SWELL
Student Workshops for Excellence in Learning and Life

WORKSHOP #1:
Time Management & Planning for a Successful Semester!
SELF-ASSESSMENT—TIME MANAGEMENT...

1. ___ It is important to feel that I am in control of my time.
2. ___ I am aware of how my background (family, culture, lifestyle, commitments, gender, age, and other factors) influences my approach to time management.
3. ___ I set academic and personal goals every semester to guide how I prioritize my time.
4. ___ I am able to focus on the task at hand instead of getting distracted or procrastinating.
5. ___ I know my most productive times of day.
6. ___ I use a daily or weekly planner or some other type of planning device to keep track of my time.
7. ___ I maintain a ‘To Do’ list to keep track of the tasks I must complete.
8. ___ I am able to balance my social life and my need for personal time with my academic requirements.
9. ___ I am able to say ‘no’ to requests so that I do not become overextended.
10. ___ I am punctual and almost never turn in an assignment late, skip class, or miss an appointment.

If you checked seven or fewer of the items, you need to establish a more functional time management strategy that will help you succeed in college. Following this seminar is a step in the right direction! LET’S GET STARTED!
MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME... Time planning and you!

(1) **Semester calendar** – made once a semester; use a wall or desk calendar for major exams, due dates, and meetings; basically the events that you must do and that do not change.

(2) **Agenda/planner** – used daily; use an agenda or personal planner as a reminder of classes, homework assignments, course readings, appointments, meetings, and errands.

(3) **Weekly schedule** - made once a semester for all classes, exercise routine, work, extracurricular activities, housekeeping duties, sleeping, and eating. Remember to leave blank spaces to fit in necessary activities as they come up.

(4) **Daily list** – made each day, either when you wake up in the morning or each night before you go to bed. The list should be kept short and prioritized, about 5 or 6 items, both academic and personal.)

(5) **Know your priority pie** – All things considered, know that needs to be first on your list above all else.

**YOUR PRIORITY PIE...**

If this pie represents your time, what portions would you distribute to the following activities?

- Class
- Studying/reading
- WIU campus organizations or activities
- Friends
- Family
- Work/Job
- Recreation
- Relaxation
- Other
Your Weekly Calendar...

Before the semester begins, take the time to organize a weekly schedule for yourself—this is a great starting place for staying focused EACH day!
3 Steps to Effective Time Management...

**GET & STAY MOTIVATED!**
- Stay on track!
- Know what factors motivate you
- Be flexible, but firm
- Take breaks and reward yourself

**EFFECTIVE SCHEDULING!**
- Know what you have to do!
- Daily lists
- Weekly schedule
- Long term goals

**GOOD GOAL SETTING!**
- Know your outcomes!
- Stay focused
- Find what you are passionate about
- Stay committed to success

**PROCRASTINATION… Time Wasters!**
In this exercise, identify your biggest time waster, which precludes you from accomplishing goals and objectives. Identify its cause(s) and indicate your strategy for eliminating your important time wasters.
Overcoming procrastination

- Recognize self-defeating problems such as fear and anxiety, difficulty concentrating, poor time management, indecisiveness, and perfectionism.

- Identify your personal goals, strengths, weaknesses, values, and priorities. Post your goals so that you are reminded of them daily.

- Discipline yourself to use your time wisely: set priorities. Make a schedule of these priorities and how to accomplish them.

- Study in small blocks instead of long time periods.

- Take big jobs and break them into a series of small ones. For example, take a long reading assignment and break it up into several smaller ones.

- Motivate yourself to study: dwell on success, not on failure.

- Try to study in small groups so that others keep you motivated.

- Set realistic goals for yourself to accomplish.

- Modify your environment: eliminate or minimize noise and distraction. Ensure adequate lighting and have necessary equipment at hand. Do not get too comfortable when studying.

- Make sure your study area is neat to avoid daydreaming.

- Convince yourself that the task is worth doing, even if it's hard getting started.
Good Goal Setting…be SMART about it!

- **Specific:** Be specific about the task at hand; instead of saying ‘study biology’, write down specific objectives such as, ‘read pg. 129 – 145’ or ‘write out study questions for chapter 1.’

- **Measurable:** There should be some tangible evidence of success.

- **Achievable:** Be realistic about the task to be completed in a time frame you have set. Based on your knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses, use this information to maximize your chances of successfully completing the tasks that you have planned.

- **Realistic:** Setting goals for every minute of the day is unrealistic. Different people will need to plan in varying degrees of detail. You may need to plan on the hour, the half hour, by fifteen-minute blocks, or smaller amounts if you have an extremely busy schedule.

- **Time frame:** Specify when you plan to work and how long you anticipate it will take you to achieve each goal. Try to stick to your plans for time, but recognize that some things may take longer than initially planned for.
10 Tips for Setting and Achieving Goals

1. **Consider changes**
   Stop and take a moment to reflect on where you are now and where you would like to be in the future. Consider the major areas of your life in this process, including educational directions, career desires, finances, family, personal relationships, spiritual needs, and community contributions.

2. **Personalize your choices**
   When making choices that will affect all aspects of your decision-making, be certain the goals you set out for yourself are ones that you personally believe in and want to achieve, as opposed to goals you think others might want for you.

3. **Make phased plans**
   With your lifestyle directions in mind, establish long-term, mid-term, short-term, and immediate plans. Start with long-term plans that include broader (but realistic) goals you can achieve over a substantial period of time, and then develop progressively smaller goals that you can accomplish more quickly.

4. **Be precise**
   If you set goals that are too broad, it will become difficult to specify appropriate actions that will move you towards reaching them. Strive for precise and measurable goals, so that you can track your progress or pinpoint the reason for being unable to achieve something you set out to do.

5. **Challenge yourself**
   By setting your goals slightly above your level of comfort, you will feel challenged and will get a greater sense of fulfillment from completing them.
6. **Take action**
Higher level goals will help you realize your lifetime plan, but if you only look at the big picture your task will feel unmanageable and you’ll lose motivation over time. Set goals that are both small and achievable instead. Taking immediate action on a goal that you have set reduces procrastination and builds the momentum needed to accomplish larger goals.

7. **Base ambitions on performance**
Where possible, set goals that are based on your performance, rather than a desired outcome. You cannot control outcomes but performance is something you can make happen.

8. **Establish priorities**
Attempting to complete too many goals at once will spread your efforts out too thinly and will reduce your chances of success. Prioritize your goals by assigning them a level of importance from 1 to 10.

9. **Reassess**
Your goals will change as you grow and evolve as a person. Take the time to periodically review your ambitions. Resolve conflicting goals and re-prioritize your objectives.

10. **Write them down**
Write down each of your goals in detail. Use only positive statements or try writing your goals out as though you’ve already accomplished them.
Motivation…find what keeps you going!

- Managing your time will give you more free time. If this isn’t motivation to manage your time actively, nothing will be!
- Find something that will motivate you to accomplish your goals in the allocated time.
- Reward yourself for accomplishing your goals.

Checklist of Typical Motivators

Rank the categories, starting with "1" as the highest.

- Career Development/Success
- Health/Balance/Energy
- Learning/Knowledge/Discovery
- Recognition/Praise
- Social/Affiliation/Popularity/Acceptance
- Status/Prestige/Stand Out/Reputation
- Task Accomplishment/Problem Solving/Achievement
- Comfort/Relaxation
- Influence/Leadership
- Materials/Possessions
- Security/Money/Home
- Teaching/Guiding Others
- Vitality/Energy
10 Tips for Managing Your Time

1. Keep a schedule
In order to manage your time effectively, you need to know how you actually use it. Use a schedule to track everything that you spend your time on.

2. Prioritize tasks
List everything you’d like to get done in the course of a week and then rank the tasks from most important to least important. Experiment with labelling each task “Must Do,” “Should Do,” or “Could Do.”

3. Be realistic
When setting your schedule, remember to account for the time it’ll take to deal with commuting and the occasional interruption. Be realistic about the time you have and avoid over-committing yourself.

4. Do whatever you can do today
Putting off an unwelcome task will eventually catch up with you. At some point, you’ll end up with a stressful day full of unpleasant jobs.

5. Recognize procrastination
Procrastinating isn’t just unproductive; it can eat away all your free time. Be aware of how you’re spending your time and learn to resist activities that you haven’t accounted for in your schedule.
6. Save the best for last
To stay motivated, try completing more difficult tasks first. Plugging away at the easy stuff can be disheartening if you know that you have your work cut out for you at the end of the day.

7. Set achievable goals
Think about your short-term and long-term goals and organize your time in a way that allows you to work towards achieving them. The more realistic your goals are, the more motivated you’ll be to make them happen.

8. Break larger tasks down into more manageable activities
When looked at as a whole, completing a big job can sometimes feel impossible. By dividing a large task into small, more manageable components, you’ll feel more at ease with what you have to do.

9. Adjust to demands
Not everything is going to go according to plan. Don’t panic. There are things in life that pop up when least expected. Similarly, some activities will take much longer to complete than you had anticipated, while others will take less time. The key to managing your time is to adjust your schedule accordingly.

10. Drop-in to consult with an expert
If these tips aren’t helping you to manage your time more effectively, drop in to the University Counseling Center or the UAASC Office and meet with a Study Skills Specialist for personalized and expert advice.
5 Tips for Making the most out of WIU’s Academic Support Services

1. Book a study room
Group-study space is sometimes difficult to find around campus, particularly if you are looking for a spot where you can work with a group in private. The Malpass Library has several group-study rooms you can book in advance.

2. Collaborate with others
Several areas of campus are devoted to collaborative study. Residence hall floor lounges, the lower level of the library and space throughout the Union, are all available for students to use to work together and discuss matters collectively.

3. Take part in a workshop
Throughout the year, you are invited to attend free skills-development workshops through the University Counseling Center that are designed to help you achieve your academic goals. Whether you are looking to brush up on time-management, note-taking, presentation, or leadership skills, or just about anything else related to your day-to-day life at the University, UCC has something for you. Visit their Web site at http://www.wiu.edu/student_services/ucc/ for a current list of workshop dates and descriptions.

4. Get study-skills advice
Is there a study skill that you are looking to improve? Do you need advice on how to cope with academic demands? Drop in to consult with a study-skills specialist from the UCC or UAASC Office, and take positive steps towards reducing your anxiety and improving your grades.

5. Become a better writer
Tutors from the WIU Writing Center (298-2815) are available for one-on-one sessions to discuss any aspect of your writing assignments. Whether you are just getting started or simply need help with the finishing touches, scheduling an appointment with a writing tutor can guide you towards a more effective paper.
Tips for Stress Management

There are many ways to manage unhealthy stress in your life. As you begin to understand more about how stress affects you as an individual, you develop your own ideas to help relieve tension.

1. Take a Deep Breath!
Stress often causes us to breathe shallowly, and this in turn almost always causes more stress! Mentally scan your body for physical tension. Shallow breathing puts less oxygen in the blood stream, producing an increase in muscle tension. You may experience headaches; feel more anxious and uptight. The next time you feel "uptight," try taking a minute to slow down and breathe deeply. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count as you exhale - slowly!

2. Manage Time
One of the greatest sources of stress is over-commitment or poor time management.: plan ahead. Make a reasonable schedule for yourself and include time for stress reduction as a regular part of your schedule. Make a list of what tasks you have to do, then do one at a time, checking them off as they are completed. Give priority to the most important ones and do those first. If you face a particularly unpleasant task, tackle it early in the day and get it over with, to give the rest of your day less anxiety.

3. Connect with Others
Time to yourself is fine, but loneliness is different. A good way to combat sadness, boredom and loneliness is to seek out activities involving others. There are lists of organizations available through the OSA or visit: http://www.student.services.wiu.edu/osa/getinvolved/.

4. Talk It Out
When you feel something, try to express it (appropriately, of course!). "Bottled up" emotions increase frustration and stress. Share your feelings. Perhaps a friend, family member, teacher, clergy person or counselor can help you look at your problem in a different light. Putting problems on paper can assist you in clarifying the situation and give you a new perspective.
5. Take a "Minute" Vacation
Create a quiet scene. You cannot always run away, but you can dream. Imagining a quiet country scene can take you out of the turmoil of a stressful situation. When you have the opportunity, take a moment to close your eyes and imagine a place where you feel relaxed and comfortable. Notice all the details of your chosen place, including pleasant sounds, smells and temperature. Or change your mental "channel" by reading a good book or playing relaxing music to create a sense of peace and tranquility.

6. Get Physical
Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress. Academic life is often sedentary, and sitting around can mean letting stress accumulate in your body. When you feel nervous, angry or upset, release the pressure through exercise or physical activity.

7. Take Care of Your Body
You are special! Take care of yourself. Healthy eating and adequate sleep fuels your mind as well as your body. Avoid consuming too much caffeine and sugar. In excess, the temporary "highs" they provide often end in fatigue or a "crash" later.

8. Laugh
Maintain your sense of humor, including the ability to laugh at yourself. Rent or take yourself to a funny movie: the sillier the plot the better. Laughter is good for you!

9. Know Your Limits
A major source of stress is people's efforts to control events or other people over whom they have little or no power. When confronted with a stressful situation, ask yourself: is this my problem? If it isn't, leave it alone. If it is, can you resolve it now? Once the problem is settled, leave it alone.
What do you do to manage stress?
Congratulations! You have completed the first workshop - "Time Management and Planning for a Successful Semester."

Print out your certificate and sign and date it. Bring the certificate to your meeting with your advisor so you can discuss the strategies covered in the workshop.