Comerica Scholars Update: GPA-raising Tips from the Scholars

Three Comerica Scholars were recognized for their achievement during Fall 2006 semester. Two scholars, Sarah Shabazz and Shamiece Graye, earned a GPA of 4.0, while Tameka Addison earned a 3.9. Each of these scholars received, not only bragging rights, but $200.00 gift certificates to Barnes and Noble bookstore funded by the Comerica Charitable Foundation.

You're probably wondering how three freshman adjusting to college life had such a successful semester. I was wondering the same thing and I knew the only way to find out was to ask them.

I asked Tameka Addison if her study habits have changed from high school to college and she responded by saying, "I never studied in high school and I was the valedictorian!" She then went on to explain that here at Wayne, she struggled with her first college psychology exam and decided something had to change.

Addison described the advice she received from the Comerica Scholars project manager, Lisa Dillo, that helped her better understand the course information. Lisa suggested rewriting her notes after class. Ever since applying this technique, Addison described her study habits as improving, adding to her academic success.

"Being disciplined and knowing how to manage my time" is what Shamiece Graye said helped her obtain her 4.0. She discussed procrastination and her decision to reduce it. Graye has the right idea. Recognizing and being willing to work on study skills is a major step in boosting academic success.

Sarah Shabazz, the other 4.0 recipient, discussed what motivated her to do so well in her five courses. Her answer surprised me. She said college "is difficult but you have to be motivated, and my son is my motivation."

It turns out that not only is Sarah a 4.0 student but is also a mother to an 11-month-old son. It can be difficult to take care of ourselves during college and succeed academically. Although a lot of responsibility, her baby served as a strong motivation to stay on course.

Each of these students deserve kudos and has much to be proud of. They have shown us that even though they too have hurdles in life to overcome, school is worth setting as a high priority. Many congratulations to these scholars.

Show Your Textbook Who's Boss

Textbooks are critical to one's success. Many people might say that this is obvious. However, take a second to think about this—have you had a course in which you have absolutely forgone reading the assigned text? How well did you do in the course? Even if you passed a few exams, how much did you learn? Many times students would much rather read a novel than a textbook because novels are more interesting.

Textbooks are not so much uninteresting as maybe just a little challenging. When reading a textbook, keep in mind that it differs drastically from a novel. This difference requires a different mindset. First, prepare to read the textbook. Second, read in an active manner. Third, focus on comprehension, speed will come later. Though Continued on page 2
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time-consuming at first, this approach will get faster with time and be beneficial when taking exams and writing papers.

Prepare to read a textbook. Assemble your studying materials such as highlighters, pens, pencils, and notebooks. Then grab a bottle of water or juice to keep nearby. All of these materials will alleviate a natural tendency to break one’s focus.

Furthermore, develop a mindset for studying. Ask yourself, which level of focus is necessary. If you are reading the chapter for the first time, maybe you want to focus on everything lightly. Then, go over a second time, reading carefully. On the other hand, if you have attended a lecture and are studying portions of your notes, you may want to skim, refreshing yourself and at the same time reinforcing what you have learned.

A good strategy to keep in mind when reading a textbook is first, to ask yourself questions as you read and look for answers. These measures—assembling materials, developing a mindset, asking and answering questions—will help students take ownership of the textbook and improve reading.

Second, read actively. That is, read with a purpose. Ask who, what, where, when, why, and how. Students who ask and attempt to answer questions are more attentive than the passive reader who reads without a purpose and without questioning what is being read. When you find answers to questions that you’ve posed (or questions raised by the text), highlight the information. However, use the highlighter sparingly. You do not want to highlight everything.

Additionally, do not be afraid to write in your text. Marginal comments are great at jogging the memory. After all, we remember information best when we have written it in our own words instead of someone else’s words. This may seem like tedious work that is guaranteed to slow our reading. In reality, reading with a purpose, asking and answering questions, and highlighting key points increases speed because speed increases comprehension.

Third, aim to comprehend, not to read fast. All of us can move our eyes across the page quickly. But reading without comprehension is an outrageous goal. Students’ intentions should be to understand what they are reading. To understand quicker, try summarizing small amounts of information and work your way up to larger amounts. For example, try reducing a paragraph to a sentence. Next, reduce a page to a paragraph. You cannot summarize what you do not comprehend! The more you practice, the faster you will become.

Study Skills Corner: Concentration

By Rosalind Reeves, University Counselor, Academic Success Center, reaves@email.wayne.edu

A problem college students frequently encounter is the inability to concentrate and maintain focus. This especially plagues students when attempting to read textbooks. Countless moments are wasted reading and rereading the same paragraph. But don’t despair! Below are a few tips that can be used to improve focus and expand your concentration.

Find a good study location. In determining where to study, you’d want to take into account noise level, lighting, ventilation, and possible distractions (such as roommates, phones, TV, etc. that can lure you away from your studies.)

Avoid studying in bed, as too much comfort leads to sleepiness. Having a table in front of you is ideal. Trying to read with a book in your lap can cause neck and eye strain.

To fight boredom and burnout, try varying your subjects. Spend forty-five minutes to an hour on one then switch to another. Sometimes the change of pace is all you need.

Take a short break. Get a drink of water. Walk around a little. This can stimulate better blood circulation to your brain. Continued on page 3
Make College Count Toward Your Career

By Nonnette McClean Show, University Counselor, Career Services, n.show@wayne.edu

Career services personnel often hear from employer representatives that while many job candidates look good on paper (i.e., high GPA on transcripts and good work experience on resumes), they seem to lack the ability to "sell" themselves during an interview. In other words, whether they are looking to get that first internship or dream job after graduation, students must be able to communicate how their experiences and accomplishments are relevant to the potential employer's needs.

A strategy for developing effective communication is to apply the STAR concept. STAR is an acronym for Situation-Task-Action-Result. Developed in the 1970s by industrial consultants, STAR assumes that "recent, relevant past behavior is the best predictor of future performance in similar circumstances" (Stinac, 1997).

Some employer representatives listen for the STAR (or similar model) in candidates' response to their questions for the purpose of identifying demonstrated knowledge, skills, and abilities. Students who use the STAR concept to develop their professional language in preparation for interviews will have a decided advantage over those unfamiliar with STAR.

The first step in applying the STAR concept is to identify accomplishments. These are individual actions of which the student is proud. They can range from academics, work-related experience, to personal achievements: a well-written research paper, an individual or team project, completion of a sudoku puzzle.

The second step is to prepare a STAR narrative for each accomplishment by answering these questions (National Video Profiles, Inc. and Washington, 1993):

1. What was the SITUATION as you came into it?
2. How did you ACT upon it?
3. What was the end RESULT?
4. What did you LEARN?

While contemplating these questions, student will want to explain why an accomplishment is important to them, what challenges they overcame to meet it, and how the accomplishment has affected their outlook.

The third step is to review the narrative and highlight the verbs. The purpose is to identify demonstrated skills and abilities. Students may want to distinguish between the skills that were specific to the task, those used in other activities, and those that demonstrated personal characteristics. Savvy student will refer to the narrative in their resumes.

In conclusion, the STAR strategy will not only help students process their learning, it also can help them prepare for the professional world. Awareness of personal skills and abilities is an important aspect of effective communication. Moreover, seeing one's accomplishments from the perspective of a potential employer is great practice for understanding how academic coursework is or is not relevant to the world of work. With a tweak here and a tweak there, students can tailor their accomplishments to the job of their choice.


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Set goals for yourself. Determining attainable goals can give you something to work for. Consider rewarding yourself with a study break or a special treat when you reach your goal.

Don't just start reading. Instead, begin an assignment by previewing the chapter. Skim through looking at chapter and paragraph headings, and at summaries, if they're provided. Doing this will allow you to gather a rough outline of the chapter in your mind.

To avoid "eye glide" (looking at the page without taking in the contents), close the book when you get to the end of each section and see if you can summarize what you have just learned.
ASC's TOP TEN: Things to do at the UGL

by Susan Steiner, Graduate Student Assistant, Academic Success Center

1. **Read.** The Wayne State Library System holds more than 3 million books. Books from other WSU libraries can be ordered and delivered to the David Adamany Undergraduate Library.

2. **Visit the Academic Success Center or Advising.** The offices are located in the back of the library on the first floor. Drop in or visit http://success.wayne.edu/ to make an appointment for reading and study skills assistance, or tutoring. Explore the advising website plus their great information on college success at http://advising.wayne.edu/.

3. **Google it.** Discover search engines like Ask, Alta Vista and Dog Pile. There are 700 computers available throughout the five libraries for student use, including the Computer Lab with extended hours. Students also have access on http://www.lib.wayne.edu/ to databases and online journals with full text articles as well as e-books.

4. **Take a Break.** Go to the Student Lounge on the first floor. Have a cup of coffee or soup and sandwich at the new Delilah’s Café. It is open from nine in the morning to seven at night Mondays through Thursdays and Fridays until six.

5. **Research.** Start and plan your research paper. Begin by browsing the books, journals and articles to select a topic. Also see the new Assignment Planner on the library Web page under ‘for students’.

6. **Compute.** Take one of the many drop-in computer classes offered at the undergraduate library. Topics include Power Point, Blackboard Basics, and Endnote. See the information desk for an updated schedule.

7. **Write a paper.** Get help planning and writing and revising your paper at the Writing Center located in room 2310 on the second floor of the library. (A Student Technology Studio is also scheduled to open next door the Writing Center this year)

8. **Ask a librarian.** Talk with a librarian in person or chat online. To “Ask a Librarian” online at http://www.lib.wayne.edu/help/

9. **The site will also give information to email or call for help with a particular question.**

10. **Study.** Work on your own or in a group study room on the third floor. Study rooms require a certain number of students and are available for three hours at a time. See the information desk for more details.

11. **Read a newspaper.** Find newspapers from around the world online at http://www.lib.wayne.edu/. At Articles and Databases click on “L”. Scroll down to select Library, Press Display. It features newspapers from 55 countries in 34 languages every day.

The David Adamany Undergraduate Library’s hours are 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and noon to 11 p.m. on Sunday. Holiday updates are posted at http://www.lib.wayne.edu/geninfo/units/ugl.php