

# Academic Excellence

Winter 2014 Issue

The Academic Success  
Center's newsletter  
geared toward student  
success

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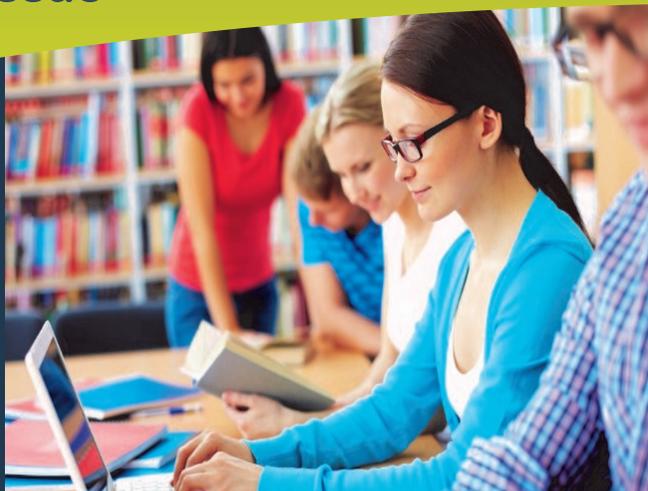
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## Ring in the New Year With Academic Success

By Zeina Ghoul, Graduate Teaching Assistant– Academic Success Center, [al0644@wayne.edu](mailto:al0644@wayne.edu)

For many people, the new year is a time of reflection and resolution. Now is the perfect opportunity to consider if you are living up to your academic potential. Having a good foundation of study skills will allow you to learn more efficiently and reduce stress levels. Ask yourself the following questions and account for where improvements can be made in your academic life.

**Do you set goals?** There are many different types of goals you can set for yourself in college. Maybe it is a certain grade you want to achieve in a course, or to become more active in campus activities. Not only is it important to identify your goals, but it is equally important to know how exactly to accomplish them. For example, each time you sit down to study, have a check-list of all the things you want to finish in detail. This will keep you on track with what needs to be accomplished instead of wasting time trying to remember your assignments. Make sure your goals are realistic and leave room for flexibility.

**Why are you in college and what do you hope to gain from the experience?** Perhaps you want to apply to grad school, or maybe you have your sights set on an internship. What is it that sparked your interest in your chosen major? Keep these motivators in mind and use them for inspiration while studying. Know that each time you attend a lecture or study for an exam you are helping to fulfill your ambitions.

**Are your priorities in check?** Most students have a lot to juggle between school, work, and social life.

It is important to maintain a healthy balance, and prioritizing your schedule is one way to help. Map out your must-do obligations on a daily and weekly basis, putting them in order in terms of importance. Plan your schedule out ahead of time so you don't have too many priorities at once.

**Do you procrastinate and if so, why?** There are many reasons why students procrastinate. Some have perfectionist tendencies, while others focus too much on the "what ifs." Try techniques such as alternating studying for subjects you enjoy with ones you find challenging, breaking large tasks into small ones, and doing school work when your energy levels are at their highest. Finally, have a reward set in place to motivate you to accomplish a task.

**Do you take advantage of the resources on campus?** Wayne State is filled with great resources to assist students. With respect to your academics, the Academic Success Center provides tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills counseling, workshops, math success services and much more! Check out [success.wayne.edu](http://success.wayne.edu) for more information.

If you are experiencing stress or need to talk to someone, WSU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is an excellent resource and can be found online at [caps.wayne.edu](http://caps.wayne.edu).

With any new habit, it may take time and practice to develop stronger study skills, so don't give up on the first sign of defeat. Take advantage of the resources in the Academic Success Center and decide to make 2014 the year you will keep your resolutions!

# Five Ways to Remain Healthy During Your Freshman Year

By Dazmonique Carr, Undergraduate Student, fh2612@wayne.edu

The day you enter college you are considered an adult. It brings about the best of times, the worst of times, and a lot of stressful times which can be controlled if you take the proper precautions. Here are five ways to start a healthy college career.

**You are what you eat.** “Freshman 15” is no joke. If you continually eat unhealthy you will become unhealthy. Campus dining is not necessarily the problem. Many of us become overwhelmed by how much is provided, therefore we over indulge. Take it easy, you can still enjoy yourself while practicing moderation.

**DIYs are your friend.** DIY, short for “Do It Yourself” is a cheap and fun way to update your look. Websites such as Pinterest show you how to decorate, style, and design clothes and crafts on a budget. With what you already have, you can transform

your wardrobe to keep up with the new trending styles.

**Pick up a hobby.** Join a club. There are a lot of activities to get involved in on campus. Colleges create organizations for a reason: to get students involved with other students. You never know what connections can be made by meeting people with similar interests.

**Exercise regularly.** Studies show that people who exercise tend to do better in school. Frequent physical activity keeps your mind more alert. If you park at least a 10 minute walk away from your class, you can automatically get 20 minutes of exercise each day. Fitting in these short bursts of activity can be a highly effective form of exercise for the busy student.

**Get help when needed.** Friends and advisors are always there to lend a

listening ear and give advice—use them. Some people think that when you’re in college, you’re completely on your own. You never know who is experiencing the same issues whether mental, emotional, or even physiological. WSU has a great deal of resources to help you work through your individual challenges.



## Get Involved: Benefits of Learning Communities

By Jazmine Wesley, Comerica Scholars Project Manager– Academic Success Center, ec3736@wayne.edu

Did you know there are over 50 Learning Communities at Wayne State? Learning Communities (LC) are a network of students, staff and faculty members who work together toward a common goal. Learning for participants of Learning Communities takes place both inside and outside of the classroom. Learning Communities not only give students the advantage of building friendships, but also a greater sense of community on campus. Staff and faculty work hard to make sure every student involved with a Learning Community receives the utmost benefits of living and learning. The following are just a few of the many reasons to become involved with a Wayne State LC:



**Common Courses-** You are enrolled in one or two courses with other participants of your LC. These courses offer benefits such as professional goal setting, critical thinking skills, and identity building.

**Networking-** Participating in an LC will allow you to work with faculty, staff, peers, and members of the community, allowing you to make meaningful connections.

**Life-Long Friendships-** Becoming a part of an LC is a sure way to create bonds that are based on holistic development, academic success and common goals. Plus, you can have a great deal of fun together!

**Engagement-** Students who are involved in LCs report the following: A higher level of engagement with members of that community, increased attendance in events across campus, and more collaborative relationships within the classroom setting.

To view and better understand existing Learning Communities at Wayne State, please visit [lc.wayne.edu](http://lc.wayne.edu) or call Amy Cooper, Learning Communities Coordinator, at (313) 577-2254.

# Social Media Showdown: You vs. Societal Norms

By Angela Sickler, Learning Specialist– Academic Success Center, [au1072@wayne.edu](mailto:au1072@wayne.edu)

In the hi-tech direction that the world is heading, future generations could find the ever-evolving smartphone as a legitimate appendage in medical textbooks. Perhaps this is an exaggeration but considering the perpetual use of smart phones, it's not far-fetched. Everywhere you look, people's eyes are glued to their phones while they navigate the sidewalks, dine with others, study, and worst of all, attend lecture. Continuous access to the internet is an incredible benefit to students looking to stay informed and in touch. However, it's the incessant and mindless usage that is causing poor concentration and lowered levels of course material comprehension. Below are a few tips to help you better balance your tech and academic lives:

**Become aware of your social media checking frequency.** Maybe you don't participate in posting or tweeting very often, but perusing through the posts of others several times an hour can wreak havoc on your ability to focus. Often times, students find themselves scrolling through social media newsfeeds out of habit, rather than interest. This behavior soon becomes unintentionally compulsive and can lead to the following:

interpersonal communication difficulties (yes, I'm referring to an actual face-to-face conversation), safety risks (such as being unaware in your environment, causing you to become a crime target), and unwarranted emotional reactions (explained in tip number 2).

**Recognize emotional/mental impact of social media obsession.** If you're a habitual phone-checker, consider the mental and emotional consequences that your actions may cause. Do you notice that you often become irritated with the tweets and status updates you read? Do you find yourself annoyed by other people's strong opinions or endless complaints posted on social media? If so, it's undeniably time to take a step away. Remember, although individuals have the right to post almost anything they please on the internet, you have the choice of whether or not to let it affect you.

**Choose a method of control.** Now that you've identified what about social media usage could be negatively influencing your demeanor, it's imperative that you choose a method of control. For example, you could make a

personal policy with yourself to only check your phone after meals or maybe have a limit on the number of times per day your thumb is allowed to tap that tempting app. If you're one of the users whose positive energy feels drained after using social media, perhaps it's in your best interest to never check Twitter or Facebook before lecture or study time. It's imperative to eliminate any negative influences prior to learning in order to focus on processing course information effectively.

It is possible to have the best of both worlds in this situation. Maintaining full focus during lecture and study periods will save you a great deal of time by allowing you to maintain comprehension of the information in the weeks to come. In addition, once you've completed your tasks and do log-on to social media, you'll enjoy it far more knowing that you have both the time and the relaxed mindset to do so. Although breaking away from your phone may initially feel foreign or even distressing, the productivity you gain will far outweigh any temporary discomfort.

## The Value of Open-Mindedness

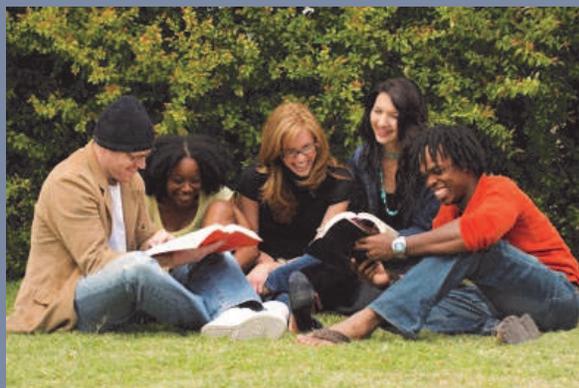
By Jacquelyn Garrett, Undergraduate Student, [fi2619@wayne.edu](mailto:fi2619@wayne.edu)

Throughout our educational and professional experiences, we meet a diverse array of people from different backgrounds and walks of life. Even when we are not in a work environment, we encounter individuals with their own ideas and beliefs which we may not agree with. A sign of a mature mind is acceptance, and more importantly, respect of said differences. Sometimes, it is easy to write someone off because we see more boundaries between each other than similarities. At this moment in our lives, we have the best opportunity to strengthen the skill of open-mindedness.

In the professional realm, it is especially important to be open to differing viewpoints because team work is integral to the professional setting. Often times, closed-minded people are resistant to new, innovative ideas and can hold their teams back from making progress. It only takes one person to throw off a team's cooperative momentum. This is why open-minded people are especially valued in the workplace; they are receptive and can work through disagreements. Being considerate of others' unique experiences must continue even outside of school and work. Do you have a best

friend who you are able to connect with although you may disagree on trivial matters? Try to accept everyone in the same non-judgmental way as your closest friends. In a general sense, open-minded people realize that differences between people make up the spice of life and they value this fact.

Consciously making efforts to respect the beliefs of others, although you do not agree, is the simplest way to be more open-minded. When you open your mind to new ideas, you are opening your heart to new people and new relationships.



By Anita Carter, Academic Advisor IV- University Advising Center, aa4208@wayne.edu

**1. They can prepare you for a career** by helping you to develop skills that employers seek and by providing exposure to vocational fields that can lead to a career choice.

**2. They can aid in the transition** from your previous environment, be it high school, work or home life. Campus involvement can fill voids this change in your life may cause.

**3. They give you "hands-on" opportunities** to experience what you learn in class.

**4. They help you build relationships** outside of the classroom with students, faculty, staff and community leaders. These supportive relationships can really help you persist in your studies when the going gets tough.

**5. They can become lifelong interests** that enrich your life in the now and for many years to come.

**6. They can help you structure your schedule** and force you to be a better manager of your time.

**7. They help you develop leadership** and teach life and organizational skills that you may not always learn in a classroom.

**8. They contribute to a sense of belonging,** self-worth, and confidence. Involvement lets you test yourself in a "safe" environment and apply your classroom knowledge to real life situations.

**9. They demonstrate the importance of teamwork.** Developing communication skills in problem-solving and conflict resolution will help prepare you for your professional life.

**10. Campus activities are a blast!** They help you to relax, blow off steam, get in shape, or reduce stress. A good balance between work and play is vital.



## Mission Statement

The mission of the Academic Success Center (ASC) is to ensure that all Wayne State University undergraduate students become self-determined, motivated, and independent learners. We accomplish this through instruction and services that support students' development of skills to achieve academic excellence.

**Free services of the Academic Success Center include:**

- Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction
- Individual Support with a Learning Specialist
- Study Skills Enhancing Workshops
- Math Success Workshops and Individual Services

### Thank you to our editorial board:

Kate Bernas, Zeina Ghoul, Jazmine Wesley, Zsa-Zsa Booker-Assistant Editor, and Angela Sickler-Editor.

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