 1.2**  
Tuning Your Life-Strings

One way to think of this model is to visualize a six-string guitar (Figure 1.2). The guitar (you) will be able to make harmonious music with properly tuned strings (life dimensions). If one of the six strings falls out of tune or breaks, the guitar will still play but the song will not be as pleasing. As more strings weaken or break from undue stress, the guitar loses its ability to play music. The remaining strings will not be able to carry the tune, possibly leading to the total collapse of the guitar (mind, body, spirit).

Whatever metaphor or image you use, it may help to remember that each life dimension is intimately related to your growth as an individual. By taking notice and care of each dimension of your life, you will take important steps toward turning your dreams into realities. If ignored, however, any one of the dimensions can have a detrimental effect on the others. For instance, if you consistently operate

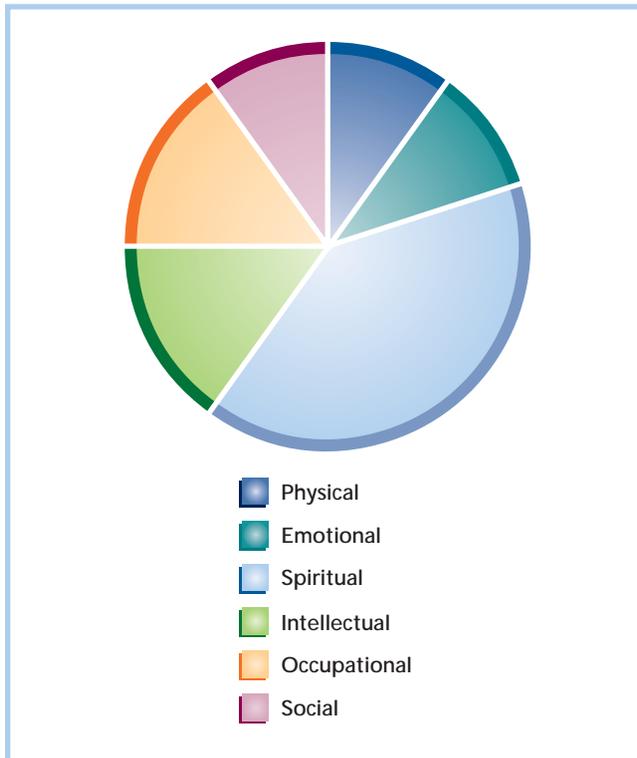
on too little sleep, eat less than nutritious food, associate with negative people, or depend on the “help” of drugs and alcohol to cope with life’s challenges, your life dimensions will eventually weaken. The choices you make have consequences.

Early in the college experience, students can experience any number of stressors that will weaken one or more of their life dimensions. If this happens to you, draw on your experiences, college resources, and the healthy practices you already follow to strengthen each dimension in your life. Strategies to help balance your new load will help you maintain good health. Care for your life dimensions, and your instrument will continue to play rich music.

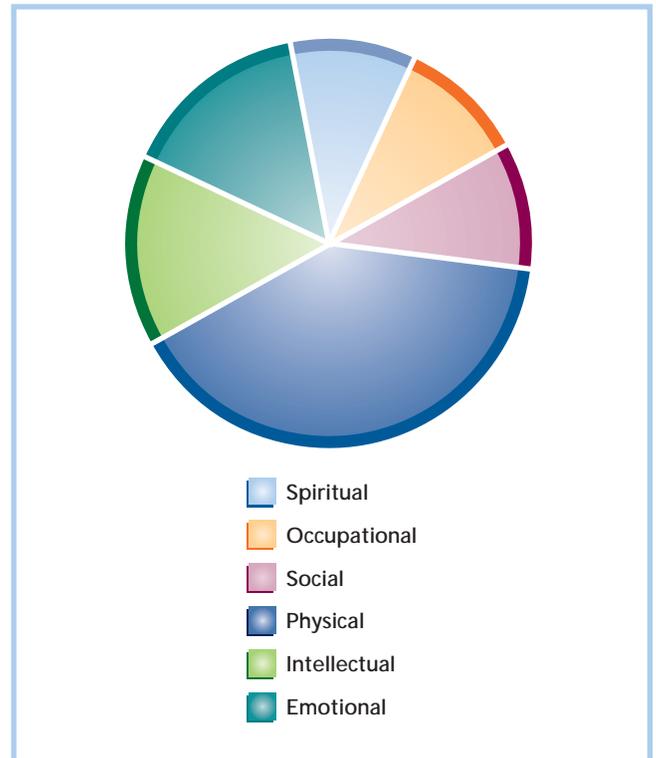
### **Balance Is Not Necessarily “Even”**

When thinking of the concept *balance*, you may envision something with equal parts. For instance, a balanced wheel might have six evenly spaced spokes. Or if you have two book bags, you would consider them balanced if they each weighed the same. That thinking does not necessarily hold true when examining your life dimensions.

One of your dimensions probably looms as the most significant in your life. It is the strongest or the one that serves as the “rock”—the foundation, the base—for your life. For some people, the spiritual dimension is their guiding light (Figure 1.3). In times, when their entire world seems to be crumbling around them, they can draw on their spiritual strength to maintain balance and safely weather the turbulence. On the other hand, your “life dimension chart” may look more like Figure 1.4 than Figure 1.3. The physical dimension may be the part of life that provides



**FIGURE 1.3**  
Life Dimensions with a Spiritual Base



**FIGURE 1.4**  
Life Dimensions with a Physical Base

a strong foundation. In times of stress, you might find that physical exercise, yoga practice, or a cup of green tea helps you stay calm.

Whatever dimension is your strength may well overshadow all the other dimensions of your life. Moreover, your “base” dimension might very well change over the course of your semester—and life.

### How Will This Help Me Get What I Want?

Some people may raise an eyebrow when reading about life dimensions. For some students their “reality” may be nothing more than finding a parking spot and getting to class on time. For others, “fitting in” with a new roommate, earning money for living expenses, or finding child care may be the pressing issues.



## Choices

### PERSONAL WELL-BEING

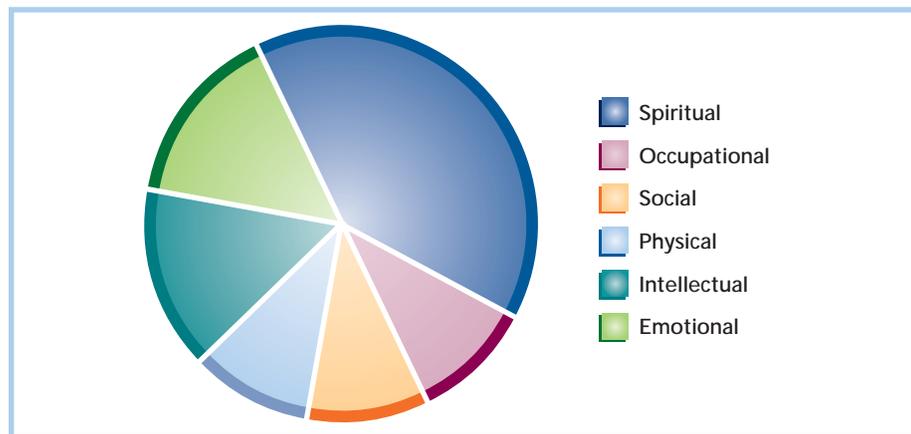
What does this mean for you and your academic success?

1. Reread the descriptions in Table 1.2 and then rank (place in order of importance) each dimension according to its strength in your life. For number 1, write the name of the life dimension that you consider the strongest in your

life. For the purpose of this activity, consider “strongest” to mean that which helps you maintain health and balance (a feeling of wellness and stability) in your life. In the second column, explain how you think the dimension will help you be successful in school. Then next to item 2 write the dimension that is the second strongest in your life, and so on for the rest of the items.

Life dimension: Your ranking	Life dimension: Its impact on your academic success
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

- Using Figures 1.3 and 1.4 as guides, draw and label *your* life dimensions below according to the relative strength of each in your life. If the blank pie chart does not work for you, draw your own.



## Balance and Integrity



The time is always right to do what is right.  
—Martin Luther King, civil rights leader

*By the time you complete reading this section, you will be able to explain two examples of how honest, responsible, and respectful actions have improved your well-being since you have been on campus.*

Often, architecture will be described in terms of structural integrity. Such a description indicates to what extent the structure is doing what it is *supposed* to do. A bridge that has structural integrity does what it was built to do—provide for safe transportation from one point to another. Likewise, a tall office building that safely houses its occupants has structural integrity.

A similar description applies to people. Our beliefs and values are at the center of our moral code. When they guide us—motivate us—to act with integrity, to do what is right and avoid what violates our code, then we do what we are supposed to do.

### Honesty, Responsibility, and Respect

In its broadest sense, **integrity** means conducting oneself in an honest, responsible, and respectful fashion. If you say you will do something, you do it. When you do something wrong, you admit your errors. Your actions show respect for yourself as well as for those around you. Living a life of integrity is more than a series of strategies and techniques; it requires a specific mindset and value structure to do what is right for you and for others. There are no shortcuts or cram courses on how to be a person of integrity. You do not practice integrity for part of the day; it is woven into your life.

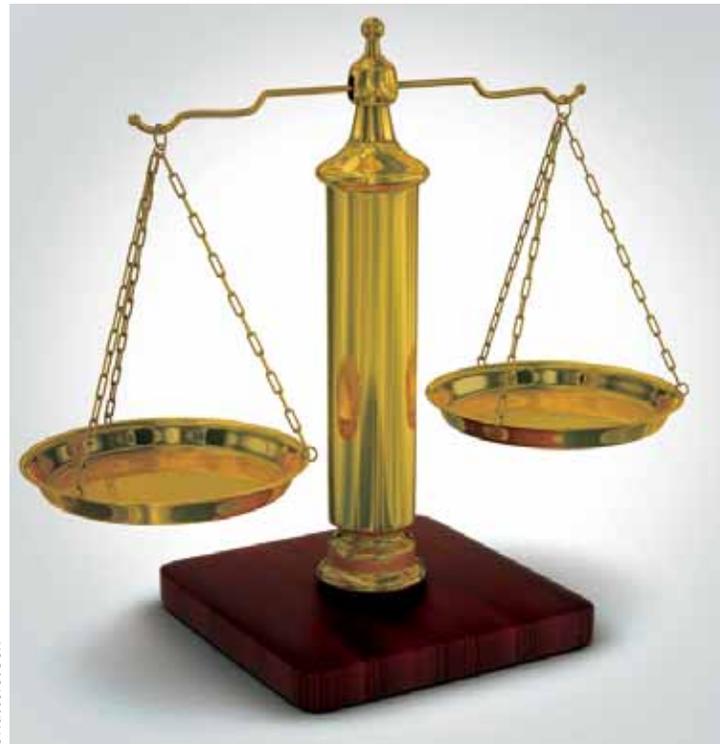
The manner in which you take care, or neglect, the dimensions of your life has an impact on your health and well-being. In reality, when you develop and practice a healthy lifestyle, you act with integrity. That is, each of your six life dimensions becomes stronger when you act honestly, responsibly, and respectfully within each dimension. Table 1.3 charts this relationship between integrity and well-being.

### Academic Integrity

The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) defines **academic integrity** as “a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action.”<sup>9</sup> According to the CAI:<sup>10</sup>

- *Honesty* is required in the classroom, the library, or on the playing field; is required of students and faculty; is a key component of “lifelong integrity.”
- *Trust* is fostered by honest relationships; trust fosters collaboration and eliminates the fear of intellectual theft.
- *Fairness* requires that clear standards are present and equally enforced.
- *Respect* includes listening to other points of view, contributing to discussions, and properly citing sources of ideas and words.
- *Responsibility* demands honesty in one’s actions and “discouraging and/or preventing dishonesty by others.”

An educational community cannot long exist if these fundamental values are violated.



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**TABLE 1.3** Connection Between Integrity and the Dimensions of Well-Being

Dimension	Connection to your integrity
Physical	You treat your body with respect. You follow a responsible diet and exercise regimen.
Intellectual	You do not engage in acts of academic dishonesty. You continuously feed your mind with responsible, thought-provoking material. You respectfully listen to and discuss differing points of view.
Emotional	You find healthy and responsible ways in which to handle stressful situations. You are respectful of your emotional needs as well as the needs of those around you. You understand how your emotional well-being affects other dimensions of your life.
Social	You respectfully enter—and maintain—relationships. You speak with honesty when talking with or about other people. You do not put yourself or another person in foolishly risky situations.
Occupational	On the job (or in the classroom) you take care of your responsibilities in an honest fashion. You are honest with yourself about why you do (or will do) what you do for work. You do not use others' resources (without their permission) for your gain.
Spiritual	You respectfully attempt to understand differing spiritual beliefs. You seek to live your life according to a higher purpose.



## Choices

### PRIORITIES

#### Personal reflection about integrity

The following was reported by a newspaper.<sup>11</sup>

“I don’t know that it’s legal, but we do a lot of things in the Legislature that are not legal,” [the Senate Minority Leader] . . . said. “We violate different aspects of the [state] Constitution from time to time. And it’s not a violation until it’s challenged.”

Write your reaction to this quote. Do you agree that a violation of a standard is not a violation if the person is not challenged about it? How does this connect to the topic of integrity?

.....

.....

## Organizing for Balance and Success



The way we spend our days is the way we spend our lives.

—Anne Dillard, author

*By the time you complete reading this section, you will be able to identify two organizational strategies you can use immediately that will help you achieve academic success.*

### The Myth of Time Management

When you hear the word *organization*, what comes to mind? Perhaps you think about wasting time, spending time, finding time, stealing time, and needing more time. Or maybe you immediately think of calendars, PDAs, procrastination, and time management.

A recent Bing.com search for “time management” brought up approximately 559,000,000 hits. The concept is the subject of books, videos, seminars, and class discussions. With so much attention, it is difficult to believe that the topic is a myth.

That’s right; you read that correctly. *Time management is a myth.* It cannot be done. Period. You can manage your finances. You can manage the amount of food you eat or your level of exercise. You even can manage relationships. But you cannot manage time. Consider the following:

- Everyone has the same number of hours in a week (168).
- Whether you are rich or poor, a student or a corporate executive, you cannot increase the number of hours. You cannot move some to next week, and you cannot borrow any from last week. You cannot manage to have more hours than the person next to you.
- Each hour is sixty minutes long. You cannot speed it up; you cannot slow it down. You cannot manage to stretch that hour.
- Regardless of what you do (or anyone does), at the beginning of each day, we all have the same twenty-four hours with which to work.

Rather than trying to do something you cannot—manage time—consider managing your priorities. Because priorities are the elements that are important in your life (the aspects that help you get what you want), it makes more sense to practice **priority management**. When you do this, you are putting the important things first on your daily calendar. When you manage your priorities, you will



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decrease your stress—and improve the balance and health in your life.<sup>12</sup> Effective priority management will make life easier. It really is an essential life skill.<sup>13</sup>

## Habits

Once a day, an hour, or a minute goes by, we can never get it back. It is gone forever. If we want to use time effectively, we have to build good habits. This book will help you examine how you can use and prioritize your time to improve the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social areas of life while helping yourself succeed in your studies. In addition, you will learn how building habits of organization now (or improving on the effective ones you already have) will have a positive impact on your life outside of college. If you can concentrate on your priorities, you will have a better chance to master your life.

A **habit** is something we repeat with such frequency that it becomes an involuntary act. It seems as though we cannot help but do it. Reflect on Anne Dillard’s quote: “The way we spend our days is the way we spend our lives.” If each day finds you mindlessly drifting from one activity to the other, it will be difficult to build a life with disciplined habits. Waste time on a regular basis and it will become a habit—a bad habit. Effective organization requires thought and practice—and good habits. It is a skill that, when mastered, can improve many other aspects of your life.

Organization, however, involves more than time. For instance, many students drop out of college because they find it difficult to use their time *and* their financial resources effectively. Whether they run out of time or run out of cash, the shortfall has a negative impact on their continued enrollment.

## Disorder

Disorganization can create stress, which in turn can create a host of problems. For instance, the disorganized student can experience any or all of the following:

- Clutter
- Debt
- Discouragement
- Illness
- Loss of financial aid
- Lost opportunities
- Lowered GPA
- Missed assignments
- Missed exams and quizzes
- Missed interviews or appointments
- Relationship difficulties
- Reputation as being undependable
- Stress
- Suspension from school
- Tardiness to class

## Order

Now look at how organization can positively affect your life:

- Financial responsibility
- Goal attainment
- Health
- Increased chances of landing the job you want
- Greater likelihood of securing and maintaining financial aid
- Better GPA
- Improved opportunities
- Meaningful relationships

- Peace and calm
- Regular punctuality
- Reputation as being dependable
- Success on exams and quizzes
- Smooth progress in academic programs
- Timely completion of assignments

On which person—the disorganized and chaotic or organized and orderly—would you want to depend? Sound organization will weave its way throughout your life by enabling a positive work ethic and helping you develop healthy habits of balance and wellness. Each chapter in this book will address a specific topic that will help you be successful in academics and life in general. The foundation for each of these topics is organization.

### What Can You Do Now to Get Started?

Perhaps you need information right now to help you with your studies—you cannot wait until the appropriate chapter comes along in this book. Consider the organizational tips in Table 1.4.

**TABLE 1.4** Organization Is the Foundation

If you want to . . .	Then . . .
Remember all important due dates (assignments, payment deadlines)	Review all your syllabi now and place the assignment due dates on a calendar.
Reach your educational dreams	Establish clear goals and take action each day to move closer to your goals.
Earn “respectable” grades—and eventually make the dean’s list	Create a study schedule now that blocks out at least two hours a week for every hour spent in the classroom.
Finish course work quickly and with quality results	Sign up for a class schedule that fits your lifestyle.
Work or play sports or join the band	Make a list of all your obligations (work, family, cocurricular activities)—and determine how much quality time you have for class. Do not overextend yourself.
Finish lengthy reading assignments—and remember what you have read	For each reading assignment, read a few pages a night rather than waiting and wading through the entire chapter the night before it is due.
Better understand classroom lectures	Ask whether your professor posts outlines or PowerPoint slides online for student use.
Understand your notes	Set up a schedule so that you can review your notes nightly. Jot down any questions you might have and ask your instructor the next class session.
Get notes for the class sessions you miss.	Early in the semester identify a study partner and consider exchanging phone numbers or e-mail addresses.
Perform as well as possible on all of your exams	Develop a study schedule now so that you can begin a nightly review rather than waiting for a night-before cram session. You might want to explore the possibility of joining a study group.
Be healthy	Schedule a specific amount of time each day for healthy physical activity and appropriate sleep each night.



# Choices

## PERSONAL WELL-BEING

### Student issues and life's dimensions

For each student situation listed, indicate which life dimensions have been affected. Briefly explain how the student can organize and prioritize to either retain or regain balance in his or her life. The first one has been completed for you.

The situation	Which life dimensions might be either in balance or out of balance?	How can the student better organize and prioritize his or her life?
1. John oversleeps more mornings than not. Consequently, he arrives late for most of his classes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Physical.</i> Either he is not getting enough sleep or he is not a "morning person."</li> <li>• <i>Intellectual.</i> John is missing academic material each class meeting, which may affect his performance on exams and class discussions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Physical.</i> John needs to adjust his sleep schedule. Either he can go to bed earlier or consider later-starting classes.</li> <li>• <i>Intellectual.</i> A study partner may be able to help John with missed class notes and announcements. John can speak with his professor; perhaps he can transfer into a class that starts later in the day.</li> </ul>
2. Jerry just found out that his girlfriend is pregnant with his child.		
3. Mohammad will do volunteer work with an attorney's office to see if this is the kind of work he would really like to do.		

## POST-ASSESSMENT

### Learn it, question it, use it

Use this activity to apply newly acquired information from this chapter to gauge the level of balance and organization in the various dimensions of your life—and how they have helped you make a successful transition to college life.

1. You started this chapter by completing the Pre-Assessment: “What can you *already do* that will help you get what you want?” Please take a moment and review your responses. In particular, reread your response for item 3 (areas in which you need to improve).
2. Reflect on the material you have studied in this chapter and complete the following:
  - a. *What three things have you learned from this chapter that can help you move closer to what you want (academic success; personal balance)?*

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.....

- b. *Why are these things important to you? How do they connect with what you consider to be important?*

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.....  
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- c. *How will you use what you have learned in this chapter to move you closer to what you want (academic success; personal balance)?*

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Building habits of organization and prioritization now (or improving on the effective ones you already have) will have a positive impact on your life inside and outside of college. Think about the connection between personal balance and organization. Each of the dimensions of your life is intimately related to your growth as an individual. Take time to treat your body, mind, and emotional core with

respect. (Together they form a crucial step to help you master your days—and get what you want from life.) By giving attention and care to each dimension, you will take important steps toward turning your dreams into realities.

Before moving on to the next chapter, take a moment to

- Reflect on the value (for you) of attending college. This will help you concentrate on beneficial activities and resources—those that will help you get what you want.
- Reflect on the transitions (physical, intellectual, emotional, and social) you have experienced this semester—and how you have handled them.
- Understand how knowledge of your life dimensions will help you be successful in school and your personal life.
- Consider how you can implement organizational strategies to help you achieve academic success.



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10. The Center for Academic Integrity, 6–10.
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12. Larry Winget examines this approach in his book *Shut Up, Stop Whining, and Get a Life* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2004). See Chapter 22, “You Are Out of Time.”
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