Ten Top Tips for Academic Success

1. **Location, location, location...**

   If you're serious about getting work done, find a place that's relatively free of distractions. Establish guidelines with roommates for quiet times or use the libraries, study rooms, or empty classrooms.

2. **Make It a Habit: Work Every Day**

   Avoid all-night cram sessions in which you (unsuccessfully) try to understand and retain large amounts of information. Spend time on your studies each day, and you can stay on top of your courses and still have time for fun. Use small blocks of time - you'll be amazed by what you can get done between classes.

3. **Help Exists! Seek It Out and Improve Your Grades**

   Whether you're an 'A' student or a 'D' student, you can strengthen your learning skills. Check out your university's learning skills services. Get to know your professors and tutorial assistants. Find out if your courses have study guides and help centres. Check to see if there's a website for your textbook. It's your academic career - make the most of it.

4. **Write It Down**

   Remember important dates. It's up to you to remember due dates for assignments and test dates. A day planner is great for organizing your life. A wall calendar of important dates is also a good idea.

5. **Get Energized - Eat, Exercise, Sleep**

   Not understanding? Trouble remembering? Comprehension and memory are affected by stress and fatigue. When you're hungry,

tense, or tired your brain can't function at its full potential. It's especially crucial to eat well, exercise, and get adequate sleep during exam periods.

6. **Be a Keener: Go to Class Prepared and Take Good Notes**

   Don't fall into the habit of missing class. Someone else's notes aren't going to be as good as having gone to the lecture yourself. In class, listen for emphasis and examples. Take a thorough set of notes; you'll be thankful at test time. Questions after the lecture? Go to your professor's or tutorial assistant's office hours. It's better to learn as you go than to find yourself not prepared the night before an exam.

7. **Lectures and Textbooks: What's the BIG Picture?**

   Many unsuccessful students see a course as "a lot of stuff to memorize." University learning requires understanding how pieces of information fit together to form a "BIG picture." Use course outlines, tables of content, headings and subheadings to organize the information in each of your courses. Routinely ask yourself, "What's the purpose of this detail?" and "Where does it fit in the big picture?"

8. **Do Something (Anything!) to Remember Key Information**

   Capture your understanding of course material in an active way. Generate examples, create mnemonics, make summary notes, identify key words, highlight textbooks, or add margin notes. Be creative and interested, and you're more likely to be awesome at test time.

9. **Think You'll Remember Key Points? Prove It.**

   No matter how well you understand something, without practice some forgetting will occur. **Before** a test, make sure that you can recall important information from memory. Self-test by recalling information

without looking at notes or textbooks and by doing practice exams if available.

10. **Be Test Smart**

Don't lose marks because of test-writing errors such as misreading a question or running out of time. Think through specific strategies to tackle different types of tests (e.g., multiple-choice). Also, carefully read instructions, budget time to marks, and do less difficult questions first to build confidence.