Goals and Expectations

What should you expect from your first year in college – from your instructors, from the university, from your family and friends, and most importantly from yourself? And what about four years from now - what do you anticipate as your future career?

And what of the people around you, what are their expectations of you? Your family has probably made some sacrifices so that you could come to college – do they have any expectations? And your instructors – do they expect anything from you?

Creating a realistic set of expectations and acknowledging and accepting the expectations of others will prepare you to deal with the challenges of college life. Through your expectations you anticipate what lies ahead – allowing you to begin to formulate plans on how to make your expectations happen. Realistic expectations are those you have a good likelihood of making real. They usually stem directly from you. Very often, they take into account a realistic appraisal of yourself, your skills, your motivations, and your commitment to succeed.

Once you have established a set of expectations – you then will begin to organize these into a set of goals. Goals are like ‘signposts’. They signify something you have set out to accomplish. Some goals may appear very far off – for example, being successful at the career you have chosen to pursue – while others seem closer – such as finishing your first semester of college with good grades. Goals that are far off but attainable are called Long-Term Goals. Goals that you can accomplish in a relatively short time frame are called Short-Term Goals. Very often, each long-term goal will include a number of short-term goals. In setting goals:

- Express your goal in a positively worded statement
- Be Precise: state how, when, and where you intend to complete your goal
- Set Performance Goals: base your goal on personal accomplishment (what you are capable of achieving)
- Keep Goals Small: this makes them achievable.

Study Skills

Note-taking, study skills, and test preparation are methods and strategies designed to increase your chances of remembering crucial information in a test situation.

How does memory work? There are two basic types of memory – short-term memory and long-term memory. When you first learn something or have a particular experience your brain stores that information in short-term memory. For a variety of reasons, including the sheer abundance of information we each process daily, short-term memories are soon forgotten. Forgetting for the brain is much easier than remembering.

If you can recall information at a later date, then you know that this information has been placed in long-term memory. The best method for creating a long-term memory is through rehearsal.

Rehearsal involves repeating – such as re-reading information in a text, re-writing class notes, using flash cards to drill yourself on facts, and so on. Through this process you re-familiarize your brain with the information so that it will remember it.

Good learning begins with good class notes that:

- Indicate each main idea,
- Show relationships between main ideas,
- Organize minor ideas and details in support of each main idea,
- Remind you of important dates and events such as tests.

Through readings and lectures you are trying to:

Decide what the Topic of the lecture/reading is
Decide what the Main Ideas related to the topic are
Decide what the Supporting Ideas related to each main idea are
Decide what Examples, if any, are important
Decide what Relationships exist in the information

The questions you should ask are: Who, What, Why, How, and When