The amount of work you need to fit in to a relatively short amount of time for finals can feel intimidating and overwhelming. Developing a Final Exam Plan can help you to know what to study and when, use your time more effectively, reduce procrastination and cramming, keep motivated, since you are working toward more tangible and achievable goals, and increase your focus while you study.

**Make a Final Exam Plan!**

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**Tips to get Stared (Creating a Final Exam Planning Calendar):**

- Determine the dates and times for all your final exams and project due dates
- Calculate your current course grade (or find out your grade from your professor)
- Isolate at least 3 to 4 two-hour each day to devote to studying for finals and/or working projects—from now until the end of finals
- Space out your study session to increase your ability to retain and recall information
- Study smaller chunks of material from class during each study session
- Self-test/self-quiz while studying—i.e., flash cards, teaching to others, reciting, etc.
- Schedule regular breaks to avoid burnout
- Work in specific rewards for specific task to help keep you motivated
- Get enough rest to reduce burnout and stress and optimize thinking power
- Eat healthy foods to stay energized—avoid “sugar crash” foods

**Tip of the Month: Cramming Reduces Performance**

Cramming is ineffective when you have multiple exams and projects. Waiting until the last minute increases stress, which detracts from your ability to concentrate and retain information. Fatigue from pulling all-nighters further inhibits your ability to recall information. Cramming also does not allow ample time to organize your materials and seek help from professors and other vital campus resources. You may be able complete long term projects, but the quality of the work, as well as your grade, will suffer.
### Exam Schedule Fall 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Exam Period I 9:00-11:00 a.m.</th>
<th>Exam Period II 12:30-2:30 p.m.</th>
<th>Exam Period III 3:00-5:00 p.m.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, December 13</td>
<td>All Classes meeting 9:00 Monday</td>
<td>All Classes meeting 12:00 Monday</td>
<td>All Classes meeting 2:10 Tuesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, December 14</td>
<td>All Classes meeting 10:00 Monday</td>
<td>All Classes meeting 11:00 Tuesday</td>
<td>All Classes meeting 2:40 Monday</td>
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<td>Saturday, December 15</td>
<td>All Classes meeting 1:20 Monday</td>
<td>All Classes meeting 8:00 Monday</td>
<td>All Classes meeting 12:00 Tuesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, December 17</td>
<td>All Classes meeting 6:30 Monday &amp;/or 6:30 Wednesday</td>
<td>All Classes meeting 6:30 Tuesday</td>
<td>TBA classes and All other classes; Make-up exams with Dean’s approval</td>
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### Daily Priority List:

1. **MUST** do!  
2. **SHOULD** do!  
3. **COULD** do!  

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Academic Counselor’s Corner

Dealing With Stress During a Stressful Time

Juggling multiple end of the semester projects and studying for final exams is stressful. However, it is possible to cope with stress in more productive ways. Doing so can help you to ease your worries and enhance your ability to concentrate and prepare for finals.

Some Tips to Help Reduce Stress During Finals:

- Prepare, prepare, prepare—there is no substitute for putting in the legwork
- Find out what to expect on the exam—and practice by mimicking the exam format
- Avoid Stressful people—their stress can be contagious!
- Just say no—set clear boundaries with you friends and make it clear when it time to work
- Get a good night’s rest—lack of sleep not only enhances stress, but also inhibits your ability to focus
- Eat power foods—avoid “sugar crash” goodies
- Be sure to take breaks to avoid burnout—set your timer if you have to!
- Visualize positive outcomes and practice positive self-talk—these really work if you keep at it!

Stress is a normal and adaptive human trait that conveys vital information to us. By learning to better “listen” to what is informing stressful thoughts and feeling, we are, ironically, be able to deal with stress and, thus, reduce it.

Dimitrios Jason Stalides, TRiO Academic Counselor

Hannah Strike: The Importance of Taking Effective Notes

At the beginning of this semester, I was experiencing some trouble trying to figure out how to efficiently take notes for most of my classes. The old techniques I used in high school did not seem to be working well for me at the college level, and I was having some issues when it came to finding the information I wrote down during class.

“I have found the Cornell system to be extremely helpful, and I think that many others would too if they gave it a try.”

My TRiO Academic Counselor, Jason, showed me a system of taking notes called the Cornell System. With this technique, one can take notes on one half of the paper and categorize them on the other side. This note-taking system works well for a variety of classes, and it organizes information in a way makes it easier find the information later, which in turn helped me to improve the way I study.

My seminar teacher was even impressed with the Cornell Note-Taking System, noting that it was the most efficient way to takes notes that he had seen.

I have found the Cornell system to be extremely helpful, and I think that many others would too if they gave it a try. This system helps me to not only efficiently categorize my notes, but also makes it easier to take notes during class. When I tried this system, I had nothing to lose, but I certainly gained a lot!
Faculty and Staff Words of Wisdom

“Memorizing doesn’t work...seek an UNDERSTANDING of the material.”
—Kevin Klein, Professor of Economics

“The most common mistake is assuming that you don't really need to study and/or you can do it all on your own. If you start having difficulties, important not to run away from them but to seek out support the college provides. Often the best students, for instance, make most use of the writing center.”
—Nancy Taylor Porter, Associate Professor of Theatre

“Cramming a night before an exam doesn't work!”
—Reiko Itoh, Associate Professor of Modern Languages (Japanese)

“The amount of reading required for each class. Take notes or highlight key phrases while you read. This will save you time when it comes to studying later on.”
—Sarah Strack Briggs, Administrative Assistant, Business Affairs/Human Resources

“To do well (a B or higher)...work every day for a sustained period of time on school work.”
—Lisa Udel, Associate Professor of English/Gender and Women’s Studies

“Take responsibility for your own success. At the first sign of a problem—low quiz grades when you studied, for instance, or not understanding the reading—go to your professor’s office hours and talk with them about what you are doing.”
—Beth Widmaier Capo, Associate Professor of English & Gender/Women's Studies

“If you’re having trouble reach out for help that is why we are all here—independence and maturity is about being able to ask for help when you need it.”
—Bill Tennill, Director of Templeton Counseling Center
Tips For Preparing For Exams

- **Begin preparing** for final exams in a **timely manner**. Make certain that you are able to maintain a regular schedule of both sleep and exercise.

- **Create a daily study plan**—budget your time based on your priorities and your prior level of preparation.

- **Use daylight hours**—research shows that 60 minutes of study during the day is equivalent to 90 minutes of study at night (Pauk, Walther, *How to Study in College*, Second Edition, 1989, p.45).

- **Plan blocks of time**—in general, optimum efficiency is reached by planning to study in one hour blocks (50 minutes of study, followed by a 10 minute break) (Pauk, 1989, p.45).

- **Have a specific agenda for each study period**; this will assist in keeping you focused and goal directed.

- Studying in **bed or in a dorm room** is generally **NOT recommended**, as these are environments which students tend to associate with “relaxing” and “sleep.” This type of mindset is not helpful in facilitating an intense study session.

- Investigate study locations in which you can be ‘free’ from typical roles and responsibilities (e.g. friend, roommate, member of student organization)—**make it a priority to find an environment that maximizes your productivity**.

- Plan to **study when you are most alert** and tackle the most difficult tasks first.

- **Build in moments of relaxation**—schedule study breaks effectively (e.g. taking a five or ten minute break every hour or hour and a half).

### Intense Study Sessions

1) **2-5 minutes:** **SET GOALS**

2) **20-50 minutes:** **STUDY** with **FOCUS** and **ACTION**

   (Read your text, create flash cards, create maps and/or outlines, work problems, write summaries, quiz yourself, etc.)

3) **5 minutes:** Take a **BREAK**

4) **5 minutes:** **REVIEW** the material just studied

5) **Repeat**
Student Guest Column: Malcolm Harvey

A Year of Many Ups and Downs: Reflections on My Freshman Year

As a sophomore, I often look back upon my first year here at IC. In my opinion it was a year of many ups and downs; I began my college career the summer of 2011 as a Yates Fellow. As a member of the Yates program I was taught basic tools for academic success at the college level, and I also able to take advantage of the services provided by the TRiO program. From my TRiO Academic Counselor, Jason Stalides, I gradually learned and was able to implement three cardinal rules as a result of our regular meetings. The “rules” that helped me be are to stay prepared, set goals, and take advantage of any and every opportunity that comes your way.

By staying prepared, you are open to any sudden changes that come up and better able to deal with any challenges you may face. There are many different ways to prepare for your classes, but for first year students, I believe organization is one of the biggest challenges. During my freshman year, I can honestly organization wasn’t one of my best qualities. My TRiO advisor, Jason, helped me explore different methods to better organize my coursework. I didn’t give most of them much of a chance at first. However, Jason continued to patiently work with me to develop a steady organizational plan. Once I became more comfortable trying new ways to become more organized, I began to use the TRiO mega Calendar and my planner to map out my monthly schedule. Planning was very helpful as first student since I was an athlete. It enabled me to stay more aware of due dates and avoid time conflicts. The planner allowed to remember dates, and as I continued to use it second semester, I became a better student—just ask Betsy Hall—because I was better able to stay on top of all my work. Methods I relied on in high school didn’t work well in the big, scary college world. The complexity of college work and the time required to complete assignments necessitate much more planning and preparation.

The next step is setting goals, which was also something that was new to me. When Jason discussed the importance of setting goals, I thought it was something simple. I was sadly mistaken yet again. Goal setting enables students to better determine and clarify what they want to achieve, as well as make a specific plan of action in order to meet your goals. Jason and I set various goals for the semester overall, as well as more specific goals for each of my classes, which we continually revisited and revised throughout the semester classes. Through this process, I began to discover and assert my strengths as a student, as well as campus resources that could help me to build on those strengths that I could to help achieve my goals. My first semester GPA was 3.0, which is not stellar; however, transitioning into college was a challenge, and I was able to establish a strong foundation in my first year that I am working toward building on now in my second year.

Finally, take and every opportunity you are given. If you display effort and the will to achieve your goals, many doors will open for you. Jason continues to challenge me to do build on my strengths; he always provides me with new opportunities; and he is a person I am able to talk to when I need advice for a new adventure I am embarking upon. Based on my experiences, I learned trying new things because opens up new doors and window of opportunity. Throughout my first year, I helped select the candidate for our college’s diversity coordinator, I was selected as an alternate residential assistant, and I was awarded the TRiO program’s Grant Aid Scholarship. It’s not much to boast about, but as a first generation college student, these three pivotal accomplishments allowed to step of my comfort zone and experience the new and different things our school has to offer. I hope that my experiences can serve as an example of hard work, persistent, and success that will possibly help others to try new things in order to work toward achieving their goals as well.

“Methods I relied on in high school didn’t work well in the big, scary college world.”
Research Writing Help Sessions: Only TWO Left

Don’t miss the LAST TWO Research Writing Help Sessions during the last week of November:

⇒ Monday, November 26, from 4-6 p.m. in the Baxter 100 computer lab
⇒ Wednesday, November 28, from 4-6 p.m. in the Baxter 100 computer lab

Like the previous writing help session, please feel free to drop by any time during the available hours. The sessions are formatted to allow you to work on your paper and receive help as needed while on the spot while you are working!

Additional Bonuses for Attending:

- Counts as TRiO Workshop or TRiO Tutor requirement for the semester!
- Librarian Brittney Thomas will be on hand to help you find Excellent sources!
- A Professional TRiO Writing Tutor and Experienced Student Tutors from the Writing Center will be available to help you on the spot!

How Important are Internships? What Should I Look for? What Can I Expect?

If you are looking for these answers and more, come to the LAST TRiO workshop of the semester on Wednesday, December 5th, at 5:00 in Kirby 108.

Center for Academic Excellence student Intern, Carmen Kremitzki, will talk about her experiences with three different internships—her current one for the Center and two with the IC Explorers program. Through these internships, she acquired valuable information, experience, and skills that are applicable to her career aspirations and have, in turn, helped her to make increasingly more informed career decisions.

“I am thankful for the opportunities I’ve had and I think that everyone could benefit from an experience provided by an internship.”—Carmen

TRiO Events Coming Up in December

**COPING WITH ACADEMIC AND LIFE STRESSORS:**
Tuesday, December 4th, 5:00—6:00, Kirby 108.

No better time to learn how to deal with stress than during a stressful time in the semester!

**THE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME—THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNSHIPS:**
Wednesday, December 5th, 5:00—6:00, Kirby 108.

How will an internship help me? What should I look for in an internship? Learn this and more at our Intern’s presentation session.

**HOLIDAY TREATS WITH TRiO:**
Wednesday, December 12th, 11:00-2:00, TRiO Room.
Come enjoy some of the TRiO staff’s favorite holiday treats as a study break on reading day! The TRiO room will be open for you to come and go, so don’t forget to stop by!