The Student Success Team, a select group of upper-division students, is dedicated to helping first-year and transfer students make a successful transition to college life. Connect with the team members through the First- and Second-Year Experience office in Altgeld Hall 100 and through the First- and Second-Year Success Series this coming year. Find out more at www.niu.edu/fsye.

UNIV 101: THE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE
UNIV 201: THE TRANSFER EXPERIENCE

Fall 2014
Denise L. Rode
Kelly J. Smith
Northern Illinois University
with contributions from Scott F. Peska
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Introduction

Welcome to NIU and to UNIV 101/201: The University Experience!

I’m pleased that you have chosen to become an NIU Huskie, and I commend you for enrolling in UNIV 101 or 201. National research shows that students who become academically and socially connected to their college or university through courses such as this are more likely to graduate. Last year, the majority of the NIU freshman class took UNIV and 85% recommended the course to others.

Your UNIV course is designed to help you make a successful transition to college life. UNIV will introduce you to campus resources that will benefit you now and in the future. You will find your instructor to be approachable and willing to help answer your questions or concerns. Your Peer Instructor, if one is assigned to your class, has recently been through some of the same transitions you’re experiencing and will also be a valuable resource for you. The small class size of UNIV sections allows for discussion and interaction with your peers. Yet another resource is in your hands right now—your UNIV textbook, Essentials for Success.

This text was created especially for you as a first-year NIU student. Almost every author who contributed to the text has taught or worked on Northern’s campus. Each chapter begins and ends with a letter from a current student or a faculty or staff member, giving you tips on how to succeed as a new Huskie. Topics covered in the text range from getting to know the campus to learning how to manage your time as a college student to developing and maintaining relationships. I challenge you to learn the methods and strategies discussed in the book. They’ll help you develop strong, effective life skills now that may benefit you through the rest of your life.

College is what you make of it. You must be proactive in charting your course here. Your university experience will not always be easy, but there are many programs, services, and most importantly, people who care about your success and are available to help as you achieve your goal of an NIU degree.

If you have questions about any aspect of life as a first-year student or if you have ideas for future UNIV courses, stop at the First- and Second-Year Experience office or e-mail fsye@niu.edu Our staff is dedicated to your success as a first-year NIU student, and we’d love to hear from you!

Denise L. Rode, Ed.D.
Director, First- and Second-Year Experience
Chapter 1
Getting to Know NIU

Note: This chapter is designed to be used with the 2014–2015 Student Handbook. Copies of the Student Handbook can be found on the First- and Second-Year Experience website: www.niu.edu/fsye

CHAPTER GOALS
As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Learn the history and traditions of NIU.
2. Become familiar with campus resources and how to access them.
3. Develop pride in being an NIU Huskie!
Dear NIU First-Year Student,

Welcome to NIU! You are about to embark on a journey of change and opportunity. As you begin to explore your first few days here on campus, you’ll find that there is much to do. You can get involved in intramural sports, Greek life, watch your fellow Huskies take the win at sports events, meet new people at social events, or go for a relaxing walk in the park. With so many things to do you might be thinking, “How do I get around the campus and community?”

Walking can be an option; however, NIU also has a bus system that will take you where you need to go. The routes include locations like downtown DeKalb, Sycamore Road, the Convocation Center, Greek Row, Barsema Hall, and many more stops. Each bus comes to their designated stop every 20–30 minutes, so the wait time is not long.

Don’t be discouraged during the first days on campus if it’s challenging to find your classes. Your fellow Huskies will gladly assist you. Many buildings on campus hold classes that pertain to specific majors. For example, Watson and Reavis Hall hold most language and English courses; Faraday and LaTourette Halls are home for many physics, chemistry, and biology classes; and DuSable and Cole hold a mix of general education classes, so don’t be surprised to find yourself there. Barsema Hall hosts courses for the College of Business, and Graham and Gabel Halls are known for education classes.

During my first semester, I was nervous about what to expect academically. I thought I was going to have challenging classes without any help, and be expected to know everything. However, NIU resources helped me overcome these challenges. I received tutoring help (which is free), and was able to learn my way around campus by using the map and asking other students for help. There’s even an app that will help you find your way to NIU buildings and services. You can download it at www.niu.edu/niumobile/.

Have a fun and successful first semester here at NIU. Be sure to start strong academically. See you around campus!

Your Fellow Huskie,

Luis Flores
Junior Nursing Major
You’ve decided to become an NIU Huskie. Welcome to College!

By now, you have heard the phrase “Welcome to Northern” dozens of times. You’ve moved into your residence hall or found the closest commuter parking space to your classes. You’ve bought your books, read your syllabi, and perhaps even made a trip to Target or Super Wal-Mart on a Huskie bus for those campus essentials. If you’re living in a residence hall, you’re getting to know your roommates or floormates. If you’re commuting, you’re figuring out the best route to get to the campus. You’re mastering the names of your instructors and their academic expectations, and you’ve noticed that NIU has some differences compared to your previous academic environment. This chapter will provide information that will help you determine what it means to be an NIU student and will give you resources to help you navigate your way to earning a college degree.

UNIV 101/201: Awareness, Involvement, and Success

You’ve probably already heard about the value of getting involved. It’s well documented that involvement beyond the classroom results in a more satisfying and successful college experience. This textbook and the UNIV course promote the value of student engagement. Your UNIV instructor (and perhaps a Peer Instructor or Graduate Student Leader) can help you identify some ways to connect at Northern right from the start. You’ll learn more in Chapter 3.

NIU as Your Home Away from Home

It’s important to feel comfortable at Northern Illinois University. You’ve made the choice to belong at NIU. This is your home, your campus. Take charge, explore, and learn your way around. Find the best routes to get to your classroom buildings. Locate the resources that can help you maximize your NIU education—places like the Financial Aid Office, Health Services, and your academic advising office. Find areas where you can relax, socialize, and be yourself. Work out at Campus Recreation (“the Rec”) or the new Outdoor Sports Complex. Cheer the football team on to victory at Huskie Stadium. Enjoy athletics, concerts, shows, and special university events at the Convocation Center.

Welcome to DeKalb, Illinois

While you’re an NIU student, you’ll be part of a thriving community of 44,030 residents located 65 miles west of Chicago’s Loop and 40 miles southeast of Rockford, Illinois’ third largest city. Despite its proximity to the state’s metropolitan areas, DeKalb has its own unique character as a university community with both urban and rural roots.

Founded in 1837 and chartered in 1856, DeKalb remained a small community until the arrival of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad in 1853. Agriculture was the primary economic activity until 1873–1874 when a farmer, Joseph Glidden, invented barbed wire and began commercial mass production of “the wire that fenced the West.” Other local inventors patented their own versions of barbed wire, earning the town the nickname “Barb City” and a place in history.

The DeKalb “patriarchs” who brought NIU to DeKalb included Isaac L. Ellwood, Jacob Haish, and Joseph F. Glidden. Both Haish and Ellwood made their fortunes manufacturing barbed wire. These three, along with newspaper publisher Clinton E. Rosette, were instrumental in the founding of Northern Illinois State Normal School in 1895.
Agriculture came to the forefront again with the creation of the DeKalb County Farm Bureau in 1912, the first organization of its kind in the state of Illinois, and arguably the first in the country as well. In the 1930s, the DeKalb AgResearch Corporation marketed its first hybrid corn. Travelers in rural areas can still spot the DeKalb “flying ear of corn” trademark. Today, DeKalb is a mix of the traditional and contemporary, combining the friendliness of a small town with the conveniences of suburban areas.

10 THINGS TO DO IN AND AROUND DEKALB

Whether you’re a newcomer or have lived here all your life, you’ll discover surprising features about the DeKalb–Sycamore communities. Here are some suggestions for getting to know the area:

1 Attend a local festival. Sample free sweet corn at the DeKalb Corn Fest August 29–31. Visit neighboring Sycamore to view the Pumpkin Festival October 22–26. Several area farms, markets, and orchards feature fall activities including haunted corn mazes and houses.

2 Shop or dine in Downtown DeKalb. Go shopping or out to dinner with friends or family in DeKalb, Sycamore, or at the growing number of stores and restaurants on Sycamore Road (Illinois Route 23), which connects the two communities.

3 Visit forest preserves and parks. You can canoe on the Kishwaukee River, or walk or bike the Kishwaukee Kiwanis bike path.

4 Attend an athletic event or concert. Attend an athletic event, a concert at the Convocation Center, art exhibit, movie, speaker, or dance performance sponsored by NIU.

5 Visit the NIU observatory. View the outer space in Davis Hall on a starry night.

6 Tour DeKalb history. Take in some DeKalb history by touring the historic Ellwood House Museum or the Glidden Homestead. The homes were owned by barbed wire barons Isaac L. Ellwood and Joseph F. Glidden. Both museums hold special events and scheduled tours during the year.

7 Enjoy the East Lagoon. Study, exercise, or watch the geese there during fall and spring. Go skating on the East Lagoon in the winter by renting skates through the Campus Recreation Outdoor Adventure Center.

8 Visit the Huskies Den. Bowl, shoot pool, play bags or video games at the Huskies Den in the basement level of the Holmes Student Center.

9 Attend an event at DeKalb’s Egyptian Theatre. The restored 1920s-era Art Deco Theater is on the National Historic Register. Recent events have included the Second City Comedy revue, The Rocky Horror Picture Show, the NIU Environmental Film Festival, and the Celtic band, Gaelic Storm.

10 Volunteer in the community. There are local non-profit organizations such as the American Red Cross, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Habitat for Humanity, Hope Haven, or TAILS Humane Society. Volunteer for NIU Cares Day in April, where you can give back to the community as part of a team of students. For more opportunities, check out the Student Involvement & Leadership Development website at www.niu.edu/studentinvolvement/volunteer
History and Landmarks

THE CASTLE ON CAMPUS (A.K.A. ALTGELD HALL)
Altgeld Hall, originally known as the Administration Building until renamed in 1963, was designed by architect Charles Brush. Construction took four years, and the building opened to the first class of students in September of 1899.

Built at a cost of $230,160, Altgeld Hall featured a Tudor Gothic style favored by the man for whom it was named, John Peter Altgeld, governor of Illinois from 1893 to 1897. Several other Illinois state university campuses also claim castle buildings constructed during Altgeld’s governorship, built to unify the campuses.

For many years, DeKalb residents referred to Altgeld as the “Castle on a Hill.” Altgeld underwent a five-year, $24 million renovation beginning in 1999, and was rededicated on October 7, 2004. The building now houses the President’s Office, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, First- and Second-Year Experience, the Office of Student Engagement & Experiential Learning, the NIU Art Museum, an auditorium that seats 500 people, and other administrative offices.

THE ALTGELD GROTESQUE
The grotesque in the gardens east of Altgeld Hall is one of 11 originally atop the castle. Legend says that at Northern’s first graduation, just after the President’s speech, black thunderclouds rolled in. During a tremendous storm, a bolt of lightning struck the grotesque, and it fell to the ground. Thinking that lightning never strikes the same place twice, administrators placed the grotesque back on its pedestal. The grotesque again was struck by lightning at the second commencement ceremony, and it fell once more. Due to fears that a third strike might be its last, the grotesque was placed in the garden where it stands today. Over the years, students have decorated the statue for occasions such as Halloween, winter snowstorms, and Commencement.

THE LIBRARY MOVE OF 1952
Northern’s first library was located on the second floor of Altgeld Hall and served for a half century, until the Swen Parson Library opened in 1952. Facing a budget deficit, administrators pondered how to move the books from one building to another. President Leslie A. Holmes worked with campus groups to hold a campus-wide Library Move Day. Instructors were told to take attendance in their classes and then send students over to the old library in Altgeld, devoting the whole class period to moving books to their new location in Swen Parson.

THE FRESHMAN BENCH, FIRST CAMPUS LANDMARK
The Freshman Bench in the East Lagoon area dates to 1903 when it was a gift of that graduating class. The story associated with it is that a female student will remain a freshman until kissed by an upper-division student while sitting on the bench.
THE EAST LAGOON AND ISLAND

The East Lagoon was part of the original 63 acres deeded to the state for the new State Normal School by Joseph F. Glidden in 1895. In the 1930s, the lagoon was completely re-landscaped and connected to the Kishwaukee River. The stone skating bench has been used by countless skaters and winter enthusiasts since 1941, and represents a lasting connection between NIU and the DeKalb community. Northern first held commencement ceremonies on the island in 1942 and for many years thereafter, until class size and unpredictable weather made such functions prohibitive. Weddings, concerts, and other gatherings often have been held on the island since then.

CAMPUS MASCOTS

Since Northern’s founding, its sports teams have been known as the Huskies. Besides the traditional Victor E. Huskie mascot, the campus has had two other unofficial animal mascots of note: Betsy the Bear and William the Goose. Betsy came to Northern’s zoo as a small black bear cub, a gift from Perry Ellwood. Betsy died December 20, 1907, and was stuffed and mounted inside Altgeld Hall. William resided near the lagoon and attracted national attention in 1976 when administrators relocated him to the Lorado Taft Field Campus near Oregon, Illinois. He was returned to campus in 1979 after students started a “Save William the Goose” campaign. After his death in 1981, a memorial plaque was placed near the lagoon in 1983, declaring William “NIU’s honorary student.”

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COMMONS

At the very center of the campus, the MLK Commons serves as a free speech area and gathering space featuring two public sculptures, Peter Fagan’s bust of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dann Nardi’s “balance of equality.” The latter is based on the Rev. King’s “Christmas Sermon on Peace” and contains two quotations from the speech at its base. The MLK Commons is the site of many campus activities, including concerts, cultural events, student organization expos, memorials, and vigils.


**FOUNDERS MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

Built in 1976, Founders Memorial Library was appropriately named for four prominent DeKalb citizens—Joseph F. Glidden, Jacob Haish, Isaac L. Ellwood, and Clinton E. Rosette. These pioneers (three barbed wire barons and a local newspaper editor) provided the funding, land, influence, and time to establish the Northern Illinois State Normal School. The library currently holds over 2 million volumes and government publications. You can find out more about what the library offers online at: [http://www.ulib.niu.edu/](http://www.ulib.niu.edu/)

**MONTGOMERY ARBORETUM**

Located just north of Lincoln Highway between Castle Drive and Normal Road lie the “Campus Woods,” now called the Montgomery Arboretum. The area, part of the original land deeded to Northern by Joseph F. Glidden, was named for Charles Edgar Montgomery, professor and head of the biology department from 1917 to 1952. Through the years, the arboretum has hosted many classes, ecological protests, and a whistle-stop speech by presidential candidate Teddy Roosevelt in 1900.

**ECOLOGICAL (ECO) PARK**

Located on the west side of campus near the West Lagoon, this recreational area was proposed in 1971 by students and faculty who protested the building of Montgomery Hall and the Psychology–Computer Science building in Montgomery Arboretum. Eco Park is the site of artist Stephen Beyer’s *The Six Questions*, a 48-foot-long steel picnic table inspired by Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs.

**CENTRAL PARK**

Situated between Stevenson Towers, Grant Towers, and Douglas Hall, Central Park is an open area where students can play catch or frisbee, have picnics, and hang out. This scenic area is also home to a number of NIU programs and events. Concerts, cook-outs, and carnivals are planned by the Residence Hall Association and other student organizations during the fall and spring semesters.

**BARSEMA ALUMNI AND VISITORS CENTER (BAVC)**

The BAVC is named in honor of Dennis and Stacy Barsema, who, along with other alumni and friends of the university, contributed to the Center’s development. These NIU benefactors also provided funding for Barsema Hall on the northeast edge of campus, where the College of Business is housed. Dennis Barsema is a 1977 alumnus of the NIU College of Business who frequently teaches and interacts with Northern’s business students.
HUSKIE STADIUM, YORDON CENTER, AND INDOOR PRACTICE FIELD
NIU’s football facility seats over 30,000 spectators. The playing surface was named Brigham Field in fall 2003 to honor former Director of Athletics Robert J. Brigham. Recent additions to the stadium include a state-of-the-art FieldTurf® playing surface and an updated scoreboard and video display system. The Jeffrey and Kimberly Yordon Center provides NIU athletes with state-of-the-art classrooms and training facilities that include a strength and conditioning center, an academic performance center with a fully equipped technology lab, a football locker room, and sports medicine areas. Dr. Kenneth and Ellen Chesick, long-time supporters of NIU, donated $3 million to Huskie Athletics to name the Kenneth and Ellen Chessick Practice Center. This 80,000-plus square foot indoor practice facility is located on the north side of the Huskie Stadium and contains an artificial turf field with full NCAA football field dimensions, a four-lane sprint track, batting cages, a long jump pit, and 120 yards of hitting space for golfers.

CONVOCATION CENTER
The Convocation Center is a $36 million multipurpose facility with a seating capacity of 10,000. The center is home to the men’s and women’s basketball teams as well as the gymnastic, volleyball, and wrestling teams. Each year, a variety of concerts, theatre productions, job fairs, trade shows, and commencement activities take place here. Recent entertainment has included shows by John Mayer, Kid Cudi, Jason Mraz, Miranda Lambert, Drake, Lady Antebellum, Wiz Khalifa, 2 Chainz, Daughtry, and Montgomery Gentry.

FORWARD, TOGETHER FORWARD
In memory of the five students that lost their lives on February 14, 2008, NIU built a garden near Cole Hall, with a curved walkway and five illuminated sections of cardinal red granite. The NIU campus and the DeKalb community demonstrated their resilience and unity in moving “Forward, Together Forward” toward recovery from this tragedy.
THE NORTHERN PACT
The Northern PACT is a statement of what NIU values as a community. The PACT is based on five principles that represent expectations that the university holds for students, faculty, and staff during their time as Huskies. These principles—just, caring, open, disciplined, and celebrative—are intentionally integrated into the NIU campus culture. Show your Huskie Pride by adopting the values it symbolizes.

NIU “FIRSTS”
First-year enrollment: 173 students in the fall of 1899. (In Fall 2013, Northern enrolled 2,679 freshmen and 1,881 transfer students.)

First edition of the student newspaper: The Northern Illinois first edition was published in October 1899 as a monthly paper, 14 pages long. (Today the Northern Star publishes Monday through Thursday during the academic year and weekly during the summer. It is also available online and through an app.)

First football game: October 6, 1900, vs. DeKalb High School (NIU won). Admission was 25 cents. The game started at 3:30 p.m., after a speech by Theodore Roosevelt. (NIU currently competes in Division I (IA for football) NCAA athletics in the Mid-American Conference. The Huskies are two-time MAC football champions and received the Mid-American Conference first bid to a major bowl game in 2012. Quarterback Jordan Lynch (2012–2013) was named second runner-up for the 2013 Heisman trophy.

First school colors: Northern’s official school colors, by vote of the students in October 1899, were yellow and white. The athletic association adopted black and red as the official colors in 1907. In recent decades, only the athletic colors of cardinal and black have been used.

HUSKIES ON PARADE
In fall 2008, nearly 50 brightly colored Huskies were placed throughout the greater DeKalb/Sycamore community to capture the vibrancy of the “communiversity”—the bond between NIU and its neighbors. Eventually, a number of the dogs were auctioned off, with all proceeds benefiting the February 14 Scholarship Fund.
Learning about Campus Resources

This section lists services and resources frequently used by first-year students according to their respective buildings or categories. The services listed here are available to all students, and you’ve already paid for most of them with your student fees. Take the opportunity to explore the following buildings, resources, and services to be successful at NIU.

ADAMS HALL

Military Student Services
Fourth floor, room 409, (815) 753-0691, www.niu.edu/militaryservices
Provides comprehensive resources and a single point of contact for military and veteran students and their families who attend Northern Illinois University. The office also certifies students for veterans’ benefits and provides educational and social support.

Testing Services
First floor, room 128, (815) 753-1203, www.niu.edu/testing
Administers many of the tests associated with undergraduate admissions, course placement, departmental qualifications, and graduation requirements.

Student Support Services
Fourth floor, room 419, (815) 753-1142, www.niu.edu/studentsupport
Provides students with the necessary support to achieve their academic goals. Open to those who are first-generation college students, are from a limited-income household, or have a learning or physical disability.

ALTGELD HALL

Office of Student Engagement & Experiential Learning (OSEEL)
Altgeld Hall, room 100, (815) 753-8154, www.niu.edu/engagedlearning
OSEEL offers a variety of research and service opportunities to NIU undergraduates including: Research Rookies, Undergraduate Special Opportunities in Artistry & Research Program (USOAR), Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (URAP), Undergraduate Research Assistantship (URA), Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day, and Huskie Service Scholars.

First- and Second-Year Experience
Altgeld Hall, room 100, (815) 753-0028, www.niu.edu/fsye
This office offers a comprehensive First-Year Experience initiative to help new NIU students, both freshman and transfer, meet their academic and social goals. Programs and services include: UNIV 101 and 201 courses, First- and Second-Year Success Series, Student-Faculty Links and Transfer2Transfer mentoring, the Common Reading Experience, and REACH (a peer outreach program). A developing second-year program features a Y2@NIU event in the fall, Sophomore Days of Service, and a “halfway there” event at the end of the year.
CAMPUS LIFE BUILDING

University Honors Program
First floor, room 110, (815) 753-0694, www.niu.edu/honors
Provides assistance to students who choose to participate in the University Honors Program at NIU. Works with all academic departments and gives students the opportunity to live in the Honors House, which is located in the New Residence Hall. Advises students in the program on course selection and meeting honors requirements, and sponsors a variety of activities to enrich the honors experience.

Students’ Legal Assistance
First floor, room 120, (815) 753-1701, www.niu.edu/legal
Provides information and assistance to students regarding a variety of legal concerns. Also provides students with consultation, advocacy, and court representation services for landlord/tenants, traffic, ordinance violations, insurance, employment, and other issues.

Northern Star/NS Radio
First floor, room 130, (815) 753-0105, www.northernstar.info
NIU’s student-run newspaper and radio station. Provides students with news and events taking place at the university and also provides news and information for DeKalb and the surrounding area.

Student Involvement & Leadership Development
First floor, room 150, (815) 753-1421, www.niu.edu/studentinvolvement
Helps NIU students become involved in campus life through academic, special interest, service, and Greek organizations. Provides meeting room reservations, poster approvals, employment opportunities, ticket services, volunteer information, organization registration, and various other services.

Campus Activities Board (CAB)
First floor, room 160, (815) 753-1580, www.niu.edu/cab
Provides students and the NIU community with a variety of entertainment during nights and weekends. Responsible for many concerts, plays, and educational speakers, which come to the NIU campus to educate and entertain students in an alcohol-free environment.

Student Association (SA)
First floor, room 180, (815) 753-0483, www.niu.edu/sa
NIU’s student-run government. Allocates funds to a variety of programs and registered student organizations at NIU. The Student Association allocates money from student fees to benefit students through supporting the Huskie Bus Line, Students’ Legal Assistance, the Campus Child Care Center, and Campus Recreation. All NIU students are considered members of the Student Association.

The Campus Life Building is located on the corner of Normal and Lucinda.

Student Tip
Becoming a part of the NIU Huskie Pack means creating caring relationships with fellow students and community members.
—Annastazia Camarena
Junior
Pre-Physical Therapy major
Counseling & Student Development Center
Second floor, room 200, (815) 753-1206, www.niu.edu/csdc
Offers a variety of free counseling services to students, including individual and group sessions. Students may make an appointment or come in during walk-in hours from 11 a.m.–3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Career Services
Second floor, room 220, (815) 753-1641, www.niu.edu/careerservices
Provides résumé and cover letter reviews, individual career counseling, practice job interviews, and information on cooperative education and internships. Also coordinates internship, educator, and full-time job fairs every semester.

Office of Community Standards & Student Conduct
Second floor, room 280, (815) 753-1571, www.niu.edu/communitystandards
Handles student disciplinary issues such as student misconduct, academic conflicts, and residential conflicts. Provides counseling and referrals for students, participates in leadership training for student judicial advocates, and also has Student Mediation Services which provide confidential meetings with a third party to resolve student conflicts.

633 WEST LOCUST STREET
Academic Advising Center
Academic Advising Center Building, (815) 753-2573, www.niu.edu/advising
Provides advising to students who have not yet selected a major or students who are reassessing their major. Advisors can aid with class scheduling and registration, monitor a student’s academic progress, and find additional activities to supplement academic majors.

Office of Student Academic Success
Academic Advising Center 113, (815) 753-5721, www.niu.edu/osas
The Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS) helps foster interaction among students, faculty, and staff through academic support and success programming and initiatives. OSAS administers MAP-Works, the Early Alert Program, Financial Cents, the Mid-Semester Check, and other programs to help students achieve success and ultimately their degrees.

CULTURAL CENTERS AND RESOURCES
NIU’s Cultural Centers welcome participation from all students. Take advantage of the opportunity to learn about and experience the diversity on campus.

Asian American Center
429 Garden Road, (815) 752-1177, www.niu.edu/aac
Participates in the recruitment and retention of Asian American students at Northern Illinois University. Offers students opportunities to develop their leadership skills through a variety of support services, diversity programming, and events.

Center for Black Studies
Lincoln Terrace, (815) 753-1709, www.niu.edu/blackstudies
Serves as an academic and research center devoted to students who want to minor in Black Studies. Collects and analyzes data on the minority experience, provides academic advising for students in this minor, and sponsors speakers and cultural events.
**Center for Latino and Latin American Studies**  
515 Garden Road, (815) 753-1531, [www.niu.edu/latinostudies](http://www.niu.edu/latinostudies)  
Offers a variety of research and cultural programs including a minor in Latino and Latin American Studies, undergraduate scholarships, a speaker series, cultural programming, and outreach activities.

**Disability Resource Center**  
Health Services Building, fourth floor, (815) 753-1303 (voice/TTY), [www.niu.edu/disability](http://www.niu.edu/disability)  
Provides a wide range of services to students with disabilities (visual, hearing, learning, and physical) concerning admission, registration, and housing. Guides students in appeals/grievance procedures and documentation of various learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder.

**Gender & Sexuality Resource Center**  
105 Normal Road, (815) 753-0320, [www.niu.edu/women](http://www.niu.edu/women)  
The Center acknowledges the historical impacts of women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer identities, while advocating for equity for all.

**Latino Resource Center**  
515 Garden Road, (815) 753-1986, [www.niu.edu/lrc](http://www.niu.edu/lrc)  
Provides resources and an environment that welcomes students to discuss and learn about culture and issues relevant to the Latino community. Also coordinates programs and events each year such as “Colegas:” Mentoring for Academic Success, Latino Heritage Month, Latin Chill, and Meet the Latino Faculty & Staff.

**Center for Southeast Asian Studies**  
520 College View Court, (815) 753-1771, [www.niu.edu/cseas](http://www.niu.edu/cseas)  
Provides leadership, focus, and coordination for Southeast Asian Studies at NIU, including an undergraduate contract major and minor.

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES**

**Health Services**  
Health Services Building located on Wirtz Drive, (815) 753-1311, [www.niu.edu/healthservices](http://www.niu.edu/healthservices)  
Offers acute care, allergy injections, general medicine, immunizations, laboratory tests, nutrition counseling, pharmacy, psychiatry, radiology, and women’s health exams. Every registered student, full- or part-time, who has paid tuition and fees is eligible to use Health Services.

**Student Health Insurance**  
Health Services Building, second floor, room 201, (815) 753-0122, [www.niu.edu/shi](http://www.niu.edu/shi)  
Assists students with maintaining mandatory health insurance coverage. Students may waive the NIU student health insurance if they provide evidence of other coverage. Student insurance also coordinates with family coverage. The student health insurance plan offers up to 80% coverage of all expenses outside of Health Services after a $250 annual deductible within network.
Health Enhancement
Chick Evans Field House, room 139, (815) 753-9755, www.niu.edu/health
Offers a variety of programs and services focused on student health and academic success. Coordinates speakers and events to promote student education and awareness on issues such as nutrition, body image, fitness, stress, sexual health, healthy relationships, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

HOLMES STUDENT CENTER
Orientation & Family Connections
Basement level, room 023D, (815) 753-1535, www.niu.edu/orientation
Coordinates the orientation, advising, and registration of new students, and provides programs for family members.

Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Student Services
Basement level, room 023J and 023K, (815) 753-9999, www.niu.edu/comnontrad
Provides a lounge for commuter, non-traditional, and off-campus students to socialize, study, and relax between classes. Also offers an online newsletter, off-campus housing and roommate resources, and additional information to assist students.

Huskie’s Den
Basement level, (815) 753-1491, www.huskieuden.niu.edu
Offers billiards, bowling, and a variety of video games. Spring and fall hours: 11 a.m.–11:30 p.m., Monday–Thursday; 1 p.m.–1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday; and 1 p.m.–11:30 p.m. on Sunday. Huskie Bucks and cash are accepted.

University Bookstore
Ground level, (815) 753-1081, www.niubookstore.niu.edu
Sells all NIU course textbooks as well as books for personal libraries. Offers a variety of school supplies and NIU apparel.

TCF Bank
Ground level, (815) 753-9363, www.tcfbank.com
Provides convenient, full-service banking for students. Has ATM locations in the Holmes Student Center, the Campus Recreation Center, the Stevenson food court, and the New Residence Hall.

OneCard Office
Ground level, (815) 753-9569, www.niu.edu/OneCard
Provides students with their student identification, the NIU OneCard. Students needing a replacement card, reporting a lost or stolen card, or adding Huskie Bucks to their card can visit this office. Huskie Bucks can also be added online at MyNIU, in person at the Bursar’s Office, or at any VTS machine on campus.

Ellington’s
Main level, (815) 753-1763, www.niu.edu/ellingtons
Offers themed three-course meals on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Students majoring in Nutrition, Dietetics, and Hospitality Administration run this restaurant.

Student Tip
Ask questions. Your professors, peers, and friends are always willing to help you find the right resources here on campus.
—Bridgett Phelan
Senior
Communicative Disorders major
Office of the Ombudsperson
Sixth floor, room 601, (815) 753-1414, www.niu.edu/ombuds
Assists students who are trying to resolve university-related concerns. The Ombudsperson can advise students on issues regarding academics, finance, housing, student conduct, employment, and/or personal concerns.

NEPTUNE HALL
Housing & Dining
First floor, 101 Neptune East, (815) 753-1525, www.niu.edu/housing
Manages all residential and dining programs, services, and facilities. Provides a variety of meal and residential living plans. Assists students with selecting or changing meal plans and living arrangements.

The Trident
Contains a grab ’n go location that offers coffee and other specialty items in addition to fresh baked goods, salads, sandwiches, wraps, fresh fruit, and smoothies. Trident accepts residence hall meal plans and Huskie Bucks.

Residence Hall Association (RHA) Office
Basement of Neptune North, room B50, (815) 753-1077, www.niu.edu/housing/getinvolved/rha
Coordinates with campus residence halls to create activities and events in the halls and across campus. Also works with Housing & Dining to represent residents’ interests.

PUBLIC SAFETY
Department of Police and Public Safety
Telephone and Security Building, located on Wirtz Drive next to Health Services, (815) 753-1212, www.niu.edu/publicsafety
Comprised of more than 70 officers and a host of other staff members who provide public safety to the NIU community. Officers are also located in each residence hall on campus daily from 7 p.m.—7 a.m. Other services provided are the Late Night Ride Service, Huskie Student Patrol, and the Motorist Assistance Program. Register for emergency text alerts and advisory e-mails at www.niu.edu/emergencyinfo

Residence Hall Resources Tutoring Centers
Grant South, Lower level, (815) 753-2825
New Residence Hall: West Hall, room B004, contact ACCESS at (815) 753-1141 in Williston 100 for more information, www.niu.edu/access
Provides students with peer tutoring in a variety of subjects. Hours of operation are Sunday through Thursday, from 6 p.m.—11 p.m.
University Writing Center
Stevenson South, Tower B, Lower level, (815) 753-6636, http://www.niu.edu/uwc/
Provides students the opportunity to talk one-on-one about their writing with trained consultants. Consultants and writers can discuss a variety of topics ranging from planning, organizing, and developing drafts; understanding language usage; and increased understanding of writing assignments.

WILLISTON HALL
ACCESS
First floor, room 100, (south entrance facing Swen Parson Hall), (815) 753-1141, www.niu.edu/access
Provides students with a variety of tutoring services, including one-on-one consultations, walk-in appointments, Supplemental Instruction, and study groups.

Admissions Office
First floor, room 101, (west entrance facing Normal Road), (815) 753-0446, www.admissions.niu.edu/admissions
Assists incoming students with the application process to NIU and provides general information and campus tours to prospective students and their families.

CHANCE Program
First floor, room 120, (east entrance facing Wirtz Hall), (815) 753-0201, www.chance.niu.edu
Identifies, recruits, admits, and assists capable students whose pre-college education has not fully enabled them to take maximum advantage of their potential. Provides tutoring services, workshops regarding academic probation, financial aid assistance, and peer mentoring.

Registration & Records
Second floor, room 220, (south entrance facing Swen Parson Hall), (815) 753-0681, www.reg.niu.edu/regrec
Assists students with course registration via MyNIU and provides copies of transcripts, Degree Progress Report information, and many other services.

Transfer Center
Third floor, room 300, (south entrance facing Swen Parson Hall), (815) 753-0446, www.niu.edu/admissions/transfer
Assists students who are transferring from other universities or community colleges. Aids students with the transfer application process and ensures that all student needs are met.

Study Abroad Office
Fourth floor, room 417, (south entrance facing Swen Parson Hall), (815) 753-0700, www.niu.edu/studyabroad
Provides support to students who wish to spend a part of their education in an international environment and organizes a Study Abroad Fair in the fall semester. Several travel opportunities are available for students and in most cases, students are able to gain financial aid to help with the costs of the program. Program location, length, and cost will vary. Study abroad programs are available in 75 different countries, including Australia, Brazil, Ghana, Italy, Jordan, Peru, and Thailand.
International Student and Faculty Office
Fourth floor, room 406, (815) 753-1346, www.niu.edu/isfo
Oversees immigration requirements and documents. Reviews credentials for all incoming undergraduate international students. Assists in academic and cultural adjustments and oversees the social well-being of international students and faculty.

SWEN PARSON HALL
Student Employment
Second floor, room 232, (815) 753-1394, www.hr.niu.edu/serviceareas/studentemployment
Provides information about regular and federal work-study employment. Potential campus jobs include, but are not limited to the following: food service workers, lab attendants, typists, clerical assistants, teaching aides, and library personnel. Student Employment is a component of the Human Resources Services.

Bursar’s Office
Second floor, room 235, (815) 753-1885, www.niu.edu/bursar
Manages student accounts, including tuition, fees, and surcharges. Students can access their account information via MyNIU, and make payments online, in person, by mail, or phone.

Financial Aid Office
Second floor, room 245, (815) 753-1395, www.niu.edu/fa
Offers scholarships, grants, loans, and work programs. Provides students with applications and due dates concerning different types of financial assistance and information regarding withdrawal from the university.

CAMPUS RECREATION
Student Recreation Center ("The Rec")
Southwest corner of Annie Glidden and Lucinda Avenue, (815) 753-0231, www.niu.edu/campusrec
Offers a range of opportunities including a cardiovascular room, a weight room, track, and several courts for basketball, volleyball, racquetball, and tennis. Services are free to all students with an NIU OneCard. Also provides various recreational classes that students can enroll in for a fee during the semester. "The Rec" is also home to the Wellness Center, which helps students with nutritional guides for good health.

Outdoor Adventures Center
West entrance of the Student Recreation Center, (815) 753-9423, www.niu.edu/campusrec/outdoor_adventures
Provides a variety of gear and equipment available for student activities for a small fee, and also plans day, overnight, and week-long trips throughout the year.

Student Tip
Take time to check out NIU’s webpage. It will help you get to know the campus and see what will benefit you.
—Sarah Honda
Senior
Accountancy major
Outdoor Recreation Sport Complex
West of Stevenson Residence Hall and north of the Convocation Center, [www.niu.edu/nnl/projects/rec.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/nnl/projects/rec.shtml)
Features lighted, multipurpose fields with natural and artificial turf. The area can be converted to accommodate two softball fields, one baseball field, three rugby fields, eight flag football fields, five lacrosse fields, five soccer fields, eight ultimate frisbee fields, or multiple quidditch fields.

Chick Evans Field House
Southeast corner of Annie Glidden and Lucinda Avenue, (815) 752-8255, [www.niu.edu/campusrec/facilities](http://www.niu.edu/campusrec/facilities)
The Chick Evans Field House provides space for academic classes, athletic practices, Campus Recreation programs and special events. It includes four multipurpose courts, a jogging/walking track, and a cardio and strength training room.

Anderson Pool and Gabel Pool
Anderson Hall, on the northeast corner of Garden Road and Lucinda Avenue, (815) 753-0231
Gabel Hall, on Stadium Drive, (815) 753-0231, [www.niu.edu/campusrec/aquatics](http://www.niu.edu/campusrec/aquatics)
The pools are free for student use with an NIU OneCard. Call Campus Recreation for information on open swim times.

NIU Online
Another way to discover all that NIU has to offer is by exploring the NIU website, [www.niu.edu](http://www.niu.edu). The A–Z index provides an alphabetical list of campus resources and academic offices, linking you to their homepages. An events calendar is available to keep you posted on academic and social university programs. You can learn about various NIU locations and traditions without ever leaving your room by taking a virtual campus tour.

MYNIU
The MyNIU system serves as your one-stop shop for registration and your student records while enrolled at Northern. Through MyNIU, you can register for classes, check your financial aid account, find your to-do list for missing documents, check progress toward your degree and transfer credit reports, and change your personal or biographical information. In order to log in to MyNIU ([www.niu.edu/myniu](http://www.niu.edu/myniu)), you will need your NIU Z-ID and password.

Degree Progress Report
The Degree Progress Report tracks the progress you are making toward meeting the requirements for your degree. It shows the courses you’ve taken and credit hours and grades received. It also includes the number and types of courses necessary to graduate. It’s a good idea to review your Degree Progress Report each semester and contact your advisor if there are discrepancies or if you have questions. You can access your current report through MyNIU.

Blackboard
Blackboard is a course management software used by many instructors at NIU. Instructors can post documents (such as the syllabus, notes, and homework assignments) to the site. Students can submit assignments and send messages to other class members through the Blackboard system. To log in to Blackboard ([www.webcourses.niu.edu](http://www.webcourses.niu.edu)), you will need your NIU Z-ID and password.

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Undergraduate Catalog
The Undergraduate Catalog contains information on admission policies and procedures, graduation requirements, academic regulations, expenses, housing, financial aid, and other student services, as well as detailed descriptions of academic majors, minors, and course offerings. Each new student receives a copy of the Undergraduate Catalog at Orientation. The catalog is also online at catalog.niu.edu

NIU Mobile Learn
You can get the NIU mobile application at myniu.niu.edu. It includes the NIU Directory, athletics, news and events, courses, maps, and the library. The Blackboard application is also available to smartphone platforms with a data plan. Go to the App Store for your device to download. Visit www.niu.edu/blackboard/mobile/ for more NIU settings. The App works for iPhone and iPod touch, Blackberry, Android, webOS, and other devices.

Student E-Mail
You will receive official NIU correspondence through your student e-mail account. You can access your NIU e-mail on your web-enabled mobile device. Follow the instructions on your mobile device for setting up POP3 or IMAP connections.

WHERE CAN I GO FOR TECHNOLOGY HELP?
Residential Technology (ResTech)
Stevenson North, Tower C, room 110, (815) 753-6267, restech@niu.edu
Manages and supports all computer labs on campus and provides students with technical support for any computer, software, and hardware problems or concerns. Provides on-site repairs to computers infected with viruses along with network connectivity support to all residence hall students.

ResTech provides support for the residence halls and can address issues related to virus detection and removal, software support, support for Internet access, and support for wireless computing.

Information Technology Services (ITS) Helpdesk
Telecommunications Building, TS114, (815) 753-8100, www.its.niu.edu/its/helpdesk/
The ITS Helpdesk provides campus-wide technology support. This department provides live chat, software, application, and campus e-mail support. Contact the ITS Helpdesk through e-mail at helpdesk@niu.edu.

NIU Computer Labs
Information regarding computer lab locations and hours can be found at http://www.its.niu.edu/its/labs/
Use your Z-ID and password to sign in to the lab computers. You will need to bring your OneCard in order to print. Students are allowed the first 100 pages of printing free of charge; a .07 charge per page applies after 100 copies. If you have forgotten your Z-ID and/or password, log in to www.logonid.niu.edu to reset, change, or locate your Z-ID.

Getting Around On and Off Campus

HUSKIE BUS
The Huskie Bus System is a convenient way to travel around campus and the DeKalb community. The system is one of the largest in the state, and it is completely funded by student fees and fare box collections. NIU students may ride the bus at no additional cost and only need to show their OneCard when using the number 7 bus route that travels to Route 23 (Sycamore Road) in DeKalb and Sycamore.

The Huskie Bus System is a convenient way to get around campus and the DeKalb community.
The updated schedule of bus routes can be found online at www.huskieline.com and in a printed publication available at the beginning of the fall semester. All buses leave from and return to the bus turnaround area on the west side of the Holmes Student Center. Routes travel throughout campus and the community, servicing the residence halls, academic buildings, off-campus housing, downtown DeKalb, Sycamore Road shopping district, and Kishwaukee Community Hospital.

HUSKIE TRACKS
Huskie Tracks is a GPS system that allows students to see the real-time location of each bus in service on the routes. Monitors in the Holmes Student Center, DuSable Hall, and residence halls show each route so that students can time their departure. Additionally, the Huskie tracks system can be accessed online through a personal computer by going on the Internet to http://huskietracks.niu.edu and selecting the appropriate web browser from the choices.

ELBURN TRAIN STATION SHUTTLE
The Huskie Bus System also includes a shuttle that travels between the Holmes Student Center and the Metra train station in Elburn. The shuttle operates on Fridays and Sundays. Tickets can be purchased at the Holmes Student Center ticket office located on the ground floor by the food court. An updated Elburn Shuttle schedule can be found online at www.huskieline.com

WEATHER AT NIU
Although NIU closes for weather-related reasons very rarely, it is important to know where to find weather-related updates. In order to stay informed you can find weather-related information by watching local news broadcasts, visiting http://weather.admin.niu.edu, listening to the radio at 89.5 WNIJ, or calling 1-888-4NIU-OPEN.

Summary
This chapter has introduced you to some of the major campus resources, the history and traditions of the university, and the DeKalb community of which NIU is a part. Now it’s up to you to get involved and live your college experience.

Available Resources

FIRST- AND SECOND-YEAR EXPERIENCE
Altgeld Hall, room 100, (815) 753-0028, www.niu.edu/fsye

DEKALB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
164 E. Lincoln Hwy, (815) 756-6306, www.dekalb.org


Critical Thinking Questions
• Why is it important to know the history and resources of your University?
• How do you think UNIV 101 will help you be successful at NIU?
• Define what college means to you.
Activity 1. East/Central Campus Timeline

What do chronological timelines tell us about a place? They offer us ways to understand complex events in history as well as organize the way we think about and comprehend places. In order to better experience NIU today, it is useful to understand the history of when its buildings were constructed.

With a group of students, find and date the attached list of 36 buildings on the east campus. Construction dates may be found on cornerstone plaques located near the main entrance of each building, or by interior or exterior memorial plaques. As you locate a building, it is also important to record its existing use or function (residence, lecture, administrative, etc.).

When you have compiled your list, sort and organize the buildings chronologically, and identify any meaningful patterns over time. You can do this on a piece of paper, in a spreadsheet program, in a graphical program such as PowerPoint, or even with string and clothes pins. What is the timespan of building construction at NIU? Are there any particular decades when many buildings were constructed? Are there any specific campus milestones that you can identify? Do any of these milestones reflect any concurrent national, state, or social milestones that occurred in the past?

Instructions:
For the purpose of this activity, the east campus is bounded by Annie Glidden Road on the west, Barsema Hall on the north, the Kishwaukee River on the east, and Lincoln Highway on the south. Stay with your group! Take photos as documentation and to quickly collect data for later analysis (ask your instructor for details). Also take photos of all your group members at each location (when possible). Use an online map or your textbook (map on back cover). Get as much information as you can at each location. Your instructor will provide instructions for what to do when your group is finished. Plan to present what you learned about NIU’s east campus timeline. Have fun!

Direct your analysis by considering the following questions:

☐ What is the oldest building on the east campus? ________________________________
  • What milestone could this represent in the history of Illinois? ____________________

☐ What is the tallest, most elaborate, or most expensive building on the east campus? _____________
  • Does the construction of this building represent any important milestone? ______________

☐ Where does the existing library fall in the campus timeline? ____________________________
  • Has the library always been here or has its role changed over time? __________________
What are the original and current functions of Davis Hall? ________________________________
  • Has the building’s role changed at all over time? ________________________________

What do the buildings east of Normal Road and south of Lucinda Avenue have in common? ________
  • What does this commonality represent in terms of NIU’s history? ______________________

Did a lot of building construction occur during World War II (1941–1945)? ________________
  • What factors could account for an increase or decrease in building new facilities at NIU? ______

During which decade did NIU build the most buildings? ________________________________
  • What milestone could this represent in NIU’s history? ________________________________
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Primary Function</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams Hall</td>
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<td>(How would you use this building? What main program(s) or services are located in this building?)</td>
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<td>Altgeld Hall</td>
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<td>Anderson Hall</td>
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<td>Barsema Hall</td>
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<td>Campus Life Building</td>
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<td>Center for Black Studies</td>
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<td>Center for Latino and Latin Ameri-can Studies</td>
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<td>Cole Hall</td>
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<td>Davis Hall</td>
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<td>DuSable Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering Building</td>
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<td>Faraday Hall</td>
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<td>Founders Library</td>
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<td>Gabel Hall</td>
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<td>Gilbert Hall</td>
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<td>Holmes Student Center</td>
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<td>IL ASBO/NIU Public Admin.</td>
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<td>LaTourette (formerly Faraday West)</td>
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<td>Lowden Hall</td>
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<td>McMurray Hall</td>
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<td>Montgomery Hall</td>
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<td>Music Building</td>
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<td>Neptune North</td>
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<td>Building</td>
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<td>Neptune Central/East/West</td>
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<td>(How would you use this building? What main program(s) or services are located in this building?)</td>
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<td>Psychology/Computer Science Bldg.</td>
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<td>Reavis Hall</td>
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<td>Stevens Building</td>
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<td>Still Gym</td>
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<td>Still Hall</td>
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<td>Swen Parson Hall</td>
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<td>Visual Arts Building</td>
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<td>Watson Hall</td>
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<td>Williston Hall</td>
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<td>Zulauf Hall</td>
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Chapter 2
Understanding Your Academic Experience

CHAPTER GOALS

As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Identify NIU student learning outcomes for earning an undergraduate degree.
2. Understand the value of a college education.
3. Recognize the NIU academic expectations for all undergraduate students.
Dear First-Year NIU Student,

Coming to NIU is not simply about adding a diploma to your résumé. What will you learn at NIU that will set you apart from your peers and help you grow in your life?

You may have come to NIU to pursue a particular major in art or accounting or teaching, but you also will find that Northern’s reputation for a strong liberal arts education and its status as a research institution will benefit you, too.

A liberal arts education allows you to explore interests you may never have thought about pursuing. Perhaps your experiences in general education classes such as “Education as an Agent for Change” or “Contemporary Moral Issues” will change your career path and shape your life in ways you never imagined. Completing COMS 100 will prepare you for presenting in classes, and collaborating on projects with people from diverse backgrounds.

Undergraduate research experiences can give you insight into your professional career. Developing relationships with faculty members now could lead to valuable mentorship opportunities for your future.

In the following pages you’ll find NIU’s goals for student learning and what the faculty aims to achieve in each student before graduation. NIU has a support system in place for almost anything you run into, and there are always faculty, staff, or students to listen and help when they can. I encourage you to take advantage of this safety net and take what you learn at NIU (both in and out of the classroom) and apply it to your life. The critical thinking skills you gain will become invaluable.

Franz Varga

Franz Varga
Junior Economics and Finance Major, Honors Program
Junior Advisor, Lambda Sigma Sophomore Honor Society
Box Office Manager, NIU School of Theatre and Dance
Box Office
Economics Student Association Program Editorial Board
Baccalaureate Learning

A *baccalaureate* (or *bachelor’s*) degree is given by a college or university to students who have satisfactorily completed the undergraduate curriculum. Baccalaureate degrees usually require the equivalent of four years of full-time study built around a defined body of knowledge. General education is an integral part of all baccalaureate degree programs at NIU.

But what does it mean to be college educated? Simply put, it is important to graduate from NIU with the knowledge necessary to live and work in a dynamic and global environment, and know how to be a lifelong learner and an empowered and responsible citizen. A college-educated person is someone who uses logic to seek the truth, and makes the world around them a better place. A college-educated person is someone who possesses the knowledge needed to make rational decisions in their personal and intellectual life, and in both familiar and novel situations. An educated person can talk to and respectfully listen to and hear others, can understand and evaluate anything they read, and can write clearly and persuasively.

To help you become an educated person, NIU has developed **eight student learning outcomes** (SLOs) that focus upon the three “C”s of Baccalaureate learning: **critical thinking, creativity, and communication**. These SLOs are the abilities to:

- Communicate clearly and effectively;
- Demonstrate critical, creative, and independent thought;
- Use and combine appropriate quantitative and qualitative reasoning skills to address questions and solve problems;
- Collaborate with others to achieve specific goals;
- Integrate knowledge of global interconnections and interdependencies;
- Exhibit intercultural competencies with people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives;
- Analyze issues that interconnect human life and the natural world; and
- Synthesize knowledge and skills relevant to one’s major or particular fields of study and apply them creatively to develop innovative outcomes.

As a student, you will have continuous exposure to these eight realms of baccalaureate study. As you progress through your college career, you will begin to realize that becoming a college-educated person means finding the interrelations between all these realms.

**COMMUNICATE**

Communication is at the heart of all careers, and indeed, at the heart of our society. Without clear and effective verbal communication and writing skills, a scientist would not be able to effectively share the outcomes of their research, a teacher would not adequately explain a concept to their students, and a manager could not effectively lead their team. Communication truly drives our world.

NIU wants students to graduate with a firm grasp of how to develop and express ideas, both in writing and in speech. To accomplish this, students must give attention to organization, context, language, delivery, and use of sources and supporting materials, all while remaining true to the central message.

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*Good communication skills are important both inside and outside of the classroom in order to share ideas and network with others.*
THINK
There is no doubt that a research project or a major paper requires creative thinking. In fact, we hear the term “creativity” used quite often. The ability to demonstrate critical, creative, and independent thought is key to being a well-rounded student. NIU wants students to develop their inquisitiveness and demonstrate a comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Creative thinking is the capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways. The experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way is characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk-taking.

REASON
This outcome focuses on the ability to explain information presented in mathematical forms, including the ability to perform calculations and present their results clearly; the ability to appropriately express a problem mathematically; and the ability to evaluate the reasonableness of a hypothesis, result, or assertion based upon either quantitative or qualitative analysis.

COLLABORATE
The ability to collaborate with others in a team to achieve specific goals is paramount to success. In fact, the term “teamwork” is used so frequently that it has nearly become cliché. The ability to work not only collaboratively but also efficiently—while remaining focused on the goal or the team’s charge—is a skill all NIU students must have upon graduation.

INTEGRATE GLOBALLY
The first of the SLOs—the integration of knowledge of global interconnections and interdependencies—is critical in measuring how NIU instills its students with global self-perspective and knowledge through cultural self-awareness.

Knowing one’s place in the world and how we affect others is key to becoming an effective member of the global community. Identifying themselves as part of a larger international community and developing an understanding of the interdependencies of this large, complex world, are indicators of future career and civic success.

UNDERSTAND CULTURALLY
Also essential to the success of our students is the second SLO—students’ ability to exhibit intercultural competencies with people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives. NIU’s diverse campus community is a great asset in achieving this goal.

By interacting with people from varied backgrounds, students develop appreciation for, and an understanding of, the rich complexity of the human experience. Achieving this goal, NIU students will demonstrate knowledge of, respect for, and ability to communicate with people of diverse cultures and perspectives.
CONNECT TO THE NATURAL WORLD
A crucial piece of general education is acquiring the ability to analyze issues that connect human life and the natural world. This ability, known as environmental literacy, means understanding the impact of individual and community actions upon local, regional, and global environments.

Students with an environmental perspective have working knowledge in the form of experience with varying physical environments as well as political, economic, ecological, biological, and philosophical education on global environments.

SYNTHESIZE
This outcome measures learning across courses and experiences both within and beyond the classroom. The focus here is on making connections to fields of study, adapting and applying skills, creating new knowledge, and drawing informed conclusions.

NIU will help you achieve these Student Learning Outcomes not only through your major course work (and your minor, if you add one), but also through the Core Competency requirements (see pages 30–31 in the Undergraduate Catalog) and in the Distributive Studies Area requirements (pages 32–34). By the time you graduate, you should be able to track your progress toward these goals and be able to use this knowledge and your practical skill sets for professional and personal success.

Value of College
One of NIU President Doug Baker’s main goals is to help you achieve student career success. You will notice that many initiatives on NIU’s campus will guide you towards attaining a position in your preferred career path after graduation, even if you don’t know exactly what it is you want to do right now, or change your mind in the next couple of years. As with most things, the more engaged and involved you are with your education at NIU, the more you will gain from it during and after graduation. According to a Gallup/Lumina poll, 74% of Americans believe that earning a post-secondary degree is important to attaining a better quality of life and obtaining employment in today’s job market.1

EMPLOYMENT AFTER GRADUATION
College is expensive and can be difficult at times; you want to do everything you can to make certain you will reap the benefits in the job market when you graduate. One of the most obvious reasons for attending college is to find a job (and one that pays well) after graduation.

For the past six years the U.S. has been working to climb out of a recession. The good news is that, according to a 2013 study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (GUCEW), more jobs are becoming available to American workers, with those holding a bachelor’s degree or better seeing more jobs available to them than those with a high school education or less. (Find the full GUCEW report here: https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/tll0zkxt0puz45hu21g6.) In fact, the GUCEW (2013) predicts that 65% of available jobs in 2020 will require education and training beyond that of a high school diploma.

EARNING POTENTIAL

As a result of completing your bachelor’s degree at NIU, you should be able to demonstrate the SLOs, described at the beginning of this chapter, in your writing, speaking, and how you choose to approach various projects. The GUCEW (2013) revealed that employers are willing to pay higher wages to employees with college degrees because they demonstrate higher level thinking and problem-solving skills like those described in NIU’s SLOs. On average, workers with a college degree earn 74% more than their counterparts who don’t hold a degree (GUCEW, 2013). The skills and the experience you gain as a result of getting involved with your education at NIU will be invaluable to you as you journey into the job market.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Beyond obtaining a job, there are additional benefits to earning your college degree that may be less visible. Individuals with a college degree are more likely to have greater access to resources and opportunities to increase their quality of life. They and their children tend to be in better health, have more leisure time, and, on average, live longer than those who stop at a high school education. College grads are more likely to be motivated to engage in the world around them in a thoughtful, more cognitively complex way. Those with a bachelor’s degree have more experience engaging with and influencing the world around them and are more likely to continue to participate in this behavior in the future. The SLOs mentioned earlier in this chapter will be a guide for your experience at NIU to help you achieve success and satisfaction in your career and beyond. Think about the impact you might want to have on your world and how your degree can help you reach your goals (see Chapter 4).

NIU IS A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

Research universities provide undergraduates access to well-equipped libraries, the latest technologies, leading laboratories, and a diverse and international student body. As a student attending a research university with a mission that is student-centered, you have the opportunity to connect and work with faculty using the same resources they use to complete ground-breaking research.

NIU PROVIDES A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

A liberal arts education means that you will graduate with a well-rounded course of study that provides you with a skill set applicable to the variety of situations you will find yourself in after graduation. Many of the SLOs are a direct result of completing a liberal arts education at NIU.

At NIU, you will take courses that, at first glance, will not seem to connect with your major. However, over the course of your education, you will begin to recognize the ways that the knowledge you gain in multiple subject areas are interconnected. For example, what happens in politics (Political Science) affects occurrences in the medical field such as nursing (Health and Human Sciences), and engineering and technological advancements affect the foci of business. In college you will learn to think differently about your world, largely as a result of the liberal arts education and general education courses you complete.
As a liberally educated person, you will be able to develop and write clear, concise, and persuasive arguments. You will be able to understand and detect logic in others’ arguments. You will be able to have conversations with people from a variety of backgrounds. You will have a basic skill set and critical thinking skills that will allow you to analyze problems. You will know how to make changes in your surroundings and find importance in seeking the truth in a world that houses many individuals with different value systems. You will understand that you can influence your community. These skills will not only make you a valuable asset to the workplace, they will also increase the power you have over the way you live your life at NIU and beyond.2

### Differences between High School and College

As you have likely figured out by this point, your college education will be a different experience than you might have had in high school. The chart below describes differences many students experience when they enter college directly after high school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly structured</td>
<td>More flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses less demanding</td>
<td>Courses more demanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires less time and energy</td>
<td>Requires more time and energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are considered children</td>
<td>Students are considered adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are held responsible for students</td>
<td>Students are responsible for themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students remain in classes for one year</td>
<td>Students remain in classes one semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four marking periods</td>
<td>One grade reflects entire semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades might reflect effort, quizzes, attendance,</td>
<td>Grades reflect performance on exams and projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conduct, homework, projects, and teacher’s opinion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers call parents for conference</td>
<td>Professor has no interaction with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher seeks out student to assist her/him</td>
<td>Students must seek out professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor meets with student and parents</td>
<td>Counselor meets with students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from CollegeScope/College and Career Success by Marsha Fralick

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2 Adapted from William Cronon’s The American Scholar, Volume 67, No. 4, Autumn 1998.
Student Tip

Being respectful, polite, and aware of others’ rights is what it means to have class etiquette. Your peers and yourself have paid for an education; respect that decision and behave accordingly.

—Kenneth Barnett
Junior
Pre-Physical Therapy major

Classroom Etiquette

It is important to understand that most faculty members have expectations about how students should conduct themselves in the classroom. Many will share their expectations in the course syllabus or during the first class sessions. The following list provides examples of inappropriate classroom behaviors:

- **Reading the Northern Star while class is in session.** Although this is a good way to pass the few minutes prior to class, you should put the paper away once class begins. Your instructor may assume that you are not paying attention and see it as a sign of disrespect.

- **Using electronic devices in class.** Faculty members expect that students will not use cell phones, MP3 players, and other electronic devices in class. Text messaging, voicemail alerts, and music are distracting to faculty members and to other students. Many faculty members prohibit the use of these devices, although some will allow the use of e-pads, e-readers, and laptops to engage with class material. Always ask your instructor before assuming you can use these devices or any electronic device.

- **Over- or under-participating in class.** Many NIU faculty members will include class participation as a component of the course grade in order to encourage students to share their thoughts and ideas. Challenge yourself to participate at least once in each group discussion, but avoid dominating the conversation. Over- or under-participating in class discussions could negatively affect your grade as well as your relationships with other students and the instructor.

- **Making requests of faculty.** Always give faculty members plenty of time when e-mailing or calling them to make requests, such as help with subject matter, a project extension, or an assignment grade change. Stories of students e-mailing faculty at 2 a.m. with a question about an assignment due at 8 a.m. are commonly shared among faculty members and are considered unreasonable requests. Last-minute e-mails and phone calls communicate to your faculty members a lack of preparation, which is necessary to be academically successful.

- **Eating or drinking in class.** Faculty members vary in opinion on bringing food to the classroom. Some rooms, such as smart classrooms, have a “no eating or drinking” policy. It is important to know that eating and drinking, even if permitted, may depend on the item itself. Do not bring food to class without first clearing it with your instructor.

- **Arriving late or leaving early.** Many faculty members become annoyed when students try to sneak into class late, causing everyone to be distracted by the latecomer. This interrupts their class lecture or discussion. To avoid being late, plan ahead for travel time, weather conditions, and personal preparation. It is also inappropriate to pack up your belongings and to leave before your faculty member has dismissed the class. Unless your faculty member specifically shares in the syllabus that it is permitted, do not arrive late or leave early.

Many students choose to ride bikes around campus to assure that they make it to class on time.
• **Requesting extensions or extra credit.** When requesting that a faculty member grant you an extension on an assignment, the best policy is honesty. Know that faculty members frequently hear stories of grandparents dying, tires going flat, and computers malfunctioning. Also, understand that faculty members are not required to offer extra credit to compensate for poor or unfinished work. If extra credit is available, it is offered to all students in the class so that everyone has the same opportunities. To avoid asking for extensions or extra credit, start assignments early and back up work often so that excuses are not needed.

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**The Syllabus**

A syllabus should be distributed for every class you enroll in during college. Much as you refer to your Undergraduate Catalog as a guide to help you complete courses on your way to graduation, you will use your syllabus to complete each class successfully. Some professors may hand out a hard copy of the syllabus at the beginning of class and others may require you to access it online. Regardless of how you receive this document, it is extremely important to read through and make certain you understand the syllabus for each class at the beginning of each semester. The syllabus outlines course expectations, requirements, and objectives and serves as a contract between you and your professor. The syllabus tells you exactly what you need to do to earn the grade you desire in each particular course. Most syllabi will include:

- **Objectives/outcomes of the course:** These are what students can expect to learn as a result of taking this course.

- **Access information (ways to contact your instructor):** Many instructors will include their work e-mail and office phone as well as office hours each week. During their office hours, you can drop by and they should be prepared to help you with any issues you may be experiencing in their course. Many students use office hours to gain clarification on class material, discuss a grade, ask for a letter of recommendation, and learn about opportunities to get involved outside of the classroom, including assisting professors with research.

- **Course description (title and class number):** You will be able to find a brief description of the course and information that should be comparable to information in your MyNIU account. This information is simply to confirm that you are reading the correct information for the class in which you are enrolled.

- **Process for evaluating student work:** The syllabus should outline what needs to be present in each assignment to receive a certain grade.

- **Academic misconduct/ethics statement:** This statement should be consistent on all of your syllabi at NIU and will inform you of consequences for academic misconduct, including plagiarism and cheating. It will reflect the University’s policy found in your Undergraduate Catalog.

- **Calendar and deadlines:** Your syllabus will tell you what is due when. It is important to list these important dates in your academic planner.

- **Role expectations (instructor’s and students’):** Many syllabi will include behavioral expectations of you as the student and your professor. For example, guidelines for student participation may be defined in the syllabus as well as information on how you will receive feedback from the professor.
• **Textbook(s):** If there is a required text for the course, it will be listed on the syllabus. In some cases recommended reading is also listed.

• **Reserved readings:** Some instructors will put an item on reserve at the library, which allows you to save some money by not requiring you to purchase the reading material. Look to the syllabus to find out what might be on reserve at the library before you purchase a text. Using a reserved reading might require some extra planning on your part (to get to the library), but it could save you money in the long run.

• **Assignments:** All assignments required in your course will be listed on your syllabus.

• **Policy on late work or make-up content:** Keep in mind that many of your professors will not accept late work, however, some may have a policy that allows you to hand in late work with a deduction of points. Although this is not common, some professors may allow you to redo work after receiving feedback. You will always be encouraged to hand in assignments on time and to utilize resources like the University Writing Center prior to handing in an assignment.

• **Attendance policy:** Look to your syllabus to find out when your professor expects you to be in class. It is a good idea to attend every class to gain the maximum benefit of your education. Many professors deduct points for absences.

• **Provisions for special needs:** Your instructors are required to make accommodations for you if you need them to succeed in the classroom; however, they will only be able to do this if you follow the information on your syllabus to inform them of your needs.

It is up to you to keep track of the syllabus throughout the semester and make certain you are maintaining your end of the contract. Use the resources NIU provides (listed throughout this chapter and text), including your professor, to help you succeed in your classes.
Sample Syllabus
EPS 200, Section 01
Fall 2014
M/W - 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Graham Hall, Rm. 300

Instructor:  Dr. Jordan Crayton, Ph.D.
Office Location:  Graham Hall, Rm. 100
Office Phone:  (815) 555 - 1234
E-mail:  jcrayton@niu.edu
Office Hours:  M/W 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Required Texts:
McGraw-Hill College.

Course Objective:
Students will be able to understand the main theories of human development and how
they influence educational practices.

Course Requirements:
All assignments, unless otherwise noted, will only be accepted only via Blackboard.

All papers will be written using the following guidelines: 12-point, Times New Roman
font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, proper spelling and grammar.

Response Paper (10% of final grade/maximum of 15 points)
Due Date: 9/22
This response paper will cover chapters 1 and 2 of the Daniels & Meece text. Write a
one-page summary of the text followed by a 1-to 2-page response using personal
experiences, connections to in-class discussions and how you think this will benefit you
in your future career. Be sure to use the paper guidelines listed above.
Must include 2 – 3 quotes.

Midterm (20% of final grade/maximum of 50 points)
Date: 10/15
40 multiple-choice questions and 2 short-response questions

Research PowerPoint (20% of final grade/maximum of 45 points)
Due Date: 11/3
Choose a theory of human development discussed in the Daniels & Meece text or in the
articles from class. Create a PowerPoint outlining key points of the theory, the stages of
development, and the strengths and weaknesses of the theory. This will be presented in
front of the class and must be within 5 to 10 minutes in length.

Final (50% of final grade/maximum of 80 points)
Date and Time: 12/15 at 10 a.m. in Graham Hall Rm. 300
30 multiple-choice questions and one response essay

Participation (5% of final grade/maximum of 10 points)
This class is heavily based on discussion so a portion of your grade will be determined by
your participation in class activities.
Class Policies:

Late Work Policy: Assignments are due on the scheduled due date and will be collected at the beginning of that class period. Assignments not submitted at the beginning of the class period on the due date, will be considered late. Assignments that are accepted late will be deducted 5% for each day past the due date.

Attendance Policy: Attendance in this course is mandatory. Students will be given two unexcused absences; by the third absence and from then on, 10% will be deducted from their grade. For an absence to be excused, the student must contact the professor in a timely manner (preferably before the absence) and provide the professor with a doctor’s note or a reason that will then be up to the professor’s discretion.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Any student who, because of a disability, may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me within the first two weeks of the semester to ensure the implementation of necessary accommodations. (Contact the Disability Resource Center at 753-1303, if you have not been in touch with this office already, and they will assist you in documenting your disability).

Course Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>93 – 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>90 – 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>87 – 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>83 – 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>80 – 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>77 – 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>70 – 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>67 – 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>60 – 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>59% or below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>In Class</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/25</td>
<td>Introduction/Syllabus</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>Discussion: “What is human development?”</td>
<td>Read Ch. 1 for next class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/1</td>
<td>Discussion on Ch. 1</td>
<td>Read article 1 for next class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>Article 1 activity</td>
<td>Read Ch. 2 (pp. 20 – 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>Discussion on Ch. 2</td>
<td>Read Ch. 2 (pp. 30 – 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>PowerPoint: Schools and Child Development</td>
<td>Read Article 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>Article 2 activity and start article 3</td>
<td>Read the remainder of article 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>Article 3 discussion</td>
<td>Response paper due 9/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9/22</td>
<td>PowerPoint w/lecture: Erik Erikson &amp; Human Development</td>
<td>Response Paper due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy on late work or make-up content: Keep in mind that many professors will not accept late work; however, some may have a policy that allows you to hand in late work with a deduction of points.

Attendance policy: Look to your syllabus to find out when your professor expects you to be in class. It is a good idea to attend every class to gain the maximum benefit of your education. Many professors deduct points for absences.

Provisions for special needs: Your instructors are required to make accommodations for you if you need them to succeed in the classroom; however, they will only be able to do this if you follow the information on your syllabus.

Calendar and deadlines: Your syllabus will tell you what is due when. It is important to list these dates in your academic planner at the beginning of the semester. Many professors will also list what is being done that day in class. This will allow you to be better prepared and know what to focus on in assigned readings.
**Tips for Interacting with Faculty**

- **Show up at office hours.** E-mail messages and phone calls will never fully substitute for the power of a face-to-face conversation. Meeting with a faculty member in person shows initiative and motivation. It also makes it easier for faculty to get to know and remember you when they are calculating grades.

- **Arrive at class early.** The time before or after class is an excellent opportunity to talk with your faculty member.

- **Get to know faculty.** Read the materials faculty members post on their doors or in their office and ask questions about their life outside the classroom. Faculty members are people like you, with interesting tales of how they successfully navigated and succeeded in college.

- **When in doubt, address your professor/instructor as “Dr.,” “Mr.,” or “Ms.”** followed by their last name. Your course syllabus may indicate your faculty member’s rank and degree. Until you get to know your faculty, err on the side of more formality rather than less.

**COMMON MISTAKES STUDENTS MAKE WHEN E-MAILING FACULTY:**

- Forgetting to include an introductory line (Dear Dr. NIU).

- Using text lingo, causing them to sound unprofessional and immature (R U rdy to meet? C U @1 4 R meeting. l8r g8r).

- Leaving no name or signature at the bottom of the message, forcing faculty to guess the identity of fluffybunny17@hotmail.com or Z555555@students.niu.edu.

- Whenever possible, e-mail faculty from your student e-mail account. This way your message is not inadvertently identified as spam.

- Displaying poor use of grammar or failing to “spell-check.”

- Expecting too much when asking for immediate responses to e-mail messages from busy faculty members.

- Occasionally, you may be asked to reply or “RSVP” to an invitation for an event. Whether you can attend the event or not, always reply to the message.

Notice the example student e-mails in Figure 2.1 and 2.2. The e-mail message in Figure 2.1 contains many thoughtless errors that make the student seem unprofessional, immature, and not genuinely concerned about the class. The second e-mail is a better representation of how a student should address a professor via e-mail.
KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

Courses at NIU are taught by individuals with a variety of different titles. Below is a list of various titles that you will likely use to refer to your college-level teachers. When in doubt, refer to your teachers in person and when using e-mail by calling them “Professor” followed by their last name, which should be listed on your syllabus and in MyNIU.

**TAs**—Teaching assistants are graduate student instructors who are earning their master’s or doctoral degrees, and hold assistantships to help professors teach or conduct research.

**Instructors**—Instructors are adjunct (part-time) or full-time employees who are hired by an academic department to teach. They typically have extensive experience in their particular fields. They usually have no positional requirements to publish or serve the NIU community outside of teaching.

**Assistant Professors**—These faculty members have earned their master’s, doctoral, or terminal degrees in their fields. They participate in the tenure process, which consists of proving their expertise in teaching, conducting research, publishing scholarly work, and serving the NIU and regional communities.

**Associate Professors**—These faculty members have earned their master’s, doctoral, or terminal degrees in their fields and are working to become full professors. They have earned tenure, which consists of proving their expertise in teaching, conducting research, publishing scholarly work, and serving the NIU and regional communities.

**Full Professors**—These professors have received tenure, which means they have secured their position indefinitely. They are the highest ranking faculty and have taught, conducted research, published their scholarly work, and served the NIU community to a high level of effectiveness.

Calculating Your GPA

Learning how to calculate your GPA can help keep you on track towards reaching your academic goals (see Chapter 4) and help you stay motivated throughout a long semester. Each grade you receive on assignments for a particular class will come together to determine the grade you earn in that class. The grades you earn in classes over the course of the semester will come together to form your cumulative semester GPA. As you complete more than one semester at NIU, those grades will combine to create your overall cumulative GPA.

Some of you may have taken college-level courses prior to attending NIU or will choose to take certain courses at different institutions as you are earning your NIU degree. It is important to work with the advisors and admissions personnel at all places you choose to take classes to determine if the credits will transfer and count towards earning your degree or if and how they will affect your cumulative GPA.

Summary

This chapter has introduced many of the academic expectations NIU will uphold as you earn your college education. Keep in mind that it is important for you to get engaged with your academic experience inside and outside of the classroom.
Activity 1. Calculating Your GPA

Instructions: Use the tables on the next page to calculate your projected or actual GPA.

1. In Table 1, column 1, fill the boxes in with the classes you are taking this semester.

2. In Table 1, column 2, fill in how many credit hours each class is worth. For example, UNIV 101 or UNIV 201 is 1 credit hour. Where else could you look to find this information?

3. Use the list below to apply the appropriate grade point value to each letter grade. For example, an A is worth 4 grade points. (If you have not received any grades at the time of utilizing this worksheet, you can write in the grade points you hope to earn this semester.)
   - A (4.00), A– (3.67)
   - B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B– (2.67)
   - C+ (2.33), C (2.00)
   - D (1.00)
   - F (0.00)

4. Multiply the number of credit hours for each course by the number of grade points. This value represents your quality points. For example, if you earn a C in a 3-hour course, your quality points would be found by multiplying 2.0 by 3. The quality points total 6.

5. Add up your total quality points and place this amount in the correct total box in Table 1.

6. Add up your total credit hours. Place this amount in the correct total box in Table 1.

7. Using Table 2, divide your total quality points by your total credit hours. The answer will be your actual or projected GPA.
### Table 1: Calculate Your Semester GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Multiply</th>
<th>Grade (Points)</th>
<th>Equals</th>
<th>Semester Quality Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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**TOTALS**

### Table 2: Semester Quality Points, Credit Hours, and GPA

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### Calculating Your Cumulative GPA

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CHAPTER GOALS

As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Understand the impact of getting involved in their college experience.

2. Learn about involvement and leadership opportunities at NIU.

3. Discover how to find and choose involvement opportunities that fit them.
Hello, First-Year Huskies!

We are excited to welcome you to our Huskie community! There are many different paths we choose to take in life, and your path has led you to be a first-year student at Northern Illinois. You should be proud to have come as far as you have. Know that you have a world of opportunity waiting for you at NIU.

As I transitioned here, one concern I had was meeting people and feeling connected to such a large university. Looking back, the best decision I made my freshman year was to get involved. During high school, I was very involved with my theater and choral programs, and when I first came to NIU, there was not a single *a cappella* group on campus. During one of my first weekends here, I decided that needed to change. It just so happened that during those first few weekends at NIU, I met a couple guys on my floor who felt the same way. I became one of the co-founders of NIU’s all male *a cappella* group, the NIU Huskie Hunks. This organization has really helped me feel a connection to this campus. It also has helped me grow as a leader.

So get involved and try new things. There are more than 300 student organizations on this campus, and one of them is bound to interest you. And if not, be like me and start your own. All you have to do is believe that you will find your niche and a sense of belonging, and you will. I wish you the best in your years here at NIU and hope you find the Huskie community as welcoming as I did.

Your Fellow Huskie,

Adam McNeil
Senior Psychology and Communication Major
NIU Huskie Hunks
Community Advisor
UNIV 101 Peer Instructor
Orientation Coordinator
Student Success Team Member
Northern Lights Ambassador
Why Get Involved?
At Northern Illinois University, you have the opportunity to define who you are and who you want to become. A major component of our identity is determined by what we do. NIU encourages students to be active in the university community, as well as successful in the classroom.

Perhaps the most obvious reason for you to get involved is to take full advantage of your opportunities at NIU. Studies show that students who actively participate in their campus community are more successful and satisfied with their overall college experience. Campus involvement provides many opportunities, resources, and benefits to support students’ development academically, socially, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

You will meet other students, faculty, and staff members by joining campus organizations and attending campus events. You’ll find people with similar interests, and begin to build social relationships beyond the classroom or your living units. Joining an organization also gives you the chance to develop a connection with faculty or staff advisors. Every registered campus organization is required to have an advisor. These connections with faculty or staff advisors can lead to potential references later in your academic career.

Future employers will look to a student’s involvement on campus to gauge how active he or she will be as an employee and to see how students’ applied experiences match their education. Individual skills and interests that you possess will be reflected in how you choose to become engaged on campus. More importantly, employers will look for students who have taken on leadership roles through campus activities.

Students can develop leadership skills in an organization by:
• running for an office or taking on a leadership position;
• organizing an event; and
• developing new programs within an organization.

Although courses at the college level require independent learning, students sometimes overestimate the study time they have to put in outside of the classroom. You’ll find out in the chapters to come that studying usually requires at least 15–20 hours a week, which leaves plenty of time for other activities on campus. You might even find yourself having unexpected free time. Joining an organization or volunteering is a fun and beneficial way to cure boredom or get out of your room and into the community. Getting involved also helps balance classes and studying.

—Bridget Hickey
Senior
Special Education major
Many benefits await students who participate in campus activities. Some organizations award scholarships to outstanding members. Students may also have the opportunity to travel to regional, sectional, and national conferences or attend workshops to meet students from other universities. Guest speakers give presentations on valuable resources that may not be introduced in academic courses; for example, you may learn about an internship, job, scholarship, or volunteer opportunity from a guest speaker or organization advisor and one of the best benefits is meeting peers who share the same interests as you.

**ENGAGING. EMPOWERING. EVOLVING.**

Denise L. Rode, Ed.D.
Director, First- and Second-Year Experience

The evidence is clear. Students who get involved in activities outside of the classroom are more likely to complete their degree and have a more satisfying college experience.¹ Why is this the case?

For one thing, students who are involved have more interaction with their peers, faculty members, and staff of the university. They are more likely to form friendships, have leadership experiences, and know about and use campus resources. In other words, they are more engaged in the college environment than students who choose not to become involved with co-curricular activities or more casual activities such as intramural athletics, working out at “the Rec,” and attending plays, concerts, or football games.

If you’re typical of most college students, your peers will have the strongest influence on you during your undergraduate years at NIU. Interacting with the students who surround you in classes, on the residence hall floor, at work (if you choose to work on campus), or in clubs or organizations will help you develop a support network, have fun, and learn about yourself and the world around you, which is a prime purpose of higher education. Here in your UNIV class, you may have a Peer Instructor whose role is to help you get involved at Northern and empower you to make the most of your time here.

By engaging with people in your classes, organizations, and programs and services, you’ll form the CONNECTIONS that will help you become successful in college and in life. These connections will help you evolve into the person you aspire to be.

Over 300 recognized NIU student organizations fit into the different categories listed at the end of this chapter. Students can maintain their physical health, practice their faith, develop specialized academic skills, and socialize through campus organizations and/or events. Involvement categories include, but are not limited to:

- academics;
- sports;
- religion and spirituality;
- ethnicity;
- programming;
- performing arts;
- honor societies;
- military interest groups.

A list of organizations can be found in the NIU Student Handbook. The Student Handbook can be found online at www.niu.edu/fsye.

**How to Get Involved**

It couldn’t be easier to get involved on campus! You may already have attended the Involvement Fair, where organizations had tables so that new students could learn about their programs. However, if you did not get information there, you can access information about campus groups through either Student Involvement & Leadership Development (SILD) or the Student Association. SILD advises campus organizations, Greek-letter organizations, and the Campus Activities Board (CAB). They also provide students with volunteer, leadership, and scholarship opportunities. The Student Association is NIU’s student governing body, run by students who are elected by their peers. Information is provided at the end of this chapter so you can visit either of the offices or their websites to gain information about how to get involved at NIU.

Another step to involvement is to attend informational meetings held at the beginning of each semester. These meetings introduce students to the organization’s mission, goals, and membership. Students may be asked to provide their name and e-mail address to receive important dates and upcoming events in which to participate. Some meetings may start out with an ice-breaker to help new members feel comfortable. Bring your academic planner to organization meetings to check your availability for future events.

Talk with your roommate(s), Community Advisors, instructors, professors, and academic advisors for suggestions about getting involved. Pair up with another new student and attend informational meetings or events together. It’s always easier to approach a new situation with another person.

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Student Tip

*Go to NIU athletic events, plays, speakers, and concerts. Most are free to students.*

—Robert Sterling

Senior

Accountancy major
If you don’t find an organization that seems like a good fit for you, take initiative to create your own. Student Involvement & Leadership Development will help you with the process of developing your own campus organization.

Campus involvement is largely defined by membership or participation in organizations and clubs. However, you may become involved in the NIU community in other ways. You can attend social events and trips organized by the Campus Activities Board or other campus organizations. Also, take advantage of the Student Recreation Center and Outdoor Adventures. You can enroll in recreational classes such as yoga, Tae Kwon Do, kickboxing, and hip-hop dance. Intramural sports and planned outdoor trips are also available to students through Campus Recreation.

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**On-Campus Students**

Living on campus places new students in an environment that promotes campus engagement. There are often events for individual floors and halls, as well as events for the entire residential community. If you live in the residence halls, you are automatically a part of the Residence Hall Association (RHA), a student organization where you can be active and involved in residence hall life.

- Attend Hall Council meetings, which are held every Tuesday night at 9 p.m. Ask your Community Advisor for the location for your specific hall.
- Residence Hall Community Advisors are often aware of many events across campus and might even go with you if you ask.
- Participate in a Living Learning Community or live on a special interest floor (for example, the Business Careers House in Grant C-Tower, the Fine Arts House in Neptune Hall, or the Honors House in the New Residence Hall).
- Your roommate(s) and floormates are other resources if you are in need of things to do. Ask to join them at a meeting or activity that they are going to, or invite them along with you.

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**Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Students**

If you live in an apartment or an off-campus residence hall, or if you are a commuting student, there are also ways you can get involved.

- Get to know your neighbors and become a part of your community. Just like roommates, you can ask your neighbors if you might attend a meeting or event with them.
- Take advantage of the lounge in the Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Student Services (OCNTSS) Office in the basement of the Holmes Student Center (Room 023J). The lounge has a TV, full-size refrigerator, microwave, computers, and comfortable seating that provides a great place to relax in between classes or to eat lunch. OCNTSS also offers special events throughout the year including an Off-Campus Housing Fair and Family Fair.
- Become a member of an organization for commuter and non-traditional students and consider taking on a leadership role. If you’re interested in learning more, stop by the OCNTSS office or visit their website at [www.niu.edu/comnontrad](http://www.niu.edu/comnontrad)
Organizations advertise their recruitment and events on campus in the following ways:

- The *Northern Star*, published Monday through Thursday during the academic year, runs listings of campus activities daily in its “FYI” section.

- Flyers and chalkings are ways for campus organizations to publicize their events. Read the flyers while you are on a Huskie Bus or hanging out in a hallway before class, and keep an eye out for the colorful reminders on your walk to class.

- Check postings on classroom chalkboards and dry-erase boards for upcoming events or informational meetings.

- Information tables are occasionally located around campus. DuSable Hall and the Holmes Student Center are primary locations for these tables.

- The NIU EASY Calendar system is an online resource that lists campus activities such as athletic events, concerts, art exhibits, and information about academic and university deadlines. The website is interactive and available 24 hours a day for your convenience. Visit [www.niucalendar.niu.edu](http://www.niucalendar.niu.edu) to get started.

### Going Greek

New students are often familiar with the concept of Greek fraternities and sororities. However, they may not realize that Greek-letter organizations are not limited to social fraternities and sororities. Not all Greek letters that students may spot on campus refer to the social Greek-letter organizations that support communal living.

NIU also offers professional, honorary, and service Greek-letter organizations. These groups may still have a traditional membership and initiation process, but their mission is directed toward a specific academic/career field, to high academic achievement, or to volunteer services. Social Greek-letter organizations also may include academic and volunteer service requirements, but that is not their defining mission. According to Student Involvement and Leadership Development, approximately 8% of NIU undergraduate students are involved in social Greek-letter organizations.

### Finding an Organization that Matches Your Interests

The following list provides information on the different categories of involvement NIU offers. The examples are not exhaustive of all the organizations of the specified category.

#### ACADEMIC INTEREST/PROFESSIONAL

- Provide additional resources, events, and activities to enhance students’ education in a particular major, department, or college.

- Examples: Engineers without Borders, Student Nurses Organization, Business Administration Student Association.
GOVERNING BODIES
- Oversee student activities and distribute funds.
- Examples: Residence Hall Association, Student Association.

CULTURAL AND DIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONS
- Advocate awareness and education of diversity and cultures.
- Often affiliated with and/or advised by a cultural resource center.

PROFESSIONAL GREEK-LETTER ORGANIZATIONS
- Focus on professional development and networking in affiliation with a particular department or college.
- Examples: Phi Sigma Zeta (Political Science), Pi Sigma Epsilon (Marketing), Psi Chi (Psychology).

SOCIAL GREEK-LETTER ORGANIZATIONS
- Promote ideals of brother/sisterhood, community service, philanthropy, and scholastic excellence.
- Examples: College Panhellenic Council (CPC) sororities, Interfraternity Council (IFC) fraternities, and National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) fraternities and sororities.

SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS
- Focus on campus and community service.
- Examples: Best Buddies, Circle K, Alpha Phi Omega, NIU Peace Jam Scholars.

RECREATION ORGANIZATIONS
- Allow students to participate and compete in sports and activities.
- Examples: Lacrosse Club, Gamer’s Association, Gymnastics Club, Paintball Club.

HONOR AND HONORARY SOCIETIES
- Serve to recognize students’ leadership, scholarship, and service achievements.
- Examples: Order of Omega Greek honorary society, Lambda Sigma sophomore honor society, Kappa Delta Pi education honorary, Mortar Board senior honor society, Phi Kappa Phi honorary.

PROGRAMMING & PERFORMING ORGANIZATIONS
- Schedule events, activities, and performances.
- Examples: Northern Black Choir, Event Production Services, Flip Mode Dance Troupe, Latin Fever.

Student Tip
Check out informational sessions for different organizations. Think about your interests beyond your resume.
—Ben Clark
Senior
Business Administration major

Students pose with the NIU Huskie mascot.

Huskie football spectators use Thunderstix® to show their spirit at Huskie Stadium.
PUBLIC MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS
- Engage students in the application and education of media communications.
- Examples: Student Film and Video Association, Forensics, Northern Star, Towers literary magazine.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS
- Promote the practice, awareness, and service of various world religions.
- Examples: Grace Place Campus Ministry, Muslim Students Association, Newman Catholic Student Center, Campus Crusade for Christ, Hillel.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS
- Encourage students’ education, application, and action in U.S. and foreign politics.
- Examples: College Democrats, College Republicans, Libertarians, Model United Nations.

MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS
- Support leadership, service, self-improvement, and social skills.
- Examples: Veterans Club.

Available Resources

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
Campus Life Building 150, (815) 753-1421
www.niu.edu/studentinvolvement

CAMPUS ACTIVITIES BOARD
Campus Life Building 160, (815) 753-1580, www.niu.edu/cab

CAMPUS RECREATION
Student Recreation Center, (815) 753-0231, www.niu.edu/campusrec

FIRST- AND SECOND-YEAR EXPERIENCE
Altgeld 100, (815) 753-0028, www.niu.edu/fsye

HOUSING & DINING
East Neptune Hall, (815) 753-1525, www.housing.niu.edu

Student Tip
Know the difference between involved and being overly involved; remember why you came to school in the first place. Balancing your responsibilities is everything!
—Novella Blackman
Senior
Psychology major

The NIU Women’s Rugby team celebrates a victory.
A student performs with the NIU Marching Band.
A group of students participates in their student organization’s Free Hugs Day event on campus.
Things to Consider When Getting Involved

You have a lot to consider when becoming involved on campus. Try to figure out what you want out of an organization. Is it more important to you to play outdoor sports or to volunteer for a fundraiser like Relay for Life? Would you rather join a social sorority/fraternity or join an academic honor society? Fortunately, you can do a combination of any of these.

An organization’s requirements may help you decide which activities are right for you. The following are some questions to keep in mind when learning about a new organization:

- How active do I need to be?
- Are there any membership dues or fees I have to pay?
- How long will my membership last?
- Do I need to have or maintain a certain GPA?
- Do I need a certain amount of credit hours?
- Is there a candidate process?
- Is there an initiation ceremony?
- How will I benefit from being a part of this group?
- What is the time commitment (events, fundraisers, meetings)?

You may have to prioritize your involvement and activities to reserve time for your studies, a job, your relationships, or personal interests. Learning to manage your time can help you find a balance between overwhelming yourself with activities and having too much free time on your hands.

Critical Thinking Questions

- In what ways do you believe getting involved will help you succeed?
- What do you think are the most important things for you to consider when thinking about getting involved?
Dear First-Year Student,

Welcome! You are about to begin what, I hope, will prove to be a very exciting time in your life: college. To make the most of this experience, it is important to have a strong foundation so that you can be successful both inside and outside the classroom.

In signing up to take UNIV 101 or UNIV 201, you have taken a very important first step toward building that strong foundation. This class affords you the opportunity not only to learn about Northern but also to interact with your peers and faculty on a more personal level. You will receive valuable information about the resources NIU has to offer (for example, the writing center, tutoring centers, advising, MAP Works, and the Office of Student Academic Success). You will also discover that NIU has a myriad of organizations, clubs, and activities that you can become involved with on campus. It is simply a matter of deciding what is of interest to you personally and then getting involved.

The more involved you become with the university community, the more opportunities you will have to meet new people and open your mind to other perspectives and experiences. At times, you may feel your boundaries being pushed; you may also find that these new experiences teach you a few things as well. That was certainly the case for me. Getting involved at college allowed me to work and interact with people who had different perspectives and life experiences from my own and, as a result, I developed greater self-awareness. I learned to be open, respectful, and gained knowledge from a variety of opinions and ideas.

Be sure to take advantage of this course and all that it has to offer. Be an active learner, not a passive listener. Be willing to explore. Ultimately, your college experience will depend upon what you do with the opportunities that are provided. So, let the foundation building—and the fun—begin.

I wish you an active and engaging learning experience at NIU!

Warm Regards,

Anne L. Birberick, Ph.D.
Vice Provost

Activity 1. Transforming Your Interests into Campus Involvement

Getting involved on campus begins with your interests. Your involvement can be instrumental in building your résumé, networking, and gaining leadership roles. When you begin to search through the organizations available at NIU, keep in mind the things that interest you most.

Part I
Make a list of your involvement during high school or while attending a previous institution. Consider whether you would like to continue to participate in similar or different activities at NIU.

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

What are you looking for in an organization? Ask yourself the following questions and place a Yes or No on the line.

_______ Do I primarily want to make new friends?
_______ Do I want to work on something I believe in?
_______ Do I want to explore something new?
_______ Should I be in a group that relates to my major or career choice?
_______ Do I want a real break from my academics?
_______ Should I continue an interest from high school?
_______ Do I want to be of real service to the campus or community?
_______ Are there financial considerations?

How much time do I have for an organization? ________________________________

Use the Student Handbook, found at www.niu.edu/fsye (click on First-Year Experience, then on Important Resources). What groups, organizations, or activities at NIU interest you?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Continue Activity on Next Page
Part II

Choose one student organization from your list in your handbook that you would like to explore further. You can answer the following questions by e-mailing an executive board member (contact information can be found on the Student Association website: www.niu.edu/sa/organizations), attending an informational meeting for the organization, or participating in one of their events.

Why did you choose your particular organization?
____________________________________________________________________________________

What did you learn about the history of the organization?
____________________________________________________________________________________

Is there an executive board? What do they do?
____________________________________________________________________________________

Do they meet regularly? If so, when and how often?
____________________________________________________________________________________

What types of events do they usually put on or participate in?
____________________________________________________________________________________

How are they funded?
____________________________________________________________________________________

Who can join?
____________________________________________________________________________________

If you attended a meeting or an event, how long was it? What was covered or what took place?
____________________________________________________________________________________

What are your overall thoughts about the event and organization?
____________________________________________________________________________________
CHAPTER GOALS

As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Learn how to formulate clear and realistic goals.
2. Establish the best way to achieve their goals.
3. Identify progression toward their goals.
Dear First-Year Student,

Welcome to NIU! This will be your academic home until you’re ready to walk across the stage, get your diploma, and graduate. Depending on where you are in your academic journey, the day you receive your degree might seem far off in the future, but that moment will be here before you know it! Setting realistic, achievable goals is a technique that will help you find your fit and stay focused on the path to graduation.

Goals help you work toward your personal and academic objectives. They can be short- or long-term, and they need to be realistic and achievable. I’ve found that the best way to keep track of my goals is to make a list and check it regularly. Every time I check off a goal, I feel satisfied and proud of what I’m accomplishing.

Goals don’t have to be complicated. For example: “getting an A on my math test” or “finishing my essay before Tuesday” are both very realistic and achievable goals that will keep you motivated and encourage you to finish the task. By developing this technique, you will be able to accomplish much more than you would ever have imagined in college and in life.

Have a wonderful year and good luck!

Irina Yatsyk
Junior Biology Major
University Honors Program
UNIV 101 Peer Instructor
Course Transformation Project Peer Mentor
Alpha Phi Omega Service Fraternity
“Progress has little to do with speed, but much to do with direction.”
~Author Unknown

Where do you want to go with your college career? Do you know yet, or is it still unclear? What happens if you change your mind? What can you do now to help you tackle these and bigger issues? And, most importantly, why do you need goals and how can NIU help you reach them?

Without goals, people wander aimlessly through their lives. If you are undecided on what your goals should be, take some time to reflect on your current dreams and what you want to accomplish. Do you want to graduate? Do you want to earn all As? Do you aspire to land a great internship?

Goals help individuals, families, and groups all move forward. Nearly every business or organization uses a form of goal-setting to communicate the shared goals it strives to accomplish. Goal-setting is a proven technique that is used by everyone from athletes to business professionals to accomplish their dreams. As a college student, goal-setting can help you be intentional about improving your grades and making your experiences more meaningful.

Characteristics of Successful Students
Successful students tend to have similar patterns of behavior. If you are able to develop positive habits now, they are more likely to become a part of your daily routine. Consider the following characteristics of successful students and think about the possibility of these words and phrases describing you.

Successful students:
- attend and pay attention in class;
- are prepared and on time;
- complete and turn in assignments;
- ask questions and show interest;
- are realistic and have a positive attitude;
- utilize feedback;
- have goals and plan ahead;
- talk to faculty before or after class;
- develop and use personal study skill strategies;
- get adequate sleep;
- and find balance.

This list may seem overwhelming at first, but creating a good foundation during your first year at NIU will create opportunities for you. Some examples are having the GPA that allows you to pursue your desired major, and creating a relationship with a professor that will help you find an internship. The goals you create for yourself may look very different than others’, just as success does not look the same for many people. For some, it may be easier to seek out help, while for others, talking to professors may be a difficult task. Make sure the goals you create are meaningful to you.

Student Tip
Take time to clearly define your goals. By doing this, you are able to recognize what you want now as a student and what you want in the near future as a professional.
—Lauren Unick
Junior
Early Childhood Studies major

A proud graduate celebrates at her NIU Commencement.

Creating Goals • 57
Student Tip

Use SMART goals. Prioritize what is most important, so you don’t lose track. Have a reason WHY you chose your goal. Write down all the reasons you are working toward a goal, so you are constantly reminded. The harder the goal, the more reasons you’ll need to keep you motivated and determined.

—Scott Friedman
Senior
Kinesiology major

Goal Type

When preparing to set goals, it is a good idea to divide them into categories. Common goal categories are the following:

- **Short-term goals** can be accomplished in the very near future, usually in less than three months.
- **Intermediate goals** may take a whole semester or year to accomplish.
- **Long-term goals** can take years to accomplish and require extensive planning.

Other ways to organize your goals are by value of importance (low, medium, or high priority) or by categories (academic goals, personal goals, professional goals, or hobby-related goals).

S.M.A.R.T. Objectives and Outcomes

“Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen.”—Michael Jordan

A goal is nothing more than a target that guides action. Goals consist of objectives and outcomes, which are as important in academics as they are in your personal and work life. S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym to use as a guide to help you create **Specific**, **Measurable**, **Achievable**, **Relevant**, and **Timely** objectives to meet your goals.

**Specific** objectives have a definite answer to the questions what, why, and how.

Example: In order to achieve a grade of B or better on the mid-term and final exams, by October 1, 2014 I will contact 2–3 Psych 102 students by asking my professor and T.A. to make an announcement in class inviting others interested in meeting weekly as a study group.

What: Contact 2–3 Psych 102 students to meet weekly as a study group.

Why: In order to achieve a grade of B or better on the mid-term and final exams.

How: By asking my professor or T.A. to make an announcement in class.

**Measurable** objectives provide a tangible way to determine your progress toward completion.

Example: Is the group meeting by the week of October 1? Are the grades achieved on the midterm and final Bs or better?

**Achievable** objectives are ones which ensure the goal is within your limits. They signal you have the resources and skills to achieve the goal.

Example: Do you have access to the professor and/or teaching assistant in the course? Will you be able to find a location for the study group to meet?
Relevant objectives indicate that the outcome of the objective is beneficial and meaningful to your goal.

*Example:* The result of this goal will help you connect with your professor and your peers, and may help you achieve a higher grade in the course.

Timely objectives state the time frame in which the objective will be accomplished.

*Example:* The group will be formed by October 1, 2014 and will meet weekly throughout the semester. Other time markers include the dates of the midterm and final exams.

A single goal can be comprised of multiple objectives. The larger and more difficult the goal, the more likely it is to have many objectives.

Defining outcomes while goal-setting allows you to measure whether a goal has been accomplished. Outcomes are the desired results of goal completion. By predicting the outcomes of a specific goal, you are able to communicate effectively why you want to accomplish the goal, and what should be expected once it is achieved.

The examples below illustrate the use of goals, objectives, and learning outcomes:

- You want to get an A in your math course. (Goal)
- You need to get an A on the midterm. (Objective)
- You must earn As on 7 out of 10 homework assignments. (Objective)
- By getting an A in math, you should be prepared for the next math sequence. (Outcome)
- By getting an A in math, you should be able to maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA. (Outcome)

As humans, we are goal-directed, constantly assessing where we are, where we are going, and how we can get there. Think of goals as destinations along the trip of life. Some goals are small wayside stops, while others are grand, far-off destinations. Plans are the modes of transporting us to our goals, and determination is the fuel that keeps us motivated.

**Map Out Your Path**

From goals that are dreams to goals that are attainable, goal-setting allows for individuals to map out their paths. These paths and maps often become stories of our life, documenting significant milestones. Many people measure their lives chronologically by goals they have set and achieved.

Take the example below:

*Jon was born in 1996, received his Eagle Scout award in 2013, graduated from high school in 2014, will intern at John Deere in 2016, and will graduate from college in 2018.*
From this example we can categorize the goals:

- Received Eagle Scout award in 2013 (involvement goal).
- Graduated from high school in 2014 (academic goal).
- Will intern at John Deere in 2016 (career goal).
- Will graduate from college in 2018 (future goal).

Establishing or setting goals that could become significant events is powerful. How do you want to remember your college experience? What do you want to accomplish in your time at Northern Illinois University? Goals help you focus and achieve your wants, desires, and dreams.

A goal of becoming the CEO of a Fortune 500 company could take a lifetime to accomplish. Another goal could be to make it to the movies on time in order to get a good seat and watch the previews. As different as these two goals are, they do share similar properties.

**Goal-tending**

Whether you want to live life spontaneously or meticulously planned, the only definitive way to get what you want in this world is to: a) know what you want; b) develop a goal to get it; and c) tend to your goal until you achieve it.

As you create your goals and decide which ones are priorities, remember that you will need to tend to your goals often. Goal-tending, unlike in soccer, hockey, or basketball, is recommended as a goal-setting strategy. The following are a few methods to tend to your goals:

- **Talk about your goals.** This will help you become accountable for reaching them. If we share things with others, we usually have a greater sense of commitment not to fail, since others will know about it. Therefore, tell family members, friends, and others who will be supportive of you accomplishing your goal.

- **Reflect on your goals.** It is important to think about your goals regularly. Often you may think of new objectives or outcomes that are associated with your goal. Additionally, this will help you stay motivated to achieve them.

- **Edit your goals.** Just as editing this text took the help of those with very keen eyes, make sure that your goals are going to provide the outcomes you desire. Also, you’ll want to make sure your goals are in line with your ethics, morals, and values. For example, a goal could be to acquire $50,000 next year. Embezzling could help you reach that goal, but it probably is not in accordance with your ethics and could result in unfavorable outcomes, such as jail time.

**Student Tip**

Let your friends and family know what you want to achieve while here at NIU. This will help you to become more accountable for your goals.

—Jacob Ferguson
Senior
Accountancy major

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Let your friends and family know what you want to achieve while here at NIU. This will help you to become more accountable for your goals.

—Jacob Ferguson
Senior
Accountancy major

Discuss your goals with Community Advisors or other trusted NIU mentors.

**Student Tip**

Develop your goals. Create a plan for achieving them and set deadlines. Strive for the best and carry out your plan with confidence and determination. You can do it!

—Ericka Wilson
Senior
Journalism major

Let your friends and family know what you want to achieve while here at NIU. This will help you to become more accountable for your goals.

—Jacob Ferguson
Senior
Accountancy major
Finding Motivation

“Whatever your goal, you can get there if you’re willing to work.”
~Oprah Winfrey

Interestingly, two of the biggest predictors of being a successful student are not skill related; rather, they are aspirations and motivation.1 Simply having the strong desire to do or be something will help you reach your goal. It is important to have an idea of what your goals are now, even if they are likely to change in the future. Your motivation increases when you have something that you are working for or toward.

Even with goals, sometimes motivation can be hindered by the way we think and feel about ourselves and our capabilities. Pay attention to how you feel throughout the day and how you think about your abilities related to succeeding in school. Are you generally a positive, optimistic person, or do you struggle to feel confident in your abilities? If you are having trouble, seek out resources and support, including your UNIV instructor, to help you find ways to reach your potential.

Your actions and skills are also important in reaching your goals. For example, it is doubtful that not liking math (or English) will keep you from passing math (or English). Choosing to take the time to attend class, study, and take advantage of NIU resources like math tutoring and the Writing Center are actions that you can take to help you gain the skill sets you need to be successful at NIU. As an NIU student, you have many resources to help you reach your academic and career goals.

Available Resources

GOAL-SETTING WEBSITES

Goal-setting for Everyone
http://topachievement.com/goalsetting.html

Goal-setting for College Students
www.goal-setting-college.com

Smart Goals

FIRST- AND SECOND-YEAR EXPERIENCE

Altgeld 100
(815) 753-0028
www.niu.edu/fsye

Welcome!

Before writing this letter I sat in a comfy chair with a giant mug of coffee and thought about what little snippet of advice I could write that could actually be of value to you. What was the one thing that helped me navigate my education so that I could now be succeeding in this job that I love? Without a doubt, it’s goal-setting.

Goals get you out of bed in the morning. Goals keep you going through a rough week. Goals are a great time management tool; they help you prioritize your tasks. Goals give you a sense of purpose and direction and a good kick in the butt when you need one. Goals give you power; you become the architect of your life.

Set goals in all aspects of your life. Make them challenging and specific. Don’t worry about setbacks, but learn something tangible from them so that you can avoid them in the future. When you get where you want to be, set some more!

Some people resist setting goals because they like to be spontaneous. Working toward goals doesn’t have to mean that every behavior is planned to a “T.” It means making choices and trade-offs that get you where you want to be at a pace you are happy with. Remember, you set the goals. Wouldn’t it feel good to go to bed each night knowing that how you managed your day got you a little bit closer to where you want to be? It’s a wonderful feeling; just always remember to have fun along the way.

Best of luck!

*Lisa M. Finkelstein, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Psychology*

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**Critical Thinking Questions**

- Do your academic goals align with your personal goals? How so?
- What are some strategies or strengths that you have that will keep you on track toward your goals?
- Explain any habits or attitudes that deter you from reaching your goals.
Activity 1. Career Goals Timeline

Consider some of the obstacles that might prevent you from graduating in a timely fashion. Did you know that most college students don’t graduate in four years? National statistics show that only one of three students (33%) graduates from a four-year bachelor’s degree program on time. In fact, only six of ten students (66%) completed their college degree after six years! The United States currently ranks 12th in the world with regard to timely delivery of college degrees.

**Instructions:**
Take a half-hour and create a timeline of your expected college career. Do so with a piece of paper, in a spreadsheet program, or in a graphical program such as PowerPoint. Use the period beginning with your first semester here until your expected date of graduation.

On this timeline, identify the most important obstacles preventing you from graduating, and when they might occur. Do you have financial aid that might run out? Are you working and studying at the same time? How many degrees or minors do you wish to complete? Plan to present your timeline to your class and be prepared to brainstorm solutions.

**Direct your analysis by considering the following questions:**

- What are your academic interests? ________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________

  • What is the difference between a “professional” and a “liberal studies” degree? _________________
    ____________________________________________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________________________________

- Have you decided your career path after you graduate? __________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________

  • What sort of career opportunities and job options do you desire? __________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________________________________
    ____________________________________________________________________________________________

  (Name)
  ________________________________
  (Section Number)
  ________________________________
  (Date)
Estimate how much it will cost you to remain in college for a fifth year. 

How can you graduate in 4 years? 

How many hours do you study per week? 

Do you believe you are similar or different to other people in your class in this regard? 

How many hours do you work a week? 

Are there ways to better integrate your working and college activities?
Activity 2. Tending Your Goals and Values

As mentioned in Chapter 4, it’s important to practice goal-tending for all goals in your life. Consider the different types of goals you have for yourself and write them on their respective “puck.” Next, consider your values in life and write them beside the goalie. Then reflect on how your chosen goals reflect your values. For example, you may have more goals in one area of your life than another because you may value spirituality over a career.

**My Values:**

Academic Goals

Career Goals

Spiritual Goals

Relationship Goals

Health & Wellness Goals

Family Goals
Chapter 5
Managing Your Time

CHAPTER GOALS
As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Learn time-management strategies.
2. Determine the best way to prioritize.
3. Identify resources that can help them make the best use of their time.
Dear First-Year NIU Student,

As a freshman, I was nearly overwhelmed by the number of great opportunities that I could be a part of—everything from intramural sports, Greek life, undergraduate research, academic and service-oriented organizations, clubs for nearly any interest, and more. In addition, I had to manage my family life and the jobs that I brought with me to college. It’s easy to lose yourself among all these opportunities, and even easier to lose track of your time. This is where the skill of time management really helps.

It’s helpful to identify what you value most and use this information to build your daily schedule. Many students prioritize going to class. Go to class every day, and use the time you have before, after, or in between classes to get involved in or do work for groups you choose to join or support on campus. Freshmen might think that if they become too involved their first semester they will have a hard time balancing everything. You may worry that involvement might affect your grades. However, my advice to you is to join an organization and make the commitment.

It’s easiest to get involved early in your first year on campus. That’s when I chose to try out many different opportunities, some of which I still am active in today, and a few I’m no longer a part of because they didn’t fit with my interests. Strong time-management skills will help you accomplish everything you want to try.

Stay committed to what is most important to you, and use this time to find your niche at NIU. College can be the best time of your life, but it’s less likely if you don’t take advantage of NIU’s opportunities. So go out, get involved, and keep track of your time.

Dan Jeffries
Senior Chemistry and Biochemistry Major
University Honors Fellow
Undergraduate Research Assistant
PAL Tutor
President, NIU Chemistry Club
Alpha Phi Omega Service Fraternity
Managing time is one of the most important skills you can master in college and in life. New college students—at NIU and other universities across the country—consistently rank time management as the number 1 area they want to improve when they begin college.

Consider the following three suggestions to stay on track to time management:

• Keep your daily and academic schedule in one place.
• Write down everything.
• Save time by planning and then prioritizing.¹

You will quickly learn that you must take control of your own time in college. If you are a traditional college student, you may find that you have much more unstructured time than you did in high school. Although this new freedom can be exciting, it also comes with the responsibility of managing your time so that you are able to get to your classes on time; devote adequate time for reading, lab work, studying for exams, writing papers, and preparing presentations; spend time with family and friends; join a student organization; and possibly work at a part-time job.

Transfer students may have experience in juggling multiple priorities, but may find that starting classes at NIU brings new challenges—perhaps living off-campus and/or commuting, working, and managing family commitments, along with their course work.

Whether you are a first-year or a transfer student, “You will need to spend time managing your time, which will ultimately save you time.”¹ Mastering effective time management in your first semester at NIU will benefit you while you earn your degree and throughout your lifetime.

Tools of the Trade

USING A PLANNER AND OTHER TIME-MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Most new NIU students already have used a planner to keep track of important dates and deadlines for classes. A key to college success is to diligently use a planning system that works for you. Planners come in a variety of sizes, shapes, and formats which break down the day, week, and month. Decide what type you are most comfortable using. Whereas hard-copy, loose-leaf calendars in a binder are preferred by some, others find e-calendars, web-based planners, and cell phone organizers effective. Whatever system you select should accommodate your academic, personal, and social needs.

Your planning needs may change while you’re an NIU student. For example, a week-at-a-glance calendar may work well for you in your first semester. But as you gain more responsibilities and become more involved, you may need a daily calendar that breaks each hour down into 15-minute increments.

¹ Shushan, J. (2014). A pocket guide to student success (2nd ed.). Bedford/St. Martin’s, p. 18
GETTING STARTED

Begin by scheduling the most important details of your daily life, including class times, labs, study sessions, study group meetings, tutoring appointments, and work commitments. With few exceptions, academic responsibilities should always be first and foremost in your planning.

Next, add in work schedules, extracurricular activities such as organization meetings, intramural athletics, and major campus events as well as personal commitments such as social gatherings, family events, and entertainment.

Don’t forget to factor in time for meals, exercising, hygiene, and sleep. Forgetting to schedule these essential activities to your daily routine can cause stress or illness. It’s important to make time to take care of yourself in your quest to become a successful student.

SYNCHRONIZE YOUR SYLLABI AND PLANNER

Your instructors will distribute and/or post a syllabus to the course Blackboard site within the first week of classes. Consider the syllabus to be your “contract” with the course instructor. Be aware that some items on the syllabus may change as the semester progresses. Your instructor will update you on any modifications that occur.

Take time to transfer the assignment due dates from each syllabus into your planner to ensure that you have all essential course details in one place for easy reference. Doing this early in the semester will help you anticipate the busiest times of your semester, and will cue you to begin preparing in advance for those times.

Breaking down large assignments into smaller chunks, with deadlines for each part of the project, will keep you on track for completing work without staying up all night before an exam, paper, or project. It’s advisable to block regular study times in your planner, rather than using “left-over” time for that purpose. University faculty members expect that you will present your best work in the classroom. For most students, their best work takes time and effort to produce. It may also require the use of NIU resources such as the University Writing Center, the University Libraries, and tutoring services. Many times, taking advantage of these resources requires advance planning.

BUILDING IN STUDY TIME

Alan Strathman, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Psychological Sciences at the University of Missouri–Columbia, tells new students that professors want three things from and for their students: 1) to care about their education; 2) to take responsibility for their learning; and 3) to be successful.²

TIP!

If you’re commuting to NIU, use your driving time productively by mentally reviewing notes or memorizing facts for a quiz or exam. On the way home, rewind key points from a course lecture or discussion. A small audio recorder may be useful for keeping track of items you want to remember or lists you need to make. Make good use of this time, but be sure driving safely is your Number 1 priority!

² A. Strathman, presentation to first-year students and their parents at Summer Welcome, University of Missouri, June 8, 2014
Dr. Strathman advocates, as do many NIU faculty members, that students plan to spend 2–3 hours out of class each week studying for every hour spent in class. For a student carrying a typical 15-hour course load, this translates to a minimum of 30 hours of studying each week. In other words, if you are a full-time student, going to class and studying is a full-time job.

The message is clear: there are no short-cuts to college success when it comes to attending class and investing time in producing quality academic work. This aspect of time management—“mapping out an assignment and study plan—can mean the difference between quality work and rushed work, or between an all-nighter of cramming for a test and a good night’s sleep before taking (an) exam.”

**CODING AND PRIORITIZING YOUR PLANNER**

Some students find it helpful to color-code their planner, using different highlighter colors to represent different types of activities such as classes, social activities, and study times. This strategy can help you visualize how much time you are allocating to various categories of activities. If you see that you are scheduling significantly more time socializing than you are studying, you may want to consider rebalancing your time so that you can be a successful student and reach the goals you’ve set for yourself.

*Flags* or “markers” are used when you input important notes or tasks in your planner. Flagging an item signifies that you need to do something additional with it. Simple flags draw attention to some items in the planner; more complex flags might signal higher priorities. Assigning a letter to a priority (a, b, or c) can also alert you to items of significance. Attacking the day’s highest priorities first can help you stay on track to achieving your short-term and long-term goals.

*Prioritizing* helps you code items according to their importance. This is most effective when you take 2–3 minutes to review a list at the beginning and end of each day and then rewrite the list. When doing this, consider assigning some form of reminder for tasks that are high, medium, and low priorities. You can use letters, numbers, or symbols (*, #, !) to indicate the priority level.

*Consistency* means making sure that you don’t assign a “high priority” code to every item. In order for coding to be effective, adhere to assessing and prioritizing items based on the comparative value of each.

*Evaluating* involves rating how favorable or unfavorable a task is to you. If you take care of unfavorable tasks first, you may be surprised at how much of your list you can accomplish and cross off. Give it a try!

*Shaving* time requires that students assess how they spend their current time and where they can “shave off” usable minutes and hours. Using this approach, you may be able to save an hour of time each day. Multi-tasking can be part of this strategy. Can you review your notes for a quiz while riding the bus to your math class? Can you clean your room while talking with your best friend on the phone? Can you record a TV show you’re addicted to (*Game of Thrones* or *Scandal*) to view at a later time, and fast-forward through the commercials? If that’s not

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*Shushan, J. (2014). A pocket guide to student success (2nd ed.). Bedford/St. Martin’s, p. 21*
possible, consider what else you could accomplish during commercial breaks, such as creating the next day’s to-do list, updating your planner, or checking your NIU e-mail account. Maximizing your productive time is essential to success in college.

USE TECHNOLOGY TO YOUR BENEFIT
Having technology at your fingertips can be a distraction if it interrupts your academic life with text messages and phone calls. Setting your devices to “silent” mode or moving them away from your study area may be important strategies to learn. However, technology also can work to your advantage. If you use an online calendar, you might sync it with your phone or other technology devices. You’ll then have your calendar nearby and can use the “alarm” feature to remind you when it’s time to go to class, study, head to a meeting, or meet with your academic advisor. The trick is to make technology work for you, rather than against you, in college.

LISTS, LISTS, AND MORE LISTS
Most of us have found ourselves making lists of what we need to accomplish in a semester, a month, a week, or a day. “To-do” lists can help you prioritize and remember items, tasks, or responsibilities, but too many lists can become confusing, stressful, or overwhelming. Some students find it rewarding to cross off items as they complete them throughout a day or week. Here are several types of lists you may find helpful:

- **A master list** is a single list that you keep throughout a semester. Here, large projects can be broken down into smaller tasks to complete as you work toward a major goal. A master list can help you prioritize long-term, intermediate, and short-term goals.

- **Project lists**, as the name implies, refer to lists that pertain to a specific project or assignment. A project list breaks down the steps that are necessary to complete a task such as a term paper, research study, or another large project.

- **Running daily/weekly lists** can help you keep track of smaller, everyday tasks. By using a designated “list” notebook or pad, you can easily update your lists frequently. This can be handy if an unexpected task arises; you can quickly jot it down, and later prioritize it on your list.

- **Decide what must get done today**. It takes determination and discipline, but the mark of an efficient college student is deciding what must be done that day. Some items on your “to-do” list can wait until tomorrow or even later, but others must be done today in order to reach your goals. For example, studying for a quiz in Psychology 102 the next day will take precedence over joining friends for a video game or shopping online.

Make sure to build time for everyday errands, such as grocery or school supply shopping, in your weekly schedule.
Keep in mind that the unexpected can happen at any time. Getting sick, a family emergency, or a computer malfunction may derail your plans for completing a paper or finishing an assignment on schedule. Build a cushion of time into your days and weeks to allow for unanticipated events that might interfere with your initial plan. Doing so will alleviate some of the stress that inevitably comes with being a college student.

CONQUERING PROCRASTINATION

By now, your planner is filled with important information—your detailed daily schedule, important assignment deadlines, dates for exams, papers, and projects. You have your goals and priorities set, and are ready to go for a successful academic year.

Although organization is a prerequisite for college success, there still are challenges that can throw students off-track. One obstacle can be a tendency to procrastinate.

How do college students procrastinate? Past first-year NIU students have identified the following ways that procrastination can occur:

- Playing computer or video games;
- "Surfing" TV channels and becoming engrossed in a sitcom or sports event;
- Daydreaming while in class or studying;
- Joining friends or floormates to go out when you know you should be studying;
- Spending too much time on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Skype, and/or Instagram; and
- Spending too much time on the phone with family or friends.

While none of these activities are inherently problematic, using them to avoid going to class or studying can lead to academic concerns. Jamie Shushan tells us that "Procrastination is a powerful force that most of us deal with daily."4

Procrastination can be especially powerful in college, Sushan indicates, for the following reasons:5

- Your new academic material may be more challenging or confusing than you’re accustomed to, so it’s tempting to put it off or go to easier tasks first;
- You’re uninterested in the subject you’re studying, so it’s hard to motivate yourself to attack the reading and assignments;

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4 Shushan, J. (2014). A pocket guide to student success (2nd ed.). Bedford/St. Martin’s, p. 23
5 Adapted from Shushan, J. (2014). A pocket guide to student success (2nd ed.). Bedford/St. Martin’s, p. 23
• You’re overwhelmed by the amount of work required of you, and you don’t know where to start, so you delay;

• Other activities are more fun than your academic work, so you decide in favor of having fun and put off what you don’t want to do; and

• You’re distracted by technology, floormates, roommates, work, or extracurricular activities that take up your time, with the outcome that you avoid your course work.

If you find yourself procrastinating, being honest about it is the first step to conquering it. Then ask yourself why you procrastinate so you can develop strategies to overcome this tendency. A few methods are given below:

• **Tackle challenging assignments first.** By taking on the most difficult work first, you may find it less threatening to accomplish. If you’re more focused at the beginning of a study session, you may also do your best work then. Having conquered your toughest assignment, you’ll be motivated to tackle the rest.

• **Set up a “rewards system”** by treating yourself after achieving a goal of studying for an hour or more. A phone call to a friend, a treat from the MicroFridge®, or ten minutes on Facebook may be an appropriate way to reward yourself after achieving a study goal. Be careful, though. The reward should be proportional to the achievement, and should be time-limited so that you return to the task at hand.

• **Work in intervals, and take breaks.** A goal of studying for five hours at a stretch is easy to set, but difficult to accomplish. Be realistic about what you can do before tackling a project, and build in breaks at appropriate intervals.

• **Eliminate distractions.** Contrary to popular belief, your residence hall room or apartment may not be your ideal study location. Find the best environment for you, and get away from distractions. Popular study sites at NIU include the Founders Memorial Library, study niches in the Holmes Student Center, and nearby off-campus locations such as coffeehouses and campus ministries. When you find your spot, make sure it’s a place where you’ll have minimal interruptions. Eliminating distractions also includes turning off the phone, TV, and anything else that could distract you so you can concentrate on the task at hand. Students who are interrupted frequently report feeling more stress and frustration than those who remove themselves from distractions.

• **Divide large assignments into smaller ones.** Assignments such as 15-page term papers and comprehensive final exams are large and complex. Make them more manageable by dividing them into smaller assignments. A term paper, for example, can be seen as a series of smaller tasks, including a) developing a thesis statement; b) outlining the paper; c) researching sources on your topic; d) writing the introduction; e) writing 2–3 pages every week; and f) developing your conclusion.

• **Learn to say “no” to invitations when you know you must study.** As hard as it may be to turn down a pick-up game of basketball or a ride out to Sycamore Road to shop, ultimately you are responsible for achieving your academic goals. Suggest that you’ll join friends or family another time, and feel confident that you’re prioritizing what’s most important to your goals.

Effective time-management skills are needed when working on small-group projects.
• Keep the end in sight. Visualize completing the task, whether it’s a term paper, group presentation, or studying for a final exam. In college, students must sometimes study topics that they find boring or unexciting. At these times, it’s important to keep your eyes fixed on your goal—a baccalaureate degree from NIU. Each class you attend, each assignment you complete, each grade you receive is bringing you closer to that goal.

One of the biggest changes for many first-time college students is that they are responsible for making daily decisions which will either lead them toward the realization of their goals or away from them. Some of these decisions will seem monumental, such as “Should I change my major?” or “Should I get a part-time job while I’m in school?” Others may seem less consequential but still can influence your trajectory toward success (“Should I join an organization in my future profession?,” “Should I live off-campus next year?,” and “Can I take an extra course next semester, or should I plan to take summer classes?”). These decisions demand that you know yourself well and are realistic about what you can and can’t handle. As a one-of-a-kind NIU first-year or transfer student, you will make these decisions for yourself, perhaps with the input of your family, academic advisor, faculty members, and peers.

Although you may not schedule “reflection time” in your planner, allow yourself some time to consider your journey as a college student, reflecting on what you have accomplished and what you yet want to achieve. Take time to talk with a trusted friend, relative, or faculty member about the path you’re on and the person you want to become. Fill a journal with notes on what you’re learning about yourself and your world—in classes, in extracurricular activities, in work experiences, in conversation with your peers in classes and in your living environment. Dream a little about how college will lead you into the career and life you want to have after graduation. In doing so, you’ll develop a perspective on how the time you spend in college now will translate into the person you want to become.

It's All About Balance

First-year students often learn that one of their greatest challenges is finding balance between the many facets of their lives. A good rule to follow is to start with academics. The amount of work assigned at a four-year, comprehensive research university is almost always greater than what was assigned in high school or at a community college. Shushan explains the differences in the following passage:

Readings and papers are longer, lab work is more complicated, problem sets are more involved, and tests are more challenging. Because of the volume of work in college, you must schedule time to work on academics every day, spreading out your assignments and studying over the course of the week and the weekend. Your instructors might not assign homework every day, but you must assign yourself homework every day using your planner and time management strategies...6

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Student Tip

Activities on campus are a blast, but you need to remember that school is your number one priority. Manage your time wisely and don’t overwhelm yourself.

—Elizabeth de Guia
Senior
Nursing major

Explore your interests by taking on hobbies, but be sure to prioritize your responsibilities on a weekly and daily basis.

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While classes and studying must come first in college, we know that students’ happiness and success depends on finding a balance between their academic work and whatever else brings them joy and satisfaction. All students need time for relaxation, fitness, and meaningful activities, including nurturing their spiritual side. Maintaining relationships with family and friends also is essential for students’ well-being.

Your planner and schedule should never become so rigid that you can’t find time for your passions in life. If you love to sing or play a musical instrument, carve out time to join the University Chorus or the Marching Band (you can get academic credit for either one). If sports are your thing, get an intramural team together with people from your floor or organize a group to support Huskie football, basketball, or another athletic team. If fashion is your passion, join one of the NIU modeling groups. Dance troupes and teams—from hip-hop to ballet to jazz—are abundant here. Besides pursuing your interests, these groups will help you meet people with similar interests and find a sense of belonging at NIU.

Time management strategies, skills, and tools can help you assess, prioritize, and organize your life as a student. Using them will help you achieve your goals, live with less stress, and lead a balanced life.

Available Resources

COUNSELING & STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CENTER
Campus Life Building 200, (815) 753-1206, www.niu.edu/csdic

GREAT ELECTRONIC SCHEDULING TOOLS
www.howtostudy.org/resources_skill.php?id=6

ESSENTIALS FOR AN EXCELLENT CAREER
www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR TIME IN COLLEGE
www.ehow.com/how_1584_manage-time-college.html

MANAGING TIME FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS
www.wikihow.com/Manage-Your-Time-in-College

8 TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS
www.collegelife.about.com/od/academiclife/a/timemanagement.htm

DEVELOPING A SCHEDULE
www.studygs.net/schedule

REMEMBER THE MILK: ONLINE TO-DO LIST AND TASK MANAGEMENT
www.rememberthemilk.com

Critical Thinking Questions

• What does it mean for you to have a balanced life in college?

• How do you prioritize your time to reach your academic and personal goals?

• In what ways do you procrastinate? What can you do to eliminate procrastination?
Hello First-Year Students,

I committed to write you a letter on time management. So here I am, on the day the letter is due, pounding away at my keyboard. Does that make me a good time manager? Well, actually... it does. You see, I planned to spend the morning writing this letter—and I planned this a week ahead of time. I have been thinking about what I was going to say and periodically jotted down notes throughout the past week. By starting on this early in the morning, I have given myself sufficient time to make any revisions I need to make. So typing this letter into my computer is actually the final step in a long process of planning and goal setting—and time management.

So what advice can I give you about time management? I’ve found two things are important for managing time effectively.

First, prioritize! You will have many different goals and claims on your time. You will need to study and complete your coursework, and possibly work at a job as well. You may have family you need to take care of and friends you would like to spend time with. Judge what is really important to you—not just today, but long term—and put those goals above others. Recognize, however, that anytime you place one goal above another, the lower ranked goal is being put aside for a while, and this will have its own consequences. Are you willing to accept those consequences?

Second, judge the amount of time you need to put in to achieve a certain goal. If you have a major assignment due that is worth 15 percent of your grade, judge whether you will need to put in 10, 20, or 30 hours of work to get a good grade. Once you have estimated the amount of time you need, schedule in that time—and try to stick to that schedule to the extent possible. What if you underestimate the time you need? What if stuff happens (as it so often does) and you can’t stick to your plan? Build in some slack into your schedule ahead of time so you can meet your goal on time. On the flip side, try not to routinely overestimate the time you need to achieve goals. Not only will you find yourself spending more and more time on the details, but you might also find yourself slipping behind on other tasks.

Time management is not just about meeting deadlines; it is also a way to find the time you need for yourself—guilt-free, without worrying about not getting assignments completed on time. Quite simply, effective time management can help you not just work better, but also live better. 

Best of luck!

*Devaki Rau, Ph.D.*

*Associate Professor of Management*
### Activity 1. Prioritizing and Organizing Your Time

Using this calendar layout, schedule time for everything you need and want to accomplish next week. Refer to your syllabi for assignments and schedule meals, plans with friends, time to work out, and every other activity you have to do.

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At the end of next week, go back and assess how closely you followed the schedule. Write changes in a different color ink and notice the items you changed or forgot to include when you made your plan. Reflect on whether this was a good layout for you, and document your likes and dislikes about using this type of calendar.
Chapter 6
Developing Critical Thinking and Decision Making Skills

CHAPTER GOALS
As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Understand the value of critical thinking for their college success.
2. Apply critical thinking concepts to their academic, social, and personal situations.
3. Increase their awareness of the decision-making process.
4. Become familiar with NIU academic policies and safety resources.
Dear First-Year and Transfer NIU Students,

I am honored to be asked to write about good decision-making at NIU. Coming to Northern is your first big step in making good decisions. It may not seem so now, but this is the first of many choices that will shape your future. Good decision-making can be applied to all areas of your life—academic, social, and personal. Developing your decision-making skills can be a challenge, especially if this is your first time away from home. However, NIU provides many opportunities to help you mold yourself into a great decision-maker.

My experience here at NIU has sharpened my ability to make good decisions. I had to make the financial decision to transfer from an out-of-state university and come to NIU. Another example would be becoming involved on campus. While on the Campus Activities Board, I was able to work on events that entertain NIU students. By working hard and demonstrating commitment, I was able to move into the role of president and lead the organization in an efficient manner. I also decided to become a Community Advisor to ensure that students like you grow and become student leaders, too.

When making decisions you need to weigh various outcomes on how an alternative might play a role on your life. Going out every weekend and staying up all night will not give you those A grades you desire, nor is it good for your health. Having fun is an option but academics should be the number one priority. Learning how to balance your college experience effectively will be one decision that I ask you all to invest in.

Strive for your goals, and make good decisions here at NIU!

Richard Moore
Senior Business Management and Political Science Major
President, Campus Activities Board
Community Advisor
Delta Upsilon Social Fraternity
Becoming a Critical Thinker

Until now, you may not have thought much about how you think. You just did it, based on your past academic experiences. Now you’re being required to think about your thinking—a process we call metacognition. To use metacognition, you must become a critical thinker.

Many aspects of college life will require you to use critical thinking skills. Your faculty members will expect you to think more critically than ever before during lectures and on assignments. Your academic advisor will expect you to use critical thinking when deciding on your major and selecting courses to fulfill your academic program. Your contributions in discussions and study groups will require that you offer comments and questions that demonstrate a high quality of thought.

Thinking critically also comes into play in your life outside of academics. A commuting student, for example, will use critical thinking when deciding whether to drive to campus for classes on a day with severe winter weather. A student living in a residence hall or apartment will use these skills when deciding how best to spend their time—inviting friends over or working on a project due next week. In short, “critical thinking is at the core of a college education,” according to Jamie Shushan (2014, p. 49). It’s one of the most important skills you will develop during your NIU career.

DEFINING CRITICAL THINKING

There are many definitions of “critical thinking,” a concept which dates back 2,500 years to the ancient Greek philosophers. A simple definition offered by Richard Paul and Linda Elder is that “Critical thinking is the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it.” These authors describe a “well cultivated thinker” as one who:

- Raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;
- Gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively;
- Comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards;
- Thinks open-mindedly about alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and
- Communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.¹

One of the outcomes of strengthening critical thinking skills is that you are less likely to take what you hear or read at face value. You’ve probably already discovered that many questions or problems can have multiple answers or solutions. Looking through the lens of critical thinking will help you consider the context of a particular problem, weigh the evidence for a point of view, evaluate the consequences of potential solutions, and come to your own decision about the issue.

Critical thinkers have an attitude of “healthy skepticism.” They use logical reasoning, and avoid becoming defensive or emotional. They ask questions, consider multiple perspectives, and draw their own conclusions.²

They avoid what Gardner and Barefoot call "logical fallacies," which may be characterized by attacking the person, appealing to false authority, “jumping on a bandwagon,” falling victim to a false cause, making hasty generalizations, or assuming that something is true because it hasn’t been proven false.³

In his work, A Super-Streamlined Conception of Critical Thinking, Robert Ennis describes a critical thinker as one who:

1. Is open-minded and mindful of alternatives;
2. Tries to be well-informed;
3. Judges the credibility of sources;
4. Identifies conclusions, reasons, and assumptions;
5. Judges the quality of an argument, including its reasons, assumption, and evidence;
6. Can develop and defend a reasonable position;
7. Asks appropriate clarifying questions;
8. Formulates realistic hypotheses;
9. Understands the context of a situation;
10. Draws conclusions when warranted, but with caution.⁴

CRITICAL THINKING IN COLLEGE

College is a prime time for developing critical thinking skills by applying these principles to your own life. As Shushan (2014) points out, “All of us are shaped by our past learning and experiences... If you personalize material and make it matter to you, you’re more likely to think deeply.”⁵ You may find that your college experiences cause you to question some of your past thinking. For example, you may be living in a residence hall environment where you’ll meet other students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Or you may find yourself in a class with persons different from you in age, ability/disability status, race, gender identity, or other factors. You may learn about religions or belief systems that are different from those you know. Your course work may expose you to historical, philosophical, or political views you’ve never encountered before. As a result, you’ll have many opportunities to practice critical thinking in a variety of settings.

Most colleges and universities actively work to create opportunities for growth in critical thinking. For example, NIU’s 2014–2015 Common Reading, Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation is intended to foster a critical thinking mindset. By reading the book, participating in CRE-related campus events, and hearing author Eboo Patel speak about his own experiences, you will be asked to employ critical thinking skills as you reflect on your own beliefs and values.

ASKING QUESTIONS AND CRITICAL THINKING

If it hasn’t already occurred, you will quickly find that even faculty share different opinions about the subjects they teach. In teaching the history of World War I or genocide in Rwanda, for example, a history professor might assess the causes and consequences of these conflicts differently than a faculty member in political science. While this experience may stir up cognitive dissonance⁶ for students, it also can encourage critical thinking development by forcing students to evaluate the merits of both views. Perhaps a synthesis of these viewpoints—and consideration of even additional perspectives—will provide a richer explanation than any one on its own.

One of the important features of critical thinking is asking questions—of your faculty, about your textbooks, in discussion, and even of yourself. You may wonder why some faculty members assign readings that are not discussed in class. In part, these readings supplement (or even contradict) the material you learn in class, providing additional perspectives. So be sure you have access to required course material, either by buying or renting the texts or accessing them through the University Library system. It’s also beneficial to read as much of the recommended material as possible. Remember, if it didn’t have value, it wouldn’t be on the syllabus.

Faculty members also appreciate students who ask thoughtful questions in class or during office hours. Questioning is an essential part of critical thinking. As Shushan (2014) puts it, "Asking thoughtful questions means that you’re a thinking and engaged participant rather than a passive observer."⁷

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CRITICAL THINKING CHECKLIST

- **Conceptualize** material fully by asking questions frequently and finding answers.
- **Evaluate** your reaction to material by asking whether you agree or disagree with it and why.
- **Analyze** material by being critical of all perspectives and by asking what is missing.
- **Synthesize** material to make connections and examine the big picture.
- **Apply** what you’re learning to past experiences in order to better understand your reactions to material.


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⁶ The term cognitive dissonance describes the feeling of discomfort from holding two conflicting beliefs. When there is a discrepancy between beliefs and behaviors, something must change in order to eliminate or reduce the dissonance.
1. **All reasoning has a PURPOSE.**
   - State your purpose clearly.

2. **All reasoning is an attempt to FIGURE something out, to settle some QUESTION, solve some PROBLEM.**
   - State the question at issue clearly and precisely.

3. **All reasoning is based on ASSUMPTIONS.**
   - Clearly identify your assumptions and determine whether they are justifiable.

4. **All reasoning is done from some POINT OF VIEW.**
   - Identify your point of view.
   - Seek other points of view and identify their strengths as well as weaknesses.
   - Strive to be fairminded in evaluating all points of view.

5. **All reasoning is based on DATA, INFORMATION, and EVIDENCE.**
   - Search for information that opposes your position as well as information that supports it.

6. **All reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, CONCEPTS and IDEAS.**
   - Identify key concepts and explain them clearly.
   - Consider alternative concepts or alternative definitions of concepts.

7. **All reasoning contains INFERENCES or INTERPRETATIONS by which we draw CONCLUSIONS and give meaning to data.**
   - Check inferences for their consistency with each other.
   - Identify assumptions that lead you to your inferences.

8. **All reasoning leads somewhere or has IMPLICATIONS and CONSEQUENCES.**
   - Trace the implications and consequences that follow from your reasoning.
   - Search for negative as well as positive implications.
   - Consider all possible consequences.

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**Guidelines for Evaluating the Quality of Thinking**

Use the following questions to help you develop critical thinking skills in class lectures, reading, discussion, assignments, and when evaluating the value of sources:

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<td><strong>Clarity</strong></td>
<td>Could you elaborate further? Could you give me an example of what you mean?</td>
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<td><strong>Relevance</strong></td>
<td>How does that relate to the problem? How does that help us with the issue?</td>
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<td><strong>Logic</strong></td>
<td>Does all this make sense together? Does your first paragraph fit in with your last?</td>
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<td><strong>Accuracy</strong></td>
<td>How could we check that? How could we find out if that is true? How could we verify or test that?</td>
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<td><strong>Depth</strong></td>
<td>What factors make this a difficult problem? What are some of the complexities of this question?</td>
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<td><strong>Significance</strong></td>
<td>Is this the most important problem to consider? Is this the central idea to focus on? Which of these facts are most important?</td>
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<td><strong>Precision</strong></td>
<td>Could you be more specific? Could you give me more details?</td>
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<td><strong>Breadth</strong></td>
<td>Do we need to look at this from another perspective? Do we need to consider another point of view? Is there another way to look at this?</td>
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<td><strong>Fairness</strong></td>
<td>Do I have any vested interest in this issue? Am I fairly representing the viewpoints of others?</td>
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**EVALUATING SOURCES**

How do you identify sources for a term paper, oral presentation, or group project? Are you intentional about your search, or do you settle for a few sources you’ve found on Google, without weighing their credibility? At NIU, you’ll be required to critically evaluate the sources you cite in your work. Planning well ahead of assignment due dates allows you the time you need to locate and evaluate the quality of materials you use.

In their text, *Step by Step to College and Career Success*, John Gardner and Betsy Barefoot encourage students to measure potential sources by three criteria: relevance, authority, and bias. Relevance refers to the suitability of the source for your purposes. Questions to be asked in this category include the following:

- Is it introductory? (These sources can be helpful when you’re new to the subject)
- Is it definitional? (These sources provide description and detail on a topic)
- Is it analytical? (These sources often help you analyze or interpret data)

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• Is it comprehensive? (These sources help you look at a topic in depth and offer evidence to support conclusions)
• Is it current? (Depending on the subject, usually newer sources are preferred to older ones. There are exceptions, though, for foundational or historic sources)
• Can you draw conclusions from it? (Ask the question, “So what?” Is this source important, and is it relevant to my topic?)

(adapted from Step by Step to College and Career Success, fourth edition, by John N. Gardner and Betsy O. Barefoot, Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2011)

Authority refers to the qualifications of the author. Was the source qualified to speak or write about this topic? Is the source an expert in the field you’re studying? Be ready to identify the author and say why you selected his or her work to include in your assignment. For example, I’ve referred to the work of Gardner and Barefoot in this chapter. I chose these authors because they are the leading authorities in the field of the first-year college experience. Their qualifications include their academic degrees; their established record of teaching, research, and publication; and their international reputation in the field about which I’m writing. As you investigate potential sources, you might look at their academic backgrounds and their track record of scholarly activity. You also can ask your faculty member about the reliability of a source you’re considering using.

It’s important to note any biases a source brings to their work. Every writer or speaker has a particular point of view, and you will want to know whether a source brings a particular bias (for example, a political, religious, racial, or gender bias) to his or her work. Knowing this may help you avoid sources that may be untrustworthy or slant their work in a particular direction.

Gardner and Barefoot (2011, p. 55) also suggest that students be cautious about Internet sources. It can be more difficult to assess the credibility of these sources for accuracy, reliability, and quality. When in doubt, ask your instructor or professor about the trustworthiness of a particular website before using it.

Making Good Decisions
In college—and in life—you will be faced with making decisions on a daily basis. Some of these decisions will be routine, such as what to wear or what to eat for breakfast. Others may be life-changing, including decisions about selecting a college, changing your major, or deciding whether to continue or end a relationship that has been significant to you.

There are several models and principles available to guide you in the process of making good decisions. We’ll introduce you to a few of them in the first part of this chapter:

Step One: Recognize the Decision. The first step in making a decision is realizing that a decision needs to be made. For example, first-year student Derek needs to achieve a 3.00 (B) GPA in order to retain his scholarship. He is taking a math class in which the final grade is based on three exams (all weighted equally) spread out over the semester. He anticipates that this will be his hardest course, and wants to get at least a “B” grade. He believes that there should be plenty of time for him to meet with the professor, find a tutor, and determine the best way to study for the exams. However, Derek may not have realized that these steps should have been taken before the first exam so that he could’ve avoided an exam grade of “D,” which could negatively affect his final course grade.

Step Two: Generate Alternative Solutions. If there are no options, there is no decision to make. However, in most situations, there is more than one possible alternative, and students must use their critical thinking skills (discussed earlier in this chapter) to weigh the relative merits of their choices. In doing so, consider your desired outcome. Which alternative is most likely to lead you to that outcome? What information and resources do you need in order to make your best decision? Besides yourself, who else may be affected by your decision?
Think about Derek’s decision above. What alternative solutions can you brainstorm so that he can achieve his goal of attaining at least a “B” in his math course? What would be your course of action if you were in Derek’s position?

**Step Three: Information Gathering.** What information is needed in order to evaluate the alternative solutions brainstormed in Step Two? Derek may need to consider:

- The likelihood that he can raise his math grade over the next two exams with additional help;
- The consequences of dropping the course on his academic progress, if it appears that he can’t be successful in it;
- The consequences of dropping the course on his financial aid status, if it appears that he can’t be successful in it;
- His grades so far in other courses, and how they factor into his overall GPA;
- The possibility of repeating the course at NIU to replace a potential low grade;
- The implications of possibly having a grade lower than a “C” on a transcript, if Derek is considering applying to graduate or professional programs in the future;
- The possibility of dropping the course and picking up an equivalent course at a community college.

In Step Three, it’s essential that Derek get accurate and reliable information about his alternatives. Sources of information might include the *Undergraduate Catalog*, the Four-Year Degree Path for his major, his academic advisor, his math instructor, tutoring services on campus, the Scholarship Office, and Financial Aid.

**Step Four: Selecting an Alternative.** Many people consider Step Four to be the main component of decision making, which may undercut the complete process and lead to a less than satisfactory decision.

At this stage, it’s wise to consider the concept of *locus of control* (locus is a Latin word meaning “place”). This term refers to the strength of the belief we hold about our ability to control the outcomes of our actions. A person with an *external locus of control* is more likely to believe that things happen by chance or luck. A person with an *internal locus of control* may believe that outcomes are the result of intentional decisions they have made, and the effort they’ve spent in implementing those changes.

Derek, for example, may believe that he got a poor grade on his math exam because the teacher asked difficult and unfair questions; this would demonstrate an external *locus of control*. Coming from an internal *locus of control*, Derek might recognize that he performed poorly on the exam due to poor study habits and spending too little time preparing for the test. Derek will need to reflect on the results of the exam and analyze the causes for the outcome in making a decision about what to do about the course now.

**Step Five: Action.** The fifth step in the decision-making process is implementing the desired alternative.

**Step Six: Reflection and Evaluation.** After the choice has been implemented, it’s important to step back and reflect on the adequacy of the decision that has been made. If the process has been followed well, Derek (and you) will have made a decision that is positive and rewarding.
PRACTICING ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

What makes someone a “good person”? Most people would agree that a “good person” is respectful of others, honest and trustworthy, and frequently places the needs of others above his or her own. A “good person” does the right thing in situations in which he or she may be tempted to do otherwise for personal gain or pleasure. A “good person” is almost always respected by others.

Such a person is guided by laws and rules, and a set of personal values which dictate his or her behavior. These values are instilled by factors such as family upbringing, religious beliefs, cultural norms, and personal life experiences. All of these factors have an influence on personal values and creating a personal code of ethics. Most NIU students know right from wrong when faced with a difficult decision. However, it is sometimes hard to have the maturity and self-discipline to do the right thing, especially when it seems that everyone else is doing the opposite. It is also difficult to stick to your principles if you are unlikely to get caught doing the wrong thing.

The behavior of young children is frequently determined by avoidance of punishment. They are likely to decide to do things solely on the basis of whether they will be caught. Small children do not have the mature judgment and life experience to have developed a personal code of ethics. As we grow into mature adults we begin to reason beyond merely the risk of punishment and the need to fit in with a particular group of people. We look for friends whose personal ethics more closely match our own, rather than modifying our behaviors to avoid punishment or to fit in.

SOCIAL NORMS

Everyone is interested in making friends at college. Everyone wants to fit in and be accepted by roommates, floor mates, or peers in classes. As a result, new students who haven’t yet had the chance to make many friends at Northern are particularly vulnerable to what they perceive as campus norms. A norm is any attitude, opinion, feeling, or action that is shared by two or more people and guides their behavior. Campus social norms can influence your decisions, based on the perception that “everyone is doing it” and that to fit in, you must conform or participate in such behavior (such as drinking excessively or engaging in casual sex). Being able to identify accurate social norms requires an understanding that every dominant norm that emerges or every norm that persists is not necessarily the “right” norm for you. For instance, some groups of students may have created a norm by suggesting it is permissible to consume alcohol underage, whereas different groups of students might have a social norm that finds drinking underage unethical and unacceptable.

HOW DOES MY DECISION AFFECT ME AND/OR OTHERS?

Another quality of a mature adult or “good person” is the degree to which he or she takes into account the effect his or her behavior will have on others. Such a person accepts responsibility not only for himself or herself, but also for others in the community. This trait can be exhibited when you make a special effort to be friendly, reach out to the quiet person on your residence hall floor or in your class, stop and help a stranger pick up dropped books and papers, hold the door for a person using a wheelchair, or volunteer time at a homeless shelter or nursing home. This person does not take actions that might have a negative impact on someone else because he or she can imagine how it would feel to be in the other person’s shoes. This quality is called empathy or an “ ethic of care.” It is what causes those who possess it to confront racist, sexist, and homophobic jokes or other behaviors that belittle or demean others.

Student Tip

Don’t be afraid to do what you feel is right. If you think a situation is wrong for you, then speak up, get help, or walk away.

—Bridgett Phelan
Senior
Communicative Disorders major
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
One type of ethical decision frequently faced by NIU students involves academic honesty or integrity. Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. The two most common types of academic dishonesty are cheating on quizzes or tests and plagiarizing term papers or other written assignments. Tests and papers are assigned by instructors to assess what you know. They are to demonstrate your ability to answer questions, do research, and put together words in an effective manner. Any action that you take that results in a test or paper representing something else is academic misconduct.

CHEATING ON TESTS OR QUIZZES
“Cribbing”
- Using a “crib sheet” or other material that contains formulas, dates, or other information that you look at during a test when the instructor has not approved the use of such materials.
  - Pre-programming a calculator or cell phone to display information.
  - Text messaging someone outside the class for answers.
- Obtaining a copy of a test used by the instructor in a previous semester is also a form of academic misconduct, unless the instructor has specifically approved this practice. (Some instructors make files of previous tests available in the library for student use.)
- Looking at someone else's paper for answers to copy is by far the most common type of cheating.

PLAGIARISM
- Definition: Representing someone else’s words or ideas as your own.
- Can be in the form of phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or entire papers available on the Internet or given to you by a friend.
- Simply changing a few words here and there does not make its use acceptable without proper citation because the original writing was not your own.
- Students responsible for, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved, and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.
- How to avoid plagiarism: Cite your sources every time!
- You may not find it worth the loss of your academic integrity and the potential disciplinary sanctions you may face if you are caught cheating.
Academic misconduct is taken very seriously at NIU. The penalties for getting caught are likely to be much more serious than they were in your high school or community college, and they could easily result in your removal (suspension or expulsion) from the university.

Instructors are authorized to use their individual discretion in dealing with academic misconduct in their classes and can levy certain sanctions. The student will be given the opportunity to resolve the matter in meetings with the faculty member and the department chair. Faculty, for example, can then decide whether the student shall rewrite a paper or receive a lower grade on a paper. Faculty may decide to award no points for a paper, quiz, or test. They can even choose to assign an “F” for the final grade in a class on the basis of a single incident, no matter how small the offense.

NIU policy requires the instructor to report any incidence of academic misconduct to the Office of Community Standards & Student Conduct by completing an “Academic Misconduct Incident Report.” The faculty member is to notify the student in writing whenever such action is taken. The Office of Community Standards & Student Conduct will receive a copy of the Academic Misconduct Incident Report indicating the final disposition of the case, which will be placed in the student’s conduct file. The instructor will indicate on the report if the matter has been settled between the faculty member and the student or if the faculty member is referring the matter to the Office of Community Standards & Student Conduct for further review.

Actions taken by Community Standards & Student Conduct are completely separate from those taken by the instructor. The office has the authority to impose any sanctions which are not grade related, anything from a letter of written warning through university expulsion. Students should refer to the Student Code of Conduct for additional information about non-academic sanctions. Students who are expelled from Northern Illinois University receive a permanent notation on their transcript that follows them for the rest of their lives. The transcript may be sent to other colleges or universities when the student applies for admission and to potential employers when the student applies for a job. Sanctions greater than an “F” in a course can be levied only through the university conduct system. Whether or not the student is found responsible or not responsible for his or her action will be ruled by the Academic Misconduct Hearing Board. This ruling will be binding.

In cases where there is either a finding of responsibility or an admission of responsibility by the student, the instructor remains solely responsible for assigning a course grade consistent with the policies set forth in the course syllabus. In cases where the student feels the penalty of less than or equal to an “F” in the course is excessive and/or inappropriate, an appeal of the penalty only may be made through the grade appeal process. Students may find the information for Grade Appeal Process in the Academic Policy & Procedure Manual on the University Provost’s website.

Obviously, the potential penalties for cheating or plagiarizing are severe. If you engage in these behaviors, you take a huge risk that could jeopardize not only your education, but your career opportunities as well.
Safe Decision-Making at NIU

You will make decisions daily as an NIU student. Some will have long-lasting consequences, some will seem inconsequential, and others will require you to delay gratification (such as going to class every time to earn a higher grade at the end of the semester). An especially important area for good decision making is your personal safety. (You will learn more information about making good decisions regarding your personal health and wellness in Chapter 8.)

NIU is a community of nearly 22,000 students and 4,648 faculty and staff members. Each person on NIU's campus contributes to the safety of the community. While certain circumstances are out of anyone's control, no matter who or where you are, there are some things that you can do to make smarter, safer decisions.

Here are some tips to help keep you safe:

- Walk with others, especially late at night.
- Use the NIU Huskie Patrol (815-753-9658) or Late Night Ride (815-753-2222) services.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Tell people where you're going and when you expect to return.
- Keep to well-lit, busy routes.
- Have your keys ready as you approach your vehicle, and look inside before getting in.
- Extensive safety and security information is available at www.niu.edu/campuslife/safety/ and in the Student Handbook.

New students are encouraged to sign up to receive text alerts from the NIU Police, so that they will be contacted if there is an imminent and verifiable threat to the lives and safety of the general campus population. The text will alert you to the nature of the situation and what steps you should take to stay safe. You can sign up on MyNIU Student Center by changing your Personal Information and adding your cell phone number. Visit www.niu.edu/emergencyinfo/register for more information.

If stopped by the police:10

- Always ask the police if you are free to go. If the officer says "yes," you have the absolute right to remain silent and leave.
- Never run from the police.
- If the officer says you are not free to go, you have the right to remain silent, but realize that refusing to give your name is likely to arouse suspicion.
- If you choose to talk to the police, anything you say can be used against you in court.
- You can be prosecuted for giving police false information.
- You need not consent to a search of your person or belongings, but never physically resist a search. While your silence cannot be taken as consent, it is better to verbalize your refusal. You can contest the search later in court.

10 Reprinted with permission from NIU Students’ Legal Assistance.
If stopped in your car:11

• If you receive a ticket, sign it. Signing a ticket is not an admission of guilt. You can still contest the ticket in court. If you do not sign the ticket, you are more likely to be arrested.
• You need not consent to a search of your person, your car, the glove compartment, or trunk. Verbalize your refusal, but do not physically resist.
• Upon request, you must show your driver’s license, registration, and proof of insurance and must exit your vehicle if told to do so. If you are a passenger, you must exit the vehicle if requested. You have the right to remain silent, and can be prosecuted for providing false information or identification.

Making Good Decisions Online
In a recent study, college students have been identified as the most frequent users of the Internet, mainly for the purpose of communicating and socializing with others.

With so many web-based communication tools such as instant messengers (IM), Twitter, Skype, blogs, and social community sites such as Facebook, college students have multiple mediums of communication to choose from and pressing decisions to make about what to share, where to share, and how to share information.

• As of June 2014, Facebook reported over 1.28 billion monthly active users,
• 802 million are daily users, and
• 1.01 billion users actively use Facebook mobile products.12
• As of April 2014, Twitter reports having 500 million tweets a day and 241 million active users.13

WHAT TO SHARE
In communicating or socializing online, one of the first questions you should ask yourself is, “What kind of information do I plan to share?” Will you share your personal thoughts about politics, religion, and gender roles? Will you share personal information such as your cell phone number, address, and revealing facts about yourself? Perhaps you plan to share where you are or what you are doing every hour of the day.

When determining what to share, it is important to ask these questions:

• What is the purpose of sharing this information?
• What are the possible consequences of posting this information?
• Will sharing this bring harm to me or to others?

Answering these three questions regarding what you post or share online can help you make good decisions. For instance, pictures of underage students drinking might be viewed by on-campus or off-campus employers, and could result in students being rejected for or losing a job. Sharing your personal contact information and revealing intimate facts in a personal blog could be read by a potential stalker. There have been numerous television specials illustrating the victimization of online teenagers by older individuals. Professors on Facebook could see a status message indicating a student is skipping class, which could impact grades. Students must consider the possible impact and outcomes of deciding what to post online when it can be seen by peers, family members, faculty, academic advisors, employers, and law enforcement agencies.

11 Reprinted with permission from NIU Students’ Legal Assistance.
WHERE TO SHARE
Aside from what you share, you need to consider where you share. The GW Hatchet, an online college independent student newspaper, suggests that in less than 20 years, political elections could be quite interesting due to the number of weekend exploits students are posting on sites such as Facebook.¹⁴

When deciding where to share information, many college students feel peer pressure to follow the norm to fit in. Wild party pictures of underage drinking and lewd behavior can be found on many Facebook student profiles.

Consider the following three questions:
• Why share the information through this online forum?
• Who has access to my profile or website?
• How could sharing information through this forum affect me or others?

Accessibility to personal information will largely depend on where you choose to display it. Remember that if photographs or personal information are posted online, the message could be saved by the provider of that communication service or by users who have access. For example, Facebook users have access to copy and save information posted on student profiles. A simple “print screen” command copies everything viewed on the computer screen and can be saved as an image file.

Many students are surprised to discover that faculty, staff, and potential employers have access to the same online sites that they do. Do you want your English instructor to know that you had an embarrassingly good time at the toga party last night? If not, you may want to reconsider what you post on a site that anyone in the institution can access. Also, you might want to consider limiting who has access to view your profile or site, if that is an option.

HOW TO SHARE
Seventy-five percent of college students have sent e-mail messages to professors to get clarification or more information about an assignment.¹⁵ When determining how to request information from a professor, you must decide what communicative tool to use (for example, e-mail, Blackboard, Facebook messaging) and how to construct the message.

Facebook messaging allows for more interactive and real-time communication. E-mail can be slow, taking a day or two for responses to be received. Blogs can be read by anyone. Facebook messages are less formal.

Here are some tips for success when communicating and socializing online:
• Know who has access to what you are sharing.
• Think about the possible consequences associated with what, where, and how you share information.
• Be clear and concise to avoid miscommunication.

• Choose the preferred communicative tool for your intended audience.

• Review a message three times before sharing (to make sure it accurately reflects what you intend to communicate).

Faculty who receive e-mails at 2 a.m. typically will not respond before 8 a.m. the next day. It is a good rule of thumb to allow one to two days for e-mail responses. At times, online communication is not the most appropriate medium to use in a professional setting. Brainstorming ideas about a final project might be better discussed in person during office hours or on the phone. Faculty members usually notify students of their preferred means of contact on the first day of class. This information may also be listed in the course syllabus. Pay attention, and use your instructors’ preferred method of communication.

GET SMART. BE SAFE. RULES TO LIVE BY WHEN ONLINE.

1. **If you wouldn’t post it on your front door, don’t post it online.**
   Web transmissions aren’t foolproof unless they use secure forms of authentication and encryption. Posting something online is just as open and available to others as posting something on your door.

2. **Use privacy settings to help control who can access your information.**
   Many sites, including Facebook, allow you to restrict the availability of your profile to certain individuals. While these settings provide no guarantees, they can be a useful tool in gaining some control of your details and photos.

3. **Your online profile may be the only impression someone has of you.**
   While close friends may know you’re joking about something you’ve posted, another student, staff member, or faculty member who stumbles across your profile may only have that information to gauge who you are. Make sure the image you’re projecting online is one that accurately represents you. If your mom, your dad, your professors, the police, or the university wouldn’t approve, think twice before posting it.

4. **Civility matters (even on the Internet).**
   The Internet is an efficient way to connect with others, and sites like Facebook and Twitter are ways to increase your networking potential. But remember that your school expects students to be positive members of the college community, and that extends into your behavior online. The rules of civility still apply on the Internet. Be polite. Be honest. Be responsible.
FACE THE FACTS

As identified earlier, there are many NIU students using Facebook to communicate directly and indirectly. Understand the possible consequences and ways to be smart and safe in your online use.

FACT: Your control online is limited.
Just because you’ve tweaked your privacy settings doesn’t mean your online profile won’t come back to haunt you. A person who was once a friend may use your profile if the relationship goes awry. And, since these sites don’t use secure encryption, there’s a chance that malicious software or ISPs can hijack the transmission of your profile and use it for harm.

FACT: “Delete” does not equal “disappear.”
Hitting the delete button doesn’t always solve the problem. You never know how many people have printed or saved your profile or pictures, not to mention that many ISPs and servers back up or duplicate the information, retaining it indefinitely.

FACT: Employers are on Facebook.
Many companies have begun looking at online profiles of potential candidates before granting interviews. It has even been reported that some companies are paying students on campuses to print profiles of other students (circumventing the privacy settings allowed by Facebook and other sites).

FACT: Police use Facebook.
Police departments use Facebook (and other sites) as tools to identify potential suspects in crimes. In some circumstances, an investigation has been started solely on the basis of information obtained on the Internet. Arrests have been made and students have been prosecuted.

FACT: Predators love the Web.
Posting your cell phone number, apartment locations, and class schedule online may seem like a great way to make sure your friends can reach you. However, there have been numerous victims of stalking and harassment that have originated from online websites.

FACT: You’re responsible for you.
Just as you’re responsible for the content of your résumé and your public persona, you’re ultimately responsible for your online profile. While you can’t control with certainty who sees your online presence, you can control who that presence depicts. Also note that pictures “tagged by others” or messages posted on your wall can come back to haunt you.

Recreated with permission from Mercyhurst College (http://lakernet.mercyhurst.edu/departments/res_life/facethefacts.pdf).

Online communication and socialization will increase in complexity and availability in the future. It is important to develop good decision-making skills in regard to using technology before developing poor habits that could turn out costly down the road. Fifteen to twenty years ago, it was imperative for individuals to have strong writing skills to be successful in many careers. Communication skills are even more important today because you must understand how to construct an appropriate message, and also understand the formal and informal rules associated with the many different communicative options at your immediate disposal.
Ethical Dilemmas in Your Own Life

When you are faced with an ethical dilemma (a difficult life decision involving right and wrong), it may be helpful to ask yourself the following questions before deciding what to do:

1. **Might any of my choices result in harm or suffering to:**
   - a. My friends, family, or floor mates?
   - b. The campus and local community?
   - c. The earth?

2. **What family values might guide my decision?**

3. **What spiritual, religious, or humanistic beliefs do I hold that might apply to this situation (i.e., the Golden Rule)?**

4. **What are the potential consequences for me?**
   - a. Do I risk punishment?
   - b. Will I feel guilty?

5. **How might one of my ethical role models resolve this situation?**

6. **If my actions were to become widely known, would I be proud or embarrassed and ashamed?**

Available Resources

**UNIVERSITY OMBUDSPERSON**
Holmes Student Center (sixth floor), (815) 753-1414, [www.niu.edu/ombuds](http://www.niu.edu/ombuds)

**COMMUNITY STANDARDS & STUDENT CONDUCT**
Campus Life Building 280, (815) 753-1571, [www.niu.edu/communitystandards](http://www.niu.edu/communitystandards)

**DEPARTMENT OF POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY**
375 Wirtz Drive, (815) 753-1212 (non-emergency), [www.niu.edu/uwc/](http://www.niu.edu/uwc/)

**UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**

**UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER**
Stevenson South, Tower B, Lower Level, (815) 753-6636, [www.niu.edu/uwc/](http://www.niu.edu/uwc/)

Critical Thinking Questions

- How do you evaluate your critical thinking skills as a new NIU student?
- What can you do to improve your critical thinking skills?
- What does it mean to make good decisions at NIU?
- Why is it important to interact with faculty at NIU?
Dear First-Year Students,

Welcome to NIU! I hope that your time here will be both fun and intellectually enriching. You’ll find that life as a university student offers you an abundance of choices. Some decisions are as simple as what to eat in the cafeteria, while others, such as whether to tackle your course readings or go out with friends, are more complex and far-reaching. While this newfound freedom of choice can be extremely gratifying, it is also a major responsibility; some of the decisions you are now expected to make can be a bit tricky. You are in charge of when, how, and if your coursework gets done, if you squeeze in social time with friends and family, and if you work a job or get involved on campus.

Choose your best study setting. If you need quiet, find that spot. If you’re easily distracted, you probably shouldn’t study in your room; it’s too easy to turn on the TV or surf the Internet. If you need quiet and can’t find it, earplugs can be a big help. If you like a little background noise, then you can play some calm music.

As a university student you will be spending a lot less time in the classroom than you did in high school. Don’t be fooled by thinking this means you have piles of free time; you have a lot of material to cover! Set specific study times every day; try to study in shorter blocks of time, generally 20–50 minute segments followed by a short five- or ten-minute break will work well. Practice active studying by taking notes and asking yourself questions. Write down key concepts. Most importantly, if you are confused about material, ask for help from your professor or other students.

For particularly challenging courses, look into forming or joining a study group. If you still find you’re really struggling, find out if tutoring is available by asking your professor directly or by contacting the department office. Remember, your professors want you to succeed, so don’t be afraid to ask them for help.

You should also keep in mind that many classes will not involve daily homework, but will require that large assignments be turned in late in the semester. Start early! Also decide when you need a break from studying to reconnect with friends. Lastly, write out lists of what needs to be done and keep these visible (inside your academic planner, above your desk, taped to your bathroom mirror). It’s much harder to neglect your work with these constant reminders!

Again, welcome to NIU. I’m so glad you’re here!

*Jessamine Cooke-Plagwitz, Ph.D.*
*Associate Professor of Foreign Languages & Literatures*
### Activity 1. Applying Ethics

Rank the following items in order from the most unethical item (1) to the least unethical item (16). Optional in-class activity: In small groups come to a consensus (no voting) on the ranking of the items. Observe how other students’ perspectives differ from your own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posting malicious information or pictures about a peer online</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Skipping class and telling your professor that a relative passed away</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lying to a police officer</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Taking $20 off your roommate’s dresser without asking</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Returning clothing after you’ve worn it</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Going out on a date with someone else and not telling your significant other</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tripping someone to watch them fall down the stairs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spiking a person’s drink at a party</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spending haircut money (from your parents) on beer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Using a fake ID to gain access to the bars</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Copying computer software</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Looking on someone’s test for help with an answer</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not returning an iPod that you found outside on the ground when you have the owner’s contact information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Keeping $10 when a store clerk accidentally gave you too much change back</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Driving a car after you’ve been drinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Downloading illegal music tracks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enhancing Academic Skills

CHAPTER GOALS

As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Become familiar with different learning styles.
2. Improve academic skills including note taking and study skills.
3. Learn how to effectively prepare for exams.
Dear First-Year NIU Student,

As you begin your journey at NIU, you will quickly learn that college studies and academic success are different from what you experienced before. In college, responsibility and work ethic play a huge role in the development of academic skills. You face new responsibilities such as going to class and organizing academic, social, and personal aspects of your life. Additionally, having choice in scheduling classes changes the dynamic of school.

To develop successful study skills, you have to find a style that works for you. We all learn differently and fall into categories of visual, auditory, or tactile learning (or a combination of all three). If you don’t study in a way that reflects your strength in learning, you will not be as successful as you could be. Personally, I am a kinesthetic (tactile) learner, and I have found that rewriting my notes with an occasional doodle is the best way for me to retain information. I also need to be comfortable in order to study and take tests. So, where I study or work on projects is very important to me. The best study locations also vary from student to student. The Founders Memorial Library is a great place to avoid distractions and study in silence, while common areas are good if you prefer to study in open spaces with background noise.

Before you can have good study habits, you need good notes to study from. Lecture halls can be overwhelming. Some professors will provide PowerPoint presentations, but others will only lecture. Taking notes on a laptop is really convenient and can help you remain organized. However, do not use a laptop for notes if you are easily distracted by Facebook! The classic pen and paper can be great for drawing diagrams and organizing notes in a personal way, but may not be the best option if you are a messy or slow writer. Also, remember that each professor will use the textbook for their class differently. For the first week or two, read assigned chapters and take notes extensively so that you will be prepared for anything. Once you get a better understanding of your professors, you will know which textbooks need to be read thoroughly and which ones can be skimmed in order to facilitate discussions or supplement content.

Your Fellow Huskie,

Amy Henkel
Senior Art and Design Education Major
University Honors Program
Lambda Sigma Sophomore Honor Society
Mortar Board Senior Honor Society
Vice President, National Art Education Student Association (NIU Chapter)
Developing a Growth Mindset

Academic success in college is the product of several factors, including a student’s previous educational background, their motivation to succeed in the classroom to achieve their academic and career goals, and their use of university resources such as the University Writing Center and tutoring services. A student’s mindset can play an important role in achieving success in college and in other areas of life.

Carol Dweck, author of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, asserts that “...the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life. It can determine whether you become the person you want to be and whether you accomplish the things you value.”¹ When you arrive at NIU, you have the choice of developing a fixed mindset or a growth mindset.

A fixed mindset creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over.² Students with a fixed mindset believe that characteristics such as intelligence, personality, and character are set and do not change. In coming to a new academic environment, they may feel a great need to demonstrate their competence academically and socially. They may see college life in “either/or” terms, and ask questions like: Will I succeed or fail? Will I appear smart or dumb? Will I make friends or not? Students who think with a fixed mindset thrive when challenges are safely within their grasp. Their concern with self-evaluation may prevent them from accepting risks that would promote their learning and growth. Students with a fixed mindset want to be sure that they will succeed.²

A growth mindset, on the other hand, is based on the belief that your basic qualities can be cultivated through effort.³ In this perspective, a student’s true potential is unknowable, and is influenced by their passion, resilience, and hard work. A mark of the growth mindset is sticking to an experience even when it’s not going well. This mindset allows students to thrive during some of the greatest challenges they face in college.³ Students with a growth mindset take charge of their learning and motivation, and are creative in how they learn. Gaining faith in your ability to succeed is key to becoming an effective college student.

How can adopting a growth mindset help you as an NIU student? Read the following fixed mindset myths and the suggestions which follow to debunk stereotypes you may be bringing to college and to learn how you can counteract them with a growth mindset.

Learning to Learn

LEARNING STYLES AND PREFERENCES

Myth #1: “There’s only one way to study because we all learn the same way.”

Learning styles provide a guide for students to recognize their preference for a style of learning. They describe the way your brain best receives and processes information, and are typically linked with your senses. Knowing your preferred learning style can help you make decisions on the best way for you to learn and study new material. Although a basic Internet search on learning styles will inform you that there are many different models to determine your particular learning style preference, this book focuses on the Index of Learning Styles, which describes four different domains of learning style preferences:⁴

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• sensing (concrete thinker, practical, oriented toward facts and procedures) or intuitive (abstract thinker, innovative, oriented toward theories and underlying meanings)

• visual (prefer visual representations or presented material, such as pictures, diagrams, and flowcharts) or verbal (prefer written and spoken explanations)

• active (learn by trying things out, enjoy working in groups) or reflective (learn by thinking things through, prefer working alone or with a single familiar partner)

• sequential (linear thinking process, learn in small incremental steps) or global (holistic thinking process, learn in large leaps)\(^5\)

To help you determine which domain your learning style falls within, Activity 1 at this end of this chapter will lead you to the online Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire. It is important to remember that your learning style will fall on a continuum, meaning that you may have a strong preference for a learning style; however, you have abilities and the capacity to learn in many different ways.

**WHICH LEARNING PREFERENCE IS BEST?**

Awareness of your own learning style preference can help you adjust your study habits accordingly; however, it is important to know that learning styles do not determine where, when, and in what subjects (or careers, for that matter) you will be successful. In fact, learning preferences can change by being exposed to different teaching styles and learning environments and with practice over time.\(^4\) The focus on learning preferences in this chapter can help you figure out ways to manipulate your study habits to best fit your preferred learning style, increasing the chances of your successfully navigating courses that are not necessarily taught in your learning style preference. Over time, you will gain skills that will help you navigate a variety of new learning situations, and you may find that your learning preferences will shift toward different styles depending on what you are attempting to master.

**TEACHING PREFERENCES**

**Myth #2: “I’m not going to get anything out of this class because I can’t learn from this professor.”**

Whereas students have learning preferences, professors often have teaching preferences. When the two do not match, students may find themselves in a course that is not taught using their preferred learning preference and may wonder why they are struggling to learn the material. Recognizing that this may be the issue can help you adapt your learning techniques to the situation in order to help you learn more effectively.

**TIPS ON MAXIMIZING YOUR LEARNING**

**Myth #3: “I could study 24 hours a day and still not succeed.”**

Maximizing your learning means that you become more efficient and effective in the way you learn. On the following pages are some ways in which to adapt to many academic situations to get the most out of the course.

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Practice using a variety of study techniques that address more than one learning style. Every course you take may require different ways of studying to increase your success. Take lecture notes using words and drawings for understanding. Use techniques you learn in this book, create your own, and discuss with friends how they study. The more ways you have to study, the better.

Analyze and improve your learning environment. Everyone has different opinions about where to study. Many prefer their room or apartment; others prefer the library or some other quiet place. Where you study depends on your needs. The goal is to find a place where you have few distractions or interruptions and that will support your need to concentrate.

Typically your room is not the best place to study. There are many quiet places across campus that might be better. Find one where you feel comfortable, the lighting is good, and there isn’t a lot of noise. Go to the same place consistently. You will find that, by having one place to study, you will improve your concentration because your brain will automatically go into “study mode” when you get there.

Determine the time of day you study best. Some students are nocturnal while others are morning people. The time you prefer to study may not be the time you are most alert and have better memory. Experiment by studying at different times of day to see when your studying is best. Study your most difficult material at your best times of day in the least distracting place to maximize your effectiveness.

Develop a positive attitude for learning. A positive attitude toward learning is essential to your academic success. It doesn’t matter if you like the course material or the professor’s approach. Learn to believe in yourself and your ability to accomplish what you need to do.

You may find a particular course boring or easy. But remember that it is important to your academic goals, and you need to do well. If you are feeling defeated, intimidated, or you just don’t understand the material, get some help. Use the resources available here. If you still feel like you are in trouble, see your advisor as soon as possible to discuss strategies for what is best—to withdraw from the course or stick it out.

Get the help you need for learning. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness. The most effective students are the ones who admit they need help, and then find it. One of the benefits of a university environment is the diversity of resources that you have available. Look to your UNIV instructor as one resource, and get used to asking questions to meet your needs.

**EFFECTIVE STUDY STRATEGIES**

**Myth #4: “In high school I didn’t have to study much, so I won’t have to study much in college.”**

Effective studying is not the same as studying for a long time, though it may take some time to learn new material, probably a lot longer than it took in high school. Being effective when studying, however, requires a number of different strategies, course understanding, and self-knowledge. It also means giving 100% in all aspects of the course.
There are many ways to categorize students learning styles. One of the simplest is by describing them as visual, auditory, and tactile or kinesthetic.

**VISUAL LEARNERS**

Visual learners learn by seeing information. They take detailed notes, and they benefit from illustrations and presentations in color. They like PowerPoint presentations in lectures because they like to see what they are learning. Visual learners often find it helpful to use symbols or pictures in their notes, and many find that recopying their notes or making note cards actually helps them to remember information.

**Tips for Visual Learners**

- Use different colors or symbols for highlighting, reading, or organizing notes.
- Draw boxes around main ideas or use concept maps.
- Sit in the front of the room and/or away from a door or window to avoid visual distractions.
- Try visualizing what you want to remember.
- Use different colored note cards for different types of information.

**AUDITORY LEARNERS**

Auditory learners learn best by hearing information. They usually take fewer notes than other students, preferring to just listen to the instructor. They don’t mind lecture classes, and they may tape lectures and listen to them again after class. They may find that they comprehend textbooks best by reading out loud and may study by reciting facts and asking themselves questions orally. They enjoy class discussions and learn well in study groups.

**Tips for Auditory Learners**

- Read or recite information out loud.
- Listen to books or lectures on tape.
- Make rhymes to help you remember facts, dates, or names (think of how many songs and commercials we remember without really trying).
- Sit in the front of the room where you can hear the professor clearly and are not distracted easily.

**TACTILE OR KINESTHETIC LEARNERS**

Tactile or kinesthetic learners take in and remember information best by using movement of their large or small muscle groups. They learn through physically manipulating or connecting with information. Because lectures and books are mostly visual or auditory, they may struggle to stay involved with the material. They excel in lab classes and other “hands on” activities. Kinesthetic learners may need to walk around when studying. Some kinesthetic learners report that moving around while reading a textbook helps them maintain their focus.

**Tips for Kinesthetic Learners**

- Type or rewrite notes.
- Highlight or underline main ideas in notes or texts.
- Use rhythm to help aid memory—think of drum beats or rhyme to remember facts or formulas.
- Sit near an aisle or the back of the room to allow you to stretch or move around.
- Make note cards for studying, and move them to different piles as you process information.
- In lecture classes, use acceptable motions such as jiggling your leg, doodling, or chewing gum to stay focused.
Effective Note Taking During Lectures

Many students find it difficult to learn new information during lectures. There is only one chance to get the material down, important points must be identified and written down very quickly, concentration must be consistent, and distractions must be minimized. There are many methods and techniques that can improve note taking. If you plan to take notes on a laptop or tablet, check in advance with your instructor for permission.

A. BEFORE THE LECTURE BEGINS

1. Develop a system to organize your notes for each class and keep notes from different classes separate in notebooks or binders. Organizing and maintaining meaningful notes will make your test preparation much easier.
2. Read the text assigned for a particular lecture to familiarize yourself with the material being discussed. Note taking is easier if you have a grasp of the topic and vocabulary in advance. Then during the lecture, you can concentrate your note taking on new or difficult information.
3. If your instructor uses PowerPoint slides or Web-based outlines, print them out and take them to class. Keep your notes on these pages and refer to them as you read.
4. Review previous days’ notes before class as preparation for your next lecture.
5. Arrive on time for class. If you are late, you will lose several minutes of lecture and waste several more before you get settled.
6. If you have the option of choosing where you sit, sit somewhere that minimizes distractions.
7. Unless you are expecting an emergency phone call, turn off your cell phone until class is over. This will help you keep your focus on the lecture.

B. DURING THE LECTURE

1. Number and date the pages of your notes.
2. Do not try to write everything down. Use an outline or summary style, recording both main ideas and the details or examples that clarify them.
3. At least for the first few lectures, open your book to the assigned readings. Try to connect the lecture content with the readings. If the instructor uses the text as a basis for lecture, it will be much easier to follow.
4. Phrase things in your own words rather than copying exactly what you hear or see. Note any relevant information not presented in the textbook.
5. Skip lines in your notes or draw a line to show where one idea ends and a new one begins. Underline or mark with an asterisk emphasized ideas. Place question marks next to confusing ideas for later clarification.
6. Use other abbreviations to help take notes more quickly, such as ex.=example, w/o=without. Text message abbreviations can also improve your speed.
7. Write legibly but quickly; plan to add to your notes as soon after lecture as possible.
**LECTURE CUES TO EXAM TOPICS**

1. Learn to identify what the instructor thinks is important since it’s likely to be on the test. Watch for the following:
   a. Repetition or extended comment on certain topics.
   b. Voice quality: change in volume, enthusiasm, rate of speech.
   c. Body language.
   d. Vocabulary and definitions.
   e. Examples or stories that enhance the material.

2. Pack your pen last. Sometimes you will get important information about the exam as you are leaving class.

**C. AFTER THE LECTURE**

1. You will forget the largest amount of material in the first 24 hours, so plan for an early review where you add information you remember or need to clarify.
2. Record any questions that need to be clarified by your instructor.
3. Compare your notes with classmates in a study group. Listening and discussing information in your own words with others will aid your understanding.
4. Create different ways to review the material, such as rewriting or paraphrasing, flashcards, outlines, summaries, and developing questions.

**D. THE CORNELL METHOD OF NOTE TAKING**

The Cornell Method combines note taking with note reviewing and summarizing. It can help you process what you heard in lecture.

You can buy “law ruled” notepaper at the bookstore for this method, or you can prepare any paper before lecture. Draw a line about 3 inches from the left edge of the sheet, then draw a line about 2 inches from the bottom of the page, as shown in the following diagram.

![Cornell Method Diagram](image)

1. Record: From the lecture, take notes as usual.
2. Edit: During the lecture and as soon as possible afterward, add information and make corrections.
3. Reduce: Look over your notes and try to predict test questions. Write questions in the reduce column. Use them to test your recall by folding the sheet along the vertical line, looking only at the questions in the “reduce” section, and rewriting what you know.
4. Recite: Using the reduced notes as a guide, recite what the page was about as another self-check of your understanding.
5. Reflect: Write a summary or outline of what you learned at the end of the notes, identifying the most important points from the lecture.

6. Review: Look over your notes regularly and make connections between old and new material.

**Reading, Studying, and Retaining Information**

**Myth #5: “I don’t have to read the book; the instructor will tell us all we need to know.”**

Reading a textbook isn’t like reading a magazine or novel. Usually it is not something you have chosen to read, yet you need to read and comprehend the content. How can you maintain your focus and comprehend something you really aren’t that interested in? Don’t just open the book and begin reading! You need a plan to be efficient.

**A. THE SKILL OF TEXTBOOK READING**

Surveying or skimming the book gives you a sense of its meaning before you begin to read more thoroughly. It prepares your brain for what is ahead.

1. Read the chapter objectives. These are a broad overview of the chapter and will tell you the main points that will be covered.
2. Look at the headings and subheadings. The color and the size of the font used give you an organized overview of the subject.
3. Look for how terms and definitions are presented. Are the important terms in bold font with the definitions given in the following sentences? Are the terms and definitions given in a box at the bottom of the page? The end of the chapter?
4. Are there graphs, diagrams, or case studies in the chapter? What is their meaning?
5. Is there a summary at the end of the chapter? Are there questions? Read the summary and the questions BEFORE reading the chapter. These give you things to “look for” while you are reading, helping you stay focused.

Once done surveying, you have an overall idea of what the chapter is about. Your brain is more prepared to read.

a. As you read, make connections and look for concepts and ideas you saw in the objectives, the summary, or the chapter questions. Take notes or highlight information as you read. If you highlight or take good notes, you should not have to reread the chapter again before a test.

b. Try the 25/5 rule. This means read (or study) for 25 minutes, then take a 5-minute break. You will find that you are able to maintain your focus and comprehension. Continue this 25/5 sequence until you have completed reading your assignment. You may be able to read longer, and take longer breaks, but it really is up to you. When you find yourself “looking at the words” and not comprehending, you need a break.

*Keeping up with homework pays off when preparing for exams.*
c. Read out loud or whisper, particularly when you are having difficulty with the material. It may feel awkward at first, but it is beneficial. Many students find that their comprehension increases when they hear, speak, and see the information.

d. Highlight or take notes; find what works for you. Some students find review is easier if they highlight first. Taking notes as you read, especially if you are a visual or kinesthetic learner, helps put the information into your long-term memory. Try both.

The key to comprehension and recall is to stay active in your reading: rather than just reading word by word, look for concepts, take notes, highlight, think about key terms, and relate new information to what you’ve already learned.

THE POWER OF SELF-TESTING
Self-testing is a useful strategy to help you become more effective in your reading. Self-testing can enable you to read the book once, taking notes and learning from them as you go.

The Five Steps of Self-Testing

1. As you read the book, place main ideas in the form of questions on an index card. The question should provide you with key words that will enable you to reproduce information from the rest of the section or chapter.

2. Write the answer to your question on the back of the index card. Add all of the information from the book that supports your answer.

3. To review, read the questions out loud.

4. Answer your questions out loud as completely as you can. You can also write your answers as you would for an exam. Check your answers against the card for completeness. You may also want to consult the book again.

5. If your answer is correct and thorough, set it aside. Continue working on those questions you did not get correct. Keep drilling until you have correctly answered the questions on all of your cards.

The process of reading, creating the questions in your own words, providing answers, and then testing yourself out loud enables you to use kinesthetic, auditory, and visual skills and is an effective way to remember information.

Checking Blackboard can help you stay on top of all course material.
B. CONCEPT MAPS

Concept mapping is a study strategy designed to use a less linear method of learning and processing information. It helps organize and relate different pieces of information around a main idea. The act of manipulating information to create a concept map helps increase understanding. Concept maps are useful for organizing several chapters of material around a single topic, organizing several different readings in the same course, or making connections between lecture and text materials. They offer an alternative to those who don’t learn well from outlines or summaries.

Concept maps tap into both visual and kinesthetic pathways to learning. They offer creative ways in which to organize material and help you retain information by manipulating it in a way that makes sense to you.

Here are some steps toward developing a concept map:

1. Find the main idea/topic you are studying, such as a chapter title or lecture title. In this case, you are studying Political Science, and the topic is “The Presidency.”

2. Place that main idea in the center of a blank sheet of paper:

3. Read a section of material from your text (and/or your lecture notes). Identify the subpoints and add them to your map:

4. Expand your map as you gain new layers of information. Different colors can be used to note different concepts or information from varying sources. You can use bold, italics, colored pens, or other visual reminders to identify certain types or sources of information such as examples or definitions.
a. In lectures on complex topics, concept mapping can be used to organize the thoughts provided by both your instructor and the book.

b. Concept maps offer you the opportunity to add new ideas at any time. They can be used to help organize notes for a comprehensive final or other long-term project. They can even help connect ideas you are learning now with information from a related course.

c. They can help organize a paper that uses multiple references. The topic of your paper can be the main point of one map, and each subpoint can have its own map in which you develop that point into greater detail. When all your ideas are on the map, it can be translated to an outline from which to write the paper.

How to Study for an Exam

Myth #6: “Good grades depend on how much time you spend studying.”

Once you begin practicing good study strategies, you will discover that you are better prepared for exams. Preparing for an exam will be more about review than learning new material. If you haven’t prepared before exam time, you should begin as soon as possible. Approaching an exam requires a deliberate plan and a good attitude.

A. A week or more before an exam, create a study schedule. Estimate the hours you will need to review the material. Begin the schedule by including all of your classes, obligations, homework, eating, sleeping, and exercise. Schedule study blocks, followed by breaks. Stay committed to your study plan.

B. Before your first study session, gather lecture and textbook notes, quizzes, homework, study guides, and any other relevant material. Organize your information using your syllabus or some other method. Create outlines, cognitive maps, flashcards, or other study tools to condense, paraphrase, and relate to the information, just as you do any other time you study.

C. Predict the content of the test by noting information that is emphasized and repeated through lecture, textbook, or notes. Use any study guides or chapter questions to frame your reviews. Create your own questions from the material and test yourself on various sections every day. Questions you can’t answer will help point you to where you need to spend more time.

D. As you review, use different ways to test and retest your knowledge. The more ways you can create to manipulate the material, the more likely you are to improve your recall. Reinforce your memory using visual, auditory, and kinesthetic methods such as color-coding, reciting, or writing. Give meaning to your learning by relating it to real-life situations.
E. Frequent reviews can be done by using notes, flashcards, and outlines you keep with you all the time. Take advantage of small bits of time that are otherwise wasted—before or after classes, waiting for a bus or an appointment, or other periods of downtime.

F. Working with others can be very helpful. Find or create a study group that can help you all learn more effectively. Explaining information to others helps you retain it.

G. Maintain your motivation and stay focused. Long periods of studying can be difficult so build in breaks. If you have no time for breaks, then break by studying something else.

H. Don’t think of studying as a punishment; it is a means to achieving your academic goals. As you study, plan breaks for doing something fun, talking with friends, or playing on the computer. Those breaks can recharge your batteries and keep you motivated.

Cramming and All-Night Study Sessions

Myth #7: “Any time I’m not in class is my free time.”

While not recommended as a regular practice, cramming and all-nighters can be necessary at times. In high school, cramming—as in studying for an exam only on the night before—may have been pretty common, but the volume of material to learn in college is much harder to cover in just one night. Cramming can help you learn fast, but you likely won’t retain much after the exam. Try not to cram for courses that have comprehensive finals or where material builds on itself, such as computational courses like math or chemistry. That being said, there are times in college when cramming may be needed, so you might as well learn how to do it effectively.

A. As with all studying, choose your environment: You don’t want to study in your bed, it will be far too tempting to nap. You want to be somewhere with good lighting and few distractions. It shouldn’t be particularly comfortable, either. And don’t study in your pajamas; they will just tell your brain it’s time to sleep. Bring along headphones and some music if they help you study better, but they shouldn’t distract you.

B. Keep a positive attitude: While you are in cramming mode, focus on what you can accomplish, not on the reasons you ended up in this position. If you stay organized and concentrate, you can give everything some attention, but if you panic, you just waste time. You can do it.
Planning your cramming time is critical. As you sit down to study, set up a schedule. Let’s say there are five chapters to study for your test. Estimate one chapter per hour, including a short break. Obviously that isn’t a lot of time to study each chapter in depth, so you know you need to be very efficient in the way you study.

Plan for snacks and breaks: About every 25–50 minutes, your brain will let you know that it needs a break. Things aren’t sinking in. Take no more than 5–10 minutes to stand up, stretch, or get some fresh air. Keep some healthy, light snacks around, like apples or carrots, to keep you going. Heavier food, like pizza, can make you sleepy.

Moderate your caffeine use. It can help keep you going, but it can also cause you to crash, particularly when mixed with lots of sugar. Too much caffeine can make you jittery and lose your focus. When your 5–10 minute break is over, get right back to studying. It is far too easy to sink into a comfy chair and fall asleep if you don’t.

Stay away from your phone, the TV, and your computer except on breaks. Especially late at night, they will easily tempt you away from studying. You don’t want to end up losing a precious hour of study time by texting.

Cramming is much like your usual studying, only much faster and more precise. Start by reviewing the main ideas in the chapter. Then review your lecture notes, skim your book, and start creating good test questions. Write down your answers. Review as much as possible, especially information from review sheets, homework, and quizzes. After 20–30 minutes, check to see how much of the chapter is left. Review faster, focusing on the most important items in the chapter. Keep writing and talking about information; it will help you remember more effectively and stay awake.

Sleep: Don’t pull more than one all-nighter in a row. By day three, your body is just not going to function well. If you are taking difficult courses, you need sleep to think clearly during the exam. If you can arrange your study time so you can get three hours of sleep or more, you will be much better off. And don’t forget to set your alarm clock—even for what you think is just a 30-minute nap—and turn the volume up!

Test Anxiety

Myth #8: “Tests and exams cause test anxiety.”

Test anxiety is a common form of anxiety associated with performance on exams. Test-anxious people often know the material, but they don’t have a lot of self-confidence in the subject matter or in test taking in general. Somewhere along the way, perhaps even in grade school, they had an experience that rattled confidence in their ability to take tests. Some students aren’t well prepared or doubt their level of preparation. Some are perfectionists who think they can never study enough. Some feel they are doomed to fail. Whatever the reason, there are ways to deal with it.

First, stay up to date with your readings and assignments well before the exam. Preparing thoroughly for a test will help your confidence, and it will be easier to fight off panic if you know the material.
B. Get enough sleep. If you plan your study time efficiently over several days, you can use the last day to review. This can prevent you from worrying the day of the exam that you will never finish studying in time.

C. If you are prone to test anxiety, caffeine can make it worse if you use more than you usually do.

D. Make sure to eat healthy meals on exam day. You need protein to keep your brain functioning. Minimize the carbs and grease.

E. Use positive self-talk to combat negative thoughts before and during the test. During the exam, something can trigger your stress.

   Stress can start negative self-talk and ultimately shake your confidence. Negative thoughts don’t help. Combat them by telling yourself you will do as well as you can because that is really ALL you can do, isn’t it?

F. BREATHE! Another way to trigger stress is by holding your breath or breathing shallowly. You can trick your body into thinking you are calm by altering your breathing and your mindset. Sit straight in your chair and let your hands drop to your sides. Take a couple of slow deep breaths. Think good, positive thoughts and visualize yourself doing well on the exam. Picture the tension draining out of your fingertips. Relax your shoulders and stretch your neck. Then, calmly return to your test.

Preparing for Finals

Myth #9: “I’ll just pull up my grade on the final.”

While finals week may seem a long way off, time goes quickly. It is best to begin planning at the beginning of the semester by keeping organized in each class. Finals require a dedicated focus unlike anything else in the semester. It is much easier to lower your grade on a final exam than to improve it. The pressure of finals week, the holidays, and the upcoming break all come to bear on you at this time. The week requires constant diligence to maintain or improve your grades.

A. BEFORE FINALS WEEK

1. Since there are no classes during finals week, you may have the false assumption that you have plenty of time to get everything in. However, that attitude can result in procrastination, which can end up with wasted time and having to cram.

2. Find out when and where all of your finals are—consult the semester calendar on MyNIU or your syllabi. Address any time conflicts with professors well before your exam week.

3. Create a detailed study calendar for the last week of classes and finals week. Record deadlines, final exam times, and other obligations. Block out time for working on assignments, eating, sleeping, and exercise. Build in time to have some fun, but stay dedicated to your courses. Remind yourself often that finals are your first priority.
4. Calculate your current grade in each class. Calculate the score you need on the final to get the grade you want. In some courses, even 100% on the final won’t raise your grade. In other courses, you could get a low D on the test and still keep the grade you’ve already earned. Be sure you know how much work you need to do for each course to get the grade you want/need. Then start planning.

5. Create a schedule of your study time and strategies for each class. Plan a study schedule for the hardest exam and your earliest exam first, then fill in the rest.

6. Ask your instructors what to expect. Is the format of the final true/false, essay, multiple choice? Will there be a review session or review sheet? Is the exam comprehensive? If so, how much will be new material and how much from the past? Will you need a blue book?

7. Gather and organize your course materials for each class. Create a study guide if one was not provided. If you haven’t already, make study tools such as outlines, flashcards, timelines, or diagrams. Study each day as you have planned and stay dedicated to your schedule. The lack of structure during finals week makes it easy to procrastinate.

8. Take care of your body and mind. Get sufficient exercise, eat properly, and get some sleep since your brain needs time to process the information.

B. EXAM DAY

1. Gather any exam-related supplies, set an alarm clock, and go to bed at a reasonable time the night before an exam to reduce anxiety and fatigue during the exam.

2. Wake up early enough to eat a light breakfast and take a shower. Both will make you feel more alert.

3. Arrive on time or early so you start the exam relaxed.

4. When given the exam, quickly look through it to identify how to budget your time. Be sure you understand the instructions for each section. If you have any questions, ask the instructor for clarification.

5. Check your timing regularly and adjust your pace as needed. Ignore those who finish early and use the entire class period.

6. When finished, applaud your efforts and treat yourself. Then get busy concentrating on the next final!

Student Tip

Get to know your instructors and go to their office hours. They are great resources to have and are willing to help you. They want you to succeed.

—Adam McNeil
Senior
Communication major

Engaging in class discussions can help you better understand the course subject.

—Adam McNeil
Senior
Communication major
Strategies if You Aren’t Happy with Your Grade

If you are satisfied with your grade on your first exam, congratulations! But it isn’t unusual for your first grade in any course to be lower than you expected. The most important thing you can do is modify your strategies for the next one, starting with the advice earlier in this chapter. In addition, you can do the following:

A. Review your exam: Activity 2 in this chapter provides a method by which to evaluate your studying as well as your knowledge of content.

B. Talk to your instructor: If you aren’t doing as well as you want, your professors can help. They may seem intimidating, but persist through your fear; it’s worth the effort. If you missed a question due to lack of understanding, your instructor is the best person to ask for clarification and maybe some study tips. Talking to them also tells them you care about the class and want to improve.

If you missed a question due to misreading or flaws in thinking, your nerves or negative self-talk probably got in your way. Your instructor can help you learn to study more effectively for the course. Thorough studying can help you learn to trust your instincts and relax, and you will make fewer of these kinds of mistakes.

C. Make friends in the same class. Meet and talk about the lectures, and review notes and text material together. Another person can help you think differently when you are confused or stuck with certain material. Explaining something to someone else helps you get a firmer grasp of the material.

D. If you haven’t done so yet, start or join a study group. A study group can be a powerful way to learn. It gives students the opportunity to work with others in the same course and share their knowledge and understanding. It’s also a great way to create a support network to focus on mutual questions, concerns, and frustrations. Most of all, you can see how others are dealing with the course and learn from them. Some guidelines for study groups include the following:

1. Decide on a convenient time and place.
2. Share material, notes, textbooks, and study methods.
3. Learn from each other.
4. Come prepared to discuss topics, ask questions, or suggest activities.
5. Give each member a chance to participate.
6. Make a commitment to stay focused on the course.

E. As soon as you start to lose confidence in learning material in a course, get a tutor. Even one or two sessions with a tutor early on can be enough to get you on the right track in a difficult course. If you wait until the day before a test, you will find yourself in the tutoring center with a large number of people from your class and probably not get the best assistance.
Once you know you are going to see a tutor, make sure you have done other things to help your progress. Much like participating in a study group, preparation will help you get the most from tutoring. Here are some strategies for a successful tutoring session:

- Continue to attend class sessions. Missing class is the biggest reason students do poorly in a course. Tutoring can’t replace your lectures.
- Read all assigned material. Reading again before seeing the tutor can clarify your difficulties.
- Attempt to complete all homework assignments. Practice is the only way to reinforce what you learn in class and to help you identify where you are having problems.
- Write down any questions you have about the course material as you study.

Plan ahead for each tutoring meeting:
- Be prepared.
- Be on time.
- Bring appropriate materials such as textbook, notes, paper, pen/pencil, calculator, graded papers, exams, quizzes, homework assignments, and syllabus.
- Be ready to talk, write, ask questions, and help explain to the tutor what you need from them.

A tutor can help you:
- clarify course content;
- understand concepts;
- develop better study skills;
- prepare for a quiz or test;
- determine how to learn effectively.

A tutor doesn’t:
- replace a lecture;
- do your homework;
- give you answers.
Available Resources

TUTORING ASSISTANCE

To locate a tutor, an enhanced tutoring program called Supplemental Instruction, a formally organized study group, or a program to help make your reading more effective called A+, check out the “ACCESS Programs” on the Web at www.tutoring.niu.edu

You can apply for a one-on-one tutor for up to three hours per week per course by completing an application at the ACCESS Office:

Williston Hall, Room 100
(815) 753-1141
Hours: 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

If you need immediate help or have only a few questions, you can visit one of the ACCESS/PAL walk-in tutoring centers in Founders Memorial Library 6 p.m.–10 p.m. Sunday; 10 a.m.–10 p.m. Monday through Thursday; and 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Friday; as well as the New Residence Hall and Grant towers South 6 p.m.–11 p.m., Sunday–Thursday.

Dates, times, schedules, and courses for study groups and Supplemental Instruction are located on the website, or you can call (815) 753-1141 to sign up for the A+ Program for reading efficiency.

READING ASSISTANCE

To make an appointment with a professional reading specialist to help get assistance in becoming a more effective and efficient reader, and ultimately a better learner, contact the A+ Program:

Williston Hall, Room 100
(815) 753-1141
http://www.niu.edu/access/aplus

UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

Stevenson South, Tower B (lower level)
(815) 753-6636
www.niu.edu/uwc

Critical Thinking Questions

- How can you improve your note-taking skills?
- What reading strategies will help you successfully gain the knowledge you need from your textbooks?
- How much time should you devote to your studies?
- How can you become a more active listener in the classroom during lecture?
Dear New Students,

Welcome to NIU! As you’ll discover, expectations for learning at the university level are significantly higher than those at the high school level, and you’ll have to step up to the challenge. Here is some helpful advice about what works (and what doesn’t) that I have gleaned both from my own experience as a student and as a professor.

First, attend class! You’ve paid for it, so you might as well get your money’s worth. Also, read the textbook before you attend class. Particularly in the areas of science and math, multiple exposures to the concepts will make it easier to learn and apply them appropriately. If you’ve read the book and attended lecture, then you’ve seen the material at least twice. If something does not make sense or if you have a question, you have the opportunity to seek clarification from the instructor.

Second, spend some time on each subject every day. If you have covered several sections or concepts in class on a given day, try some of the problems in the textbook relating to those concepts on the same day while it’s still fresh in your mind. If you’re able to work through the problems successfully, then you’ve reinforced the concept in your mind. If you run into difficulty, seek help from your instructor as soon as possible. Particularly in the sciences, many concepts are cumulative—you must understand the introductory material in order to have the necessary foundation for later concepts. It’s important to get up to speed and stay current.

Third, don’t wait until two days before the exam to start preparing. Set aside some time every weekend to review the material covered in class that week. Again, this reinforces the material and identifies problem areas so that you can promptly seek help as needed. If you do this consistently, then the two days before an exam can be used to review all the concepts that you have already mastered and focus on problem areas. If you wait until two days before the exam, then you have to re-learn concepts that you may have forgotten over the course of four or five weeks, and you’ll usually have too many problem areas to adequately address in the limited time available.

Finally, learn to budget your time appropriately. You’re given a syllabus at the beginning of the semester in all your courses, so it’s a simple matter to identify the dates for all major exams and projects. Don’t wait until everything piles up at once. Setting intermediate goals for projects and performing periodic reviews to prepare for exams reduces stress and helps keep the workload in any given week more manageable.

Good luck!

David S. Ballantine, Ph.D.
Director of Undergraduate Studies
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Activity 1. Using Your Learning Style

1. Take 10 minutes and follow this link to complete the Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire: www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html

2. When you’ve finished answering the questions, click the submit button and review your results. They will reflect your learning style on a continuum in the four different domains mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. This link will explain the different learning styles: www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSdir/styles.htm

3. Answer the following questions:
   - What is your preferred style of learning?
   - What is the best way for you to study, complete projects, take notes, read textbooks? Give an example of how you can apply what you’ve learned to a class you are currently enrolled in.
   - What teaching style might you struggle with the most?
   - How could you plan to study for a class that is taught in a style that does not match with your learning style preference? Give an example.
Activity 2. Evaluate Your Exams

Use the following questions to “debrief” after exams, which will help you analyze your performance on each exam you take in order to improve your performance on future exams. Answering the following questions to the best of your ability after every exam will help you strategize for the next one.

PART 1. COMPLETE AFTER THE EXAM BUT BEFORE YOU RECEIVE YOUR GRADE
Course: ___________________________ Date of Exam: ___________________________
1. When taking the exam, I (check the best answer)
   _____ was rushed   _____ had time left over
   _____ budgeted my time well

2. The topics on the exam that I was **most** comfortable with were:
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. The topics on the exam that I was **least** comfortable with were:
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. I studied approximately _______ hours for this test. Was that enough?
   __________________________________________________________

5. Study strategies that prepared me best for the test were:
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

6. I could have prepared better by:
   __________________________________________________________

7. I estimate that I received a grade of _______ on this exam.

Continue Activity on the Next Page
PART 2. COMPLETE AFTER YOU RECEIVE YOUR TEST SCORE TO MONITOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR PREPARATION

1. I earned the grade I wanted on this test. (True or False)

2. I estimated my grade correctly immediately after taking the exam. (True or False)

3. Go over all items/questions on the exam and answer the following questions. Keep your responses to help you plan your later studying for this course.
   a. I missed items because I
      ___ misunderstood or misread the question
      ___ did not know the answer
      ___ panicked and blanked on the answer
      ___ overanalyzed and changed to an incorrect answer
   b. Questions on this exam required knowledge of
      ___ factual material ___ vocabulary
      ___ application of factual material ___ analysis
   c. The concepts tested in this exam came from
      ___ assigned readings ___ lectures/PowerPoint slides
      ___ films/videos/Web assignments ___ handouts
      ___ have no idea (It’s time to find out!)

4. Factors that contributed to my errors were
   ___ overthinking the questions ___ too tired to concentrate
   ___ text anxiety (blanked out on information I know) ___ illness
   ___ personal issues not pertaining to class distracted me ___ test was much harder than expected
   ___ didn’t study effectively or enough ___ other

5. What strategies or timeline do I plan to use to prepare for the next exam? ______________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

6. What strategies do I plan to use to be more successful in the exam setting?______________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
CHAPTER GOALS

As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Learn how to achieve and benefit from a physically active and nutritious lifestyle at NIU.

2. Become aware of facts regarding alcohol and other drug use and abuse and effective ways to manage stress.

3. Increase knowledge of sexual health issues.
Dear NIU First-Year Student,

You’ve been told that in order to succeed in college you must study and work as hard as possible. Well, to some extent that is true. However, it is equally as important to develop healthy lifestyle habits. At times it may seem like managing your health is the last thing that you want to worry about, but by doing so you actually put yourself one step ahead of the game!

So what can be done to promote healthy lifestyle habits? To start, I can’t stress enough the importance of getting the proper amount of sleep. With too little sleep, it’s extremely difficult to concentrate and focus in class. An inability to focus may affect your capability to understand, retain, and retrieve information. This will definitely affect your overall performance in classes.

Developing healthy eating habits is another significant piece of health management. Consuming too much greasy, fried food and sweets that are high in calories, cholesterol, and fat can cause weight gain. Although it can be difficult since there is so much food available in the residence halls, with a little planning eating healthy can be achieved. You can look up the nutrition facts for the residence hall foods online, which can assist you in pre-planning meals and eating healthier.

Exercise is also a vital part of wellness during your first year. Even though you may feel there is no time for exercise, it is always possible to get some exercise just by walking to class (rather than taking the bus), or climbing the stairs (rather than taking the elevator). If you need more structure to your exercise regimen, there are plenty of campus resources including several workout facilities, for-credit exercise classes, swimming pools, and the new outdoor recreation facilities.

By keeping these few tips in mind, you’ll be on your way to a happy, healthy, successful first year.

Kelsey Zollinger
Senior Family and Child Studies/Child Development Major
Deaf Pride
Lambda Sigma Sophomore Honor Society
Kappa Omicron Nu Family and Consumer Science Honor Society
Staying healthy and making healthy choices are issues that college students face on a daily basis. Whether it is deciding what to eat for dinner, whether to exercise, or whether to drink alcohol or be sexually active, students face dealing with not only the decisions themselves, but the consequences of those decisions as well. It is no wonder, then, that being healthy goes hand-in-hand with making healthy decisions and handling stress.

Being healthy means having a healthy body and mind. In order to have a healthy mind and body, you need to realize there are four major areas where many students struggle: fitness, nutrition, stress, and alcohol and other drugs.

**Fitness**

Physical activity should be an essential part of every student’s life. Being physically active is a key element in living a longer, healthier, happier life. It can help relieve stress and can provide an overall feeling of well-being. Physical activity can be incorporated into your day in a variety of ways. It can also help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight and lower your risk for chronic disease. The benefits of physical activity include:

- improved self-esteem and feelings of well-being;
- increased fitness level;
- help in building and maintaining bones, muscles, and joints;
- increased endurance and muscle strength;
- enhanced flexibility and posture;
- help in weight management;
- lowered risk of heart disease, colon cancer, and type II diabetes;
- help in controlling blood pressure;
- reduced feelings of depression and anxiety.

In addition, a healthy body is created from the inside out. Creating a healthy body includes meeting proper nutrition guidelines and hydration recommendations, exercising an adequate amount, and incorporating mind/body relaxation into daily living for stress management purposes.

Physical activity and nutrition work together for better health. Being active increases the amount of calories burned. As you age, your metabolism slows, so maintaining energy balance requires moving more and eating less.

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Several types of beneficial physical activity include:

- **Aerobic activities.** Activities that speed heart rate and breathing and improve heart and lung fitness. Examples are brisk walking, jogging, and swimming.

- **Resistance, strength building, and weight-bearing activities.** Activities that help build and maintain bones and muscles by working them against gravity. Examples are carrying a child, lifting weights, and walking.

- **Balance and stretching activities.** Activities that enhance physical stability and flexibility, which reduce risk of injuries. Examples are gentle stretching, dancing, yoga, martial arts, and T’ai Chi.
Starting with an exercise program is the hardest part. General recommendations for a safe exercise program are to begin working out 3–5 times per week for a minimum of 30 minutes per session. The chosen activity should be one you like and are comfortable doing. Walking is the easiest and safest activity to start with.

To reap the most aerobic benefits, you should exercise within your target heart rate range. This range can be determined by using a simple, age-adjusted mathematical formula.

**FORMULA FOR DETERMINING TARGET HEART RATE RANGE**

\[
220 - \text{Age} = \text{Maximum Heart Rate} \\
\text{Maximum Heart Rate} \times .65 = _____ \\
\text{Maximum Heart Rate} \times .75 = _____ \\
\text{Maximum Heart Rate} \times .85 = _____ \\
\text{Target Heart Rate Range} = _____ \text{to} _____ \\
\text{65\%} \quad \text{85\%}
\]

To utilize this range, you should take your pulse during peak aerobic activity. The pulse can be taken at either the carotid artery (neck) or radial artery (wrist). The easiest method of taking the pulse is for a six-second count, starting counting with one, and multiplying the result by 10 (or just adding a zero). When exercising, the pulse count during peak aerobic activity should fall within the 65\% to 85\% range. Exercising at a level below 65\% or above 85\% of the maximum heart rate can prevent making improvements in fitness levels or could result in injuries.

For a beginning exerciser, the target heart rate range could be less than 65\% to 85\% of the maximum heart rate. There is no “magic” number. If you are just getting started, a realistic goal might be to exercise at 50\% of your maximum heart rate instead of 65\%. For a generally healthy college student, the 65\% to 85\% range is adequate.
EXAMPLE
A student has decided to work out at the Rec three days a week for 45 minutes per session. He/she is trying to calculate his/her target heart rate range. Because he/she has been exercising at home over the summer at least two days per week, the 65%–85% range is appropriate and realistic. She/he is 19 years old.

\[
220 - 19 = 201
\]

\[
201 \times 0.65 = 130
\]

\[
201 \times 0.75 = 150
\]

\[
201 \times 0.85 = 170
\]

Target Heart Rate Range = 130–170

Therefore, the student’s pulse count should be between 130 and 170 about 20 minutes into a workout session.

Twenty minutes into the student's workout, the student gets off the bike he or she is riding and takes a six-second pulse count. The count is 14 (multiply 14 by 10) which equates to 140. Since the count is within the estimated target heart rate range, the student is reaping aerobic benefits.

In addition to cardiovascular activity, you should include some type of strength training in your workouts. A minimum of two strength workouts per week is recommended. Lifting does not have to be heavy. Strength training can be accomplished by lifting light weights for many repetitions to increase muscular endurance. Working for endurance first, before lifting for strength, will improve muscular function for daily activities.

For example, improving endurance will help with carrying a full laundry basket from the parking lot all the way into a residence hall. Training for strength would help you lift the basket several times in a row, but would not necessarily help you get it into the building. Once endurance is built up, overall strength can be increased by lifting heavier weights for fewer repetitions.

WAYS TO INCORPORATE EXERCISE INTO A DAY AT NIU

- Work out at the Student Recreation Center (the Rec) or Chick Evans Field House. All fee-paying students are members of either facility.
- Hire a personal trainer through Campus Recreation. Appointments are available at various times—mornings, afternoons, evenings, and weekends.
- Take a group exercise class at the Rec Center. FIT Passes can be purchased online at www.niu.edu/campus/rec at any time.
- Take an activity class through the Kinesiology and Physical Education Department.
- Rent inline skates, cross-country skis, ice skates, or snowshoes from the Outdoor Adventure Center at the Rec.
- Join a sport club or intramural team through Campus Recreation. Team or individual play is available for intramurals and more than 19 club sports are available to choose from.
- Go for a swim at the Anderson or Gabel pools during open swim times. Show your NIU OneCard for access to either pool.
Nutrition

Practicing good nutrition habits and getting enough fluids is also important in achieving success in both personal health and academics. The dietary guidelines describe a healthy diet as one that:

- emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products;
- includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts;
- is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

The transition from high school to college is often accompanied by unexpected weight gain. This gain is sometimes referred to as the “Freshman 15.” The following is a list to help avoid gaining the “Freshman 15”:

1. Eat meals on a regular schedule as much as possible. Don’t skip meals.
2. Choose healthier options at vending machines and fast food restaurants.
3. Eat before you go to class to avoid the “munchies.”
4. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.
5. Limit late-night snacking.
6. Choose water to meet most of your fluid needs.
7. Exercise. Walk, bike, or skateboard to class. Take advantage of the Student Recreation Center, Chick Evans Field House, and the new outdoor Sports Complex.
8. Avoid these “red flag” words when dining out: fried, crispy, creamy, gravy, Alfredo, butter sauce, pot pies, stuffed with cheese, and breaded.
9. Moderation and portion control is the key! “Diet” foods aren’t necessary if you watch your portion sizes. Too much of anything isn’t good for you.

Weight gain occurs when a small amount of extra calories is consumed each day or when a large amount of extra calories is consumed on the weekend without increasing physical activity. It takes an extra 3,500 calories to equal one pound of body weight.

Calorie control should focus on reducing foods with “empty” calories and controlling portion sizes. Empty calorie foods are those that contain very few vitamins or minerals.

Calorie control should not focus on fad diets and diets that eliminate any of the food groups.

Some final tips for healthy eating on campus:

- Read the nutrition menus provided by the residence halls. These menus offer a wealth of information about calories and food choices.
- Monitor your beverage intake. The average body needs 8 cups of fluid on the average day. Beverages can play a big role in adding extra calories to your diet.
- Eat from the residence hall menus. Arrange your schedule to accommodate residence hall meal times as much as possible.
Other ideas for mind/body health at NIU:

- Have a massage or acupressure session at the Rec.
- Participate in the annual wellness fair held each spring that is sponsored by Campus Recreation and Employee Assistance.
- Take a relaxation or yoga class through the Kinesiology and Physical Education Department.

**Stress**

The adjustment to academic life at college is stressful for almost every new student. In addition, each student has specific situations and events that cause him/her stress (public speaking; test taking; deadlines; being able to say no when you really don’t have the time; and issues around money, relationships, parents, partying, roommates, and careers).

Your stress level is determined primarily from your attitudes about and your reactions to those stressors. When faced with stress, many physiological changes take place quickly and automatically—you don’t have to make a conscious effort to employ them. Changes include increases in blood pressure, blood flow, and adrenaline. Others include insulin production and blood vessel constriction. After the stress is over, the body slowly returns to its normal state. But in today’s stressful world, with multiple and repeated stressors, there is often too little time for the body to readjust to its normal, relaxed state. Stress symptoms begin to feel like the “norm.” You can forget what being truly relaxed feels like.

Like many healthy behaviors, “attention and action” are the keys to good stress management. By increasing attention to the messages sent by the body and mind, you can intervene at an earlier stage (more effective) before stress symptoms become problematic.

Students who handle stress well understand and are able to develop effective responses to these questions:

- What are my personal stressors?
- How do I respond to my stressors?
- What are some specific behaviors and/or relaxation techniques that will be effective (for me) and that I will use?

One of the most important aspects of being a healthy stress handler is to have your own “tool kit” of remedies that you can employ when needed. Just having a few is usually not enough. Having eight to ten or more behaviors will allow you to achieve effective relaxation in almost any situation. Having multiple techniques accomplishes several things: you’re less likely to get bored with just one or two techniques, you’re less likely to develop an over-dependency on any one behavior, and you’ll make more effective choices. Here are a few techniques that people often mention that seem to work for them: talking with friends, listening to music, walking/jogging, taking a hot shower, watching TV, writing in a journal, deep breathing, meditating, playing basketball, yoga, swimming, lifting weights, or updating your Facebook status. Any of these can work for you if you enjoy the activity and do not over-depend on any particular one.

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**Student Tip**

Making time for yourself is key, so watch your stress levels. It is really hard not to be somewhat stressed; it is all about making time to do something to help you relax and get your mind off of class.

—Nick Bourke
Senior
Communication major

The Counseling & Student Development Center offers free counseling to students who need assistance.
Our stress level is determined primarily from our reactions to stressors:

- Both positive and negative events can cause stress (for example, midterms, giving a class presentation, try-outs for a team or club, winning the lotto, job searching, family crises).
- People have different stressors (for example, public speaking may cause much more stress for some people than others).
- The body does not distinguish between real and perceived stress; the reactions are very much the same.
- People manage stress in a variety of ways. Behaviors run the gamut from those that promote health to those that are not healthy for more than occasional use.
- Effective stress management requires time, attention, and effort.

**POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS OF EXCESSIVE STRESS INCLUDE:**

- significant changes in sleeping or eating patterns;
- increased irritability with friends, roommates, or family members;
- inability to concentrate on academics;
- excessive amounts of time spent watching TV, drinking alcohol, or engaging in excessive distractions from normal responsibilities;
- frequent headaches or digestive problems;
- tight, sore, or achy muscles.

If your stress level becomes excessive, speak to a counselor before negative consequences become too severe, especially if:

- you're having more than an occasional night of inability to sleep;
- you find yourself using excessive amounts of alcohol or other drugs to cope;
- there has been a sudden drop in your academic performance.

**Alcohol**

Students coming to college often wonder what the “party/social” scene will be like. Is there a lot of partying? How will I meet others and make friends? Will it be fun? Can I socialize in moderation so it does not affect my academics? College life may also bring up thoughts about alcohol. Students want to know what the rules are, what happens if they break the law/rules, what do most students do, and are non-drinkers accepted?

The reality is that most students at NIU are moderate in their alcohol consumption or choose not to drink. In fact, according to a national survey conducted at NIU, most residence hall students (68.5%) drank 0–4 drinks the last time they “partied.” Also, about one third (32%) of residence hall students and over one-fourth (29%) of all NIU students have not had any alcohol in the 30 days prior to the date of survey administration. In addition, most students practice one or more of the following behaviors that promote a safer “party” experience:

- Deciding ahead of time how much to have.
- Pacing drinks to one or less per hour.
- Avoiding drinking games.
- Choosing not to drink.

1 National College Health Assessment (American College Health Association) NIU, Spring 2013 (N=378)
• Keeping track of how much they drink.
• Alternating alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks.
• Using a designated driver.
• Eating before and/or during drinking.
• Having a friend let you know when you’ve had enough.

NIU residence hall students also reduce their risk of accident and injury by not driving when they are intoxicated or driving with someone else who is intoxicated (not driving after drinking any alcohol—85%; not driving after drinking 5+ drinks—100%).[2]

NIU has several options for safe rides on and around campus, such as the Huskie Bus or Late Night Ride Service.

ALCOHOL AND YOUR BODY
Alcohol is a drug that primarily affects the brain and spine. At lower blood alcohol concentrations (BAC = .01–.05), effects include relaxation, lowered inhibitions, feelings of warmth, increased heart rate, and some loss of coordination. As BAC increases, the area of the brain that controls movement becomes affected. Effects include further loss of coordination, reduced reaction time, slurred speech, and exaggerated emotions. High BAC (> .20) can be characterized by an inability to walk without help, extreme emotionality, confusion, hostile behavior, with even higher levels of intoxication leading to loss of sensation/consciousness, coma, and death from respiratory or cardiac failure.

Aside from the quantity of alcohol consumed, other factors can contribute to higher-than-expected BAC and increased risk of harm. For students who choose to drink, risk of harm may be reduced by:

• Choosing beer, wine, or 80-proof liquor as opposed to more complicated mixed drinks or punches that may make it hard to know how much alcohol you’re actually consuming.
• Paying attention to drink container size (for example, beer cups often hold more than 12 oz.; therefore, 1 + 1 does not equal 2, but can equal 3 or 4).
• Sipping or drinking smaller amounts at a time instead of gulping or chugging.
• Eating before and/or during drinking.
• Choosing drinks that are normally drunk at room temperature or that are non-carbonated.
• Having friends keep tabs on each other so they do not over-drink or put themselves in risky situations.

Remember that for students who are ill, on medication, pregnant, or that have an alcohol problem, drinking may always be risky.

It can be easy to forget that alcohol is a drug that can cause overdose/poisoning, dependency, and addiction. Students may encounter friends or acquaintances that are highly intoxicated and need help. Drinking games, often designed to maximize intoxication, are especially risky and lead to heavy drinking. If you’re worried about a friend who may have had too much to drink, try to assess their risk of harm:

• Are they conscious and in danger of doing something that could cause injury?
• Are they open to your suggestions for keeping them safe (i.e., taking car keys, stopping drinking, chilling out with you, avoiding confrontation)? Sometimes others may be needed to help.
• If he or she is unconscious, check the person’s responsiveness. Can they be roused?
• The most important factor is the person’s breathing. If he or she cannot be roused and is breathing fewer than 10 times per minute, call 911 for medical help immediately.
• If someone is conscious but having difficulty remaining awake, it is important for that person to be monitored for at least two hours after drinking stops before he or she can be left alone.

Most students who choose to drink alcohol want to experience and maintain the positive effects that they get from alcohol while keeping their risk of harm low. One way to do this is to maintain a safer drink level. A safer drink level is one that keeps your BAC at or below .05. At this level, a drinker’s risk of harm is only slightly more than that of a non-drinker.

The charts below will help you to estimate how to keep your drink level at or below .05. Personal and other factors prevent this estimate from being an exact figure. You are the best person to determine how to make this chart work for you.

1 drink = 12 oz. can or bottle of beer, 4–5 oz. glass of wine, 1.5 oz. shot of 80-proof liquor

How do you recognize if you or a friend is exhibiting signs of a problem with alcohol? Generally, a person’s alcohol use turns to alcohol abuse if that use negatively affects one or more areas of life (physical/emotional health, relationships, legal/financial, school, work, etc.). Abuse can occur before addiction or alcoholism occurs. Warning signs of a drinking problem include:

- Experiencing negative consequences nearly every time one drinks (e.g., hangovers, legal hassles, fights/arguments, loss of control over the number of drinks consumed, regrettable actions when intoxicated, missing classes, poor grades).
- Becoming preoccupied with drinking (everything centers around the next opportunity to drink).
- Feeling uncomfortable when there is no opportunity to drink.
- Drinking to cope with problems caused by excessive drinking.

It can be difficult to intervene with someone who does not perceive that there is a problem. If he or she is resistant to your concerns it may help to have other friends who can attest to the same behavior and express concern with you—it also may be that nothing will get the problem drinker to see the abuse. Consider seeking additional help from residence hall or counseling center staff.

**Other Drugs**

Caffeine, tobacco, and marijuana are just three substances (drugs) used by some college students. Not all use becomes abuse, yet abuse can occur with all of these as well as any other drug. It is important that for any drug that you put into your body, you are aware of the risks and the benefits. This is true regardless of the drug’s legal status.

**Caffeine** is the most used drug by college students and all Americans. Caffeine is a bitter substance found in coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, some nuts, and certain medicines. It has many effects on the body’s metabolism, including the stimulation of the central nervous system. This can make you more alert and give you a boost of energy.
For most people, the amount of caffeine in two to four cups of coffee per day (200–300 mg) is not harmful. However, too much caffeine can make you restless, anxious, and irritable. It may also keep you from sleeping well and cause headaches, abnormal heart rhythms, or other problems. Stopping caffeine abruptly could produce withdrawal symptoms.

Energy drinks can be a significant source of caffeine, ranging anywhere from 80–170 mg of caffeine per 8 oz. serving. Mixing energy drinks and alcohol increases risk of harm as it can impair your judgment of intoxication. Also, be aware of less well-known sources of caffeine; it’s easy to leave them out of your calculation if you’re trying to keep track and/or limit consumption (chocolate, over-the-counter medicines, non-herbal tea, and soft drinks).

Some people are more sensitive to the effects of caffeine than others. They, as well as pregnant or nursing women, should limit their use of caffeine. Certain drugs and supplements may interact with caffeine. If you have questions about whether caffeine is safe for you, talk with your health care provider, and/or check out this website: www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/caffeine.html.

Tobacco use is declining. Nationally, more than 8 in 10 students (85%) reported not using cigarettes in the past 30 days. The vast majority of NIU residence hall students also have not used cigarettes in the last 30 days (81%). College student smoking rates have also been declining every year for the past five years. As of July 1, 2014, NIU will become an entirely smoke-free campus, in accordance with the Smoke-Free Campus Act (SB 2202).

Drug effects of tobacco include increased heart rate, alertness, and relaxation. Smoking tobacco is the leading cause of death in the United States, killing more people than AIDS, alcohol, auto accidents, homicides, and drugs combined. The good news is that the majority of college students choose not to smoke. Of the students who do smoke, 90% indicate that they want to quit. There are many strategies that can help someone quit, including making a strong commitment, setting a quit date, exercising, and using aids such as nicotine replacement therapy or medications. Health Enhancement offers Quit Kits, materials, and assistance for those students who are interested in becoming non-smokers.

Marijuana use is fairly low nationally among college students and among residence hall students at NIU; more than 8 in 10 (83%) for both populations reported not using marijuana in the past 30 days.

Effects of marijuana include euphoria, relaxation, and changes in perception and are dosage dependent. Low dose effects include sense of well-being; mild enhancement of smell, taste, and hearing; subtle changes in thought and expression; talkativeness; giggling; and increased appetite. Higher dose effects include altered perception of time and/or memory, and significantly altered thought processes and other mental perception. Other effects can include dry mouth, paranoia, respiratory problems, and nervousness. Still other effects may be negative or inconvenient in certain settings including reduced ability to concentrate, impaired memory, tiredness, and confusion. Side effects tend to increase with lifetime use. Long-term users often report decreased euphoria and increased anxiety.

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3 National College Health Assessment (American College Health Association) NIU, Spring 2013 (N=378)
4 National College Health Assessment (American College Health Association) NIU, Spring 2011 (N=105,781)
While not physically addictive, marijuana use can cause an unhealthy dependency, legal problems, and poor academic performance.

**Sexual Health**

Young adults are often interested in getting to know potential romantic partners. Some people want to take their time and get to know a boy/girlfriend better, while others may feel pressure to become sexually involved early in a relationship. Regardless of when or if partners decide to become sexually active, there are many resources available to help them make those decisions, including information about safer sex and how to form and maintain healthy relationships.

Overall, college students nationally are practicing healthier and safer behaviors related to sex because they’re either deciding to abstain from sex or using condoms and other protective measures. Condoms and other latex barriers used consistently and correctly significantly reduce the risk for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy.

**PREVENTING STIs**

All sexual contact carries some risk—that is why “safe sex” is not an accurate term. “Safer sex” is used to better reflect that risk is a continuum. The risk for any sexual contact (for STI) ranges from very low to very high. Lower risk activities include kissing or touching with no genital contact and no exchange of blood or body fluids (mucus, semen). Higher risk would be engaging in sexual activity where blood or body fluids could be exchanged and there is no barrier (i.e., condom/latex dam) between partners.

Practicing safer sex in terms of preventing infection means:

- choosing not to have intercourse (vaginal, oral, anal);
- using a latex or other approved poly-based barrier correctly every time; and
- avoiding the exchange of blood or body fluids (mucus, semen) with a sexual partner.

The most common STIs for college students include herpes, chlamydia, and condyloma (HPV). HIV does occur within the college population. Although incidence is low, taking precautions is still highly recommended. Specific information about each STI cannot be presented here. Check out Health Enhancement’s website for comprehensive information on common sexual infections. General symptoms of STIs include the following:

- genital and/or abdominal pain or discomfort;
- vaginal or penile discharge;
- painful or burning urination;
- rashes; and
- bumps or sores with or without pain.

Some STIs may not produce symptoms in everyone, though an infected individual may still be able to pass the infection on to others whether or not symptoms are present. Generally, most (approximately 80%) of women will not exhibit noticeable symptoms while most men (approximately 80%) will tend to have them.
Many STIs can be easily and painlessly diagnosed, treated, and cured. Some tend to stay in your body and may reoccur after treatment. If you think you might have an infection, abstain from any sexual activity until you consult your health care provider. If you are sexually active, regular visits to a health care provider may be beneficial. It is also important that sexual partners be notified quickly after a positive STI diagnosis so that they can seek testing.

**PREVENTING PREGNANCY**

Unprotected vaginal intercourse between men and women is likely to result in pregnancy. A wide variety of birth control (contraception) methods exist. Deciding which method is best is not always easy, but students can make an informed choice. Each method has pros and cons, and partners should decide which method is best for them by considering aspects of preference, effectiveness, cost, side effects, health benefits, ease of use, and others. Regardless of the method(s) that partners choose, effectiveness is greatly increased if the method is used correctly every time intercourse occurs.

**MYTHS ABOUND ABOUT PREGNANCY RISKS AND PREVENTION. HERE ARE SOME FACTS:**

- Pregnancy can occur almost anytime, even during the first act of vaginal intercourse.
- Pregnancy can occur as soon as ovulation occurs in the first cycle after a woman stops taking birth control pills—there is no protection beyond the last completed pill cycle.
- Douching after sex is not a form of contraception and may increase chances of pregnancy.
- Pregnancy can occur even if a woman does not have an orgasm.
- In some cases, pregnancy can occur while menstruating.
- While not as effective as hormonal methods, male and female condoms when used consistently and correctly are also very effective in preventing pregnancy.

Plan B One-Step Emergency Contraception is a method a woman can use after unprotected sex (e.g., if the regular method of contraception was damaged, slipped out of place, wasn’t used, or was used incorrectly). FDA-approved Plan B One-Step pill is a non-prescription medication. Students 17 years or older who are eligible to use NIU Health Services may purchase Plan B One-Step at the pharmacy for a cost of $40.00 (subject to change). A government-issued ID (driver’s license, state or military ID, passport) must be presented (an NIU ID does not meet this requirement). Women under 17 years old will require a prescription for emergency contraception.
Available Resources

HEALTH ENHANCEMENT
Chick Evans Field House, Room 139
(815) 753-9755
www.niu.edu/health

HEALTH SERVICES
Health Services Building
(815) 753-1311
www.niu.edu/healthservices/

COUNSELING & STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CENTER
Campus Life Building, Room 200
(815) 753-1206
www.niu.edu/csdcc

DEKALB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
2550 North Annie Glidden Rd., DeKalb, IL
(815) 758-6673
www.dekalbcounty.org/Health/

CAMPUS RECREATION
Southwest corner of Lucinda Ave. and Annie Glidden Rd.
(815) 753-0231
www.niu.edu/campusrec/

Critical Thinking Questions

• What are some ways you can practice good health habits while attending NIU?

• What are the challenges you think you may encounter when trying to maintain good health as a student?

• What keeps you motivated to stay healthy?
Dear First-Year Students,

Welcome to NIU! Are you feeling overwhelmed and exhausted yet? I am well aware that juggling new experiences away from home and finding a balance between the demands of friends, family, and schoolwork can often lead to stress and possibly poor decision-making regarding your health. As a result, staff from Health Enhancement, Health Services, Campus Recreation, and the Counseling & Student Development Center are here to assist you in making positive lifestyle choices as you pursue your academic goals.

First of all, the staff of the offices on page 140 and I are committed to providing you with skill-building opportunities that encourage personal, physical, mental, emotional, and social growth through programs and services emphasizing awareness, prevention, and positive behavior changes. Our goal is to help you improve and/or maintain your health in order to enhance your academic performance.

Additionally, accurate information on personal and community health issues is provided to foster a campus environment supportive of healthy lifestyles for everyone. To that end, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of these campus services and feel empowered to make healthy lifestyle choices for yourself and others.

Good luck as you pursue your academic and personal goals.

In good health,

Donna Schoenfeld, M.S.
Director of Health Enhancement
Activity 1. What Stresses You?

PART 1.
In the boxes below, list as many stressors as possible that apply to you. After doing so, mark the appropriate column describing the frequency of each stressor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressor</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Taking tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART 2.
Look at the stressors you listed above. Consider the ways in which you try to manage or avoid the stress. Using the lines below, list the ways in which you handle stress. What are some positive ways in which you handle stress? Negative ways? What are some ways in which you could handle stress more effectively?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Recognize strategies to create and maintain healthy relationships.
2. Identify skills used to achieve conflict resolution.
3. Become aware of characteristics of abusive relationships, how to get help, and how to access available resources at NIU.
Dear First-Year NIU Students,

I promise that your experience here at NIU will be filled with fun, excitement, and endless possibilities. You will have many opportunities to build your résumé, create a network, develop personally as well as academically, and so much more. I’m sure many of you are eager to meet new people and make new friends. At a large and diverse campus like Northern, I guarantee you that will not be a problem.

Keep in mind that the relationships you develop and maintain will play an extremely important role in your first-year experience. This encompasses your relationships with your parents, friends from home, friends at school, professors, and your significant other. You must balance these relationships and make sure that they are healthy. Your relationships all should benefit you in some way. The greatest benefit you can receive from a relationship, in my opinion, is personal support. Surround yourself with people who provide you with encouragement, empathy, and care. The people you see and spend time with every day will have a major impact on you. By developing healthy relationships, you are avoiding those that may distract you from your goal of earning your NIU degree.

Unhealthy relationships, although not always visible, involve people who directly or indirectly hurt you or hold you back from growing and learning. Though it may be hard, it is necessary for you to confront these relationships and change them. You want your first year here to be positive and unforgettable. Take risks, stay motivated, and build healthy relationships!

Sincerely,

Donna Nguyen
Junior Business Major
University Honors Program
Secretary, Women in Business Professions
Conference Chair, Delta Sigma Pi Business Fraternity
Dean’s Advisory Board, College of Business
Beta Gamma Sigma International Business Honor Society
2012 Executive Club and Young Professionals Network scholarship winner
Healthy relationships are important to your success in college, and they provide stability throughout your lifetime. This chapter will provide an overview of information that can help you manage and maintain healthy relationships and address issues that contribute to interpersonal conflict.

**Communication: The Foundation of All Healthy Relationships**

The key component for people in a relationship—any relationship—is communication. Although it can be difficult, communicating our thoughts, emotions, needs, desires, and concerns is the foundation to building a healthy relationship. A healthy relationship does not mean that two people have to agree on every issue all the time, but both should feel respected and listened to when disagreement occurs.

This is easier said than done, especially in the heat of the moment. It is often easier to focus on our individual thoughts and feelings when faced with a disagreement, and more challenging to listen and acknowledge the perspective of the other person.
Listening is an important factor in the communication process. When people truly listen to one another, healthy relationships can be developed. Open and honest communication fosters:

- trust;
- respect;
- expression of opinions, values, and beliefs;
- confidence to be yourself;
- continued interest in people and activities outside of the relationship;
- mutual interest in people and activities;
- shared decision making and responsibilities;
- clear identification of personal preferences and boundaries;
- ability to compromise, apologize, and address problems that arise.

These characteristics are essential to any relationship, whether with parents, friends, roommates, or romantic partners.

**Romantic Relationships**

Romantic relationships can be more complicated in comparison to other relationships because of the intense emotions involved. Those in romantic relationships often become vulnerable to another person and can feel wonderful support and love, and sometimes terrible hurt and confusion. The ability to trust, communicate openly, and offer and expect respect in return can help you take risks to share personal information with a romantic partner.

**JEALOUSY**

Jealousy is based on lack of trust, feelings of fear, and/or feelings of insecurity that lie within the jealous person, not the person being targeted. Jealousy does not always appear in the form of anger but in the way a partner attempts to use feelings of guilt to meet his or her needs.

Jealousy might seem like a sign of love at first. Some people might consider feelings of jealousy “normal” given the level of emotional connection in romantic relationships. But when someone uses jealousy or anger to influence your thoughts, emotions, or behaviors, it is not love, but an attempt to control and assert power in the relationship.

The best way to address jealousy is to discuss it directly and communicate how it is negatively impacting the relationship. It can be helpful for a person to hear that their feelings of jealousy are having a negative impact on the relationship. If jealousy persists and your partner does not acknowledge the problem or make efforts to change, you might have to decide whether it is best to remain in the relationship or to end it.
PHYSICAL INTIMACY

A healthy romantic relationship consists of open communication with your partner about expectations, beliefs, values, and desires regarding physical or sexual intimacy. Without communication, trust, and respect, the decision to have or not to have sex is more confusing and less gratifying. This can lead to regret, low self-esteem, and in some cases, trauma. It is important to determine if engaging in sexual activity is the right decision for you.

You should also make sure that you and your partner are prepared to handle the responsibility and potential consequences. When talking with your partner about whether your relationship will proceed sexually, consider your individual beliefs and feelings. The following is a list of questions to ask yourself and your partner as you consider a sexual relationship:

- What are my spiritual, religious, or personal beliefs about sex?
- What are my expectations about the relationship? Will my expectations change after we have sex? Why?
- Can my partner and I talk openly about our desires, needs, and concerns about having sex?
- What sexual activities am I agreeing to?
- What promises have I made to myself in the past regarding sex? Will I be upholding my promises, and if not, am I O.K. with changing them?
- What form of protection am I willing to use? What form of protection is my partner willing to use?
- Am I agreeing to sex because I feel pressured or because I’m trying to “save” the relationship?
- Knowing that no form of sexual activity is 100% safe, am I ready to accept the possible consequences?
- How would sex enhance the relationship and how might it contribute to potential difficulties?
- What emotional or personal needs do I expect sex to fulfill?

Contrary to popular myth, not everyone is having sex! It is always better to wait until you feel ready and are comfortable with both your partner and the status of your relationship. Remember, if you are not prepared to communicate about the information previously specified, then you need to question if you are ready to become sexually active in the relationship.
Family Relationships
As you transition to NIU, it is likely that your relationships with your parents and other family members will change. If you are a traditional college student, this may be your first time experiencing a new level of independence, new social and learning opportunities, and a time of significant personal development. This can be an adjustment process for all parties involved. If you are not commuting from home, an additional challenge can occur when you return for visits and adjust again to your family’s rules after living on your own. Following the communication guidelines discussed earlier in this chapter can help with this process.

Important tips to keep in mind as you negotiate changes in relationships with your parents and other family members:

- Be patient and understanding. What you perceive as “annoying” or “intrusive” may be your family member’s way of talking to you about your college experiences and maintaining a connection.
- Spend quality time with your family when you can. This can help with the separation process and make the transition back to school a little easier.
- Stay in touch with your family members. Sometimes a quick update by e-mail or phone will help ease their worries and let them know how you are doing. Follow through on your promises to call or e-mail.
- When you return home for the first time, anticipate that some tensions may arise (e.g., curfew, your sleep schedule, the amount of time you plan to spend at home). Discuss these issues with your family members. Respect home rules and remember that your visit is temporary (even over the summer months).

Roommate Relationships
Most college students live with roommates, and this experience can be positive, negative, or mostly in between. As it is not uncommon for first-year students to live with a roommate when they come to college, it is important to know that there are some straightforward steps you can take to increase the chances of having positive experiences with a roommate. As previously discussed, the importance of open communication provides the foundation for a healthy, respectful relationship. You don’t have to be best friends with your roommate (even if you were close friends before you lived together), but you do have to talk with each other, especially if you are experiencing issues that are causing frustration or dissatisfaction. The more things that are left unsaid, the more likely “small things” will become major issues.

To help avert roommate issues, fill out a Roommate Agreement form with your Community Advisor.

Your parents can be a resource to you as you transition to college.
For students living in NIU residence halls, Housing & Dining publishes the annual *Guide Post*, a handbook which provides an overview of important recommendations, policies, and procedures. One small but important recommendation in the *Guide Post* is to complete a Roommate Agreement form. This form can be obtained from any Community Advisor (CA), and it highlights topics that roommates can discuss and review to reach a mutual understanding about living arrangements. If you live off-campus with a roommate, Students’ Legal Assistance and Off-Campus and Non-Traditional Student Services also provide sample roommate agreement forms you can use. Many students are glad they completed this form if and when issues arise later in the semester. Even if you don’t live in a residence hall, having these conversations and reaching agreements with your roommate will be time well spent.

You can find entire lists of questions to discuss with your roommate online, but here are some questions to help you begin this dialogue:

- When do you typically go to sleep at night and wake up in the morning?
- If one of us is sleeping, what activities are acceptable in the room/apartment/house?
- Do you take naps? When? What should we do when one of us is taking a nap when the other comes home?
- What things can we share (like food, music, or TV), and what things are off limits (like computer or other personal items)?
- How do we want to leave messages for each other?
- How late is “too late” for friends or family to call?
- What will we do if friends or significant others want to visit when one of us is studying?
- How will each of us get enough time by ourselves in the room?
- If you are away for the weekend, can a guest use your bed?
- Who will clean what and when?
- What is your ideal room temperature at different times of the year?
- How will we communicate when something is bothering one of us?

**The Art of Conflict Resolution**

Conflict is an inevitable part of human interaction and people cope with relationship conflict in different ways. Although there is no right way to address your concerns, there are specific conflict resolution strategies that can help reduce problems related to relationship conflicts. Conflict occurs when two or more people need to examine and express their

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**Student Tip**

*Dividing space, possessions, and food can be a lot to figure out. Being open with your roommate from the beginning can help build a great relationship and hopefully deter any problems.*

—Hannah Clesceri
Senior
Business Administration major
behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. The process of conflict resolution is focused on a positive and productive solution for all involved. Conflict resolution is about healthy, assertive, and open communication.

Follow these ten steps to successful conflict resolution. You will likely feel more satisfied when addressing concerns in any relationship.

1. Attempt to resolve a conflict after experiencing “in the moment” emotional reactions.
   - Take time to calm down and wait until you can approach the situation more rationally.

2. Include all persons involved in the conflict and make sure they are present for the discussion.
   - Find times to talk that are best for all involved parties.
   - Don’t expect others to drop what they’re doing when you’re ready to talk.
   - Allow enough time to discuss the situation thoroughly.
   - Identify a neutral site for your discussion.

3. Come to an agreement about the source of the conflict.
   - Be specific about your concerns and don’t make assumptions that someone else “knows what you’re talking about.”

4. Provide opportunities for each person to express his or her point of view.
   - Take turns (literally) sharing perceptions and feelings.
   - Listen. Let them talk until they have finished.
   - Facilitate communication and address the problem. This process is not about “winning” an argument or debate.

5. Validate the other person’s position.
   - Try to understand the other person’s point of view and communicate your understanding.
   - Be genuine. If you don’t understand what someone is saying, ask them to clarify what they mean.

6. Use “I” statements (e.g., “I feel hurt when you make sarcastic comments about me”).
   - Avoid placing blame on others (e.g., “You make me crazy when you say things like that,” or “You are so selfish and should be more thoughtful.”).
   - Attack the source of the conflict, not each other.

7. Identify changes or compromises that can be made by each person.
   - Negotiate options and brainstorm ways to solve the conflict.

8. Develop a plan that specifies individual responsibilities and expectations.
   - Is everyone satisfied with this plan?

9. Make a verbal commitment to make necessary changes to resolve the conflict.

10. Set a time to follow up on the identified resolution.
    - If the conflict remains unsolved or if other issues arise, attempt the process again and/or consider professional mediation services (see below).

As an NIU student, you should be aware that Community Standards & Student Conduct provides formal mediation services to help students address areas of conflict. As stated on the Community Standards & Student Conduct website, mediation is “a confidential process in which an impartial third party facilitates communication between disputing parties to promote reconciliation, settlement, or an understanding between them.” Students can use Community Standards & Student Conduct’s mediation services to address roommate problems, harassment issues, noise and disruptive behavior, racial and/or ethnic tensions, and relationship problems. In addition to helping you resolve disputes, the mediation process can help you to develop anger management, conflict resolution, and effective communication skills.
Mediation is not a process to decide guilt or innocence. The mediator’s role is to facilitate communication to help students reach a mutual agreement. Mediation is a voluntary process that can be used when other efforts have not been successful.

**Loneliness**

Whether you are from a small town, rural area, or large city, going away to college can feel overwhelming and even lonely for students at various times. You have left your familiar community of friends and family for a new and exciting life but sometimes, finding that new sense of community can be difficult. One of the keys to developing a healthy social life and creating a personal community is to “shrink” the size of your college campus by developing a network of friends, colleagues, and support systems. When developing these systems, look to include people who share interests or similarities in various life domains such as social, academic, work, spiritual, and community involvement. Seek out new people in your residence halls, in campus organizations, spiritual communities, and even your classrooms. Getting involved in a variety of activities and with different people also allows you to explore new areas of interest and cultures that may not have been previously available to you. Though it may sometimes appear that “it’s easy for everyone else,” don’t get caught up in the hype. We all struggle at some point to “put ourselves out there.” Remember what you learned in childhood: it’s easier to get to know people face-to-face, and it all starts with “Hi.”

**Relationship Abuse**

Healthy relationships, happiness, and positive experiences are what many people hope for and anticipate; however, not all people have these experiences when dating. Relationship violence, also known as domestic violence or abuse, is found within all demographic groups in the U.S. There are no boundaries of socioeconomic status, age, ability, race, ethnicity, or sexual/gender orientation. Relationship abuse is found in heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender relationships. Both men and women can be victims of abuse, as well as perpetrators of abuse.

The dynamics of relationship abuse are often difficult to understand. The victim, or even family and friends, may not be able to easily detect the violence. It is not always clear why victims stay with their abusers as long as they do. There also is no clear answer to why there is abuse in some relationships but not others.
Most people can recognize violence when someone is being struck, but what about the violence that occurs before?

Abuse does not show up in the first date or suddenly appear in otherwise healthy relationships. Many victims will later share that when they first started dating their abusive partner, everything seemed great and they thought they might have met “the one.” Abuse often does not begin until the victim is already invested in the relationship.

The reasons that some victims stay in abusive relationships are numerous, and leaving is not always as clear-cut as we would like to believe. Sometimes, victims have a difficult time identifying their partner’s behavior as abusive. When they do realize that it is abusive, they are already invested in the relationship. Leaving often brings feelings of loss, grief, and sometimes guilt, as is often the case when ending healthy relationships. Other reasons that victims may struggle to leave are a fear of any threats that may have been made by their abusive partner, and fears of being alone or returning to the dating world. Additionally, victims may struggle with finding support to leave. When a victim has been isolated from their support network by their abuser, it is often difficult for them to return to that same group to ask for help. Understanding that leaving is a process, and a difficult one, is key to helping a friend or loved one get out of an abusive relationship.

Healthy relationships are ideal, but relationship violence can be found within all demographic groups.

As friends or family members of a victim, it is important to learn ways in which you can help. These are some guidelines to consider:

1. **Do not make statements** such as, “Why do you let him/her treat you that way?” This statement blames the victim for being abused and assumes that the victim has control over his/her partner’s behavior. No one ever deserves or enjoys being victimized.

2. **Be there for the victim** when he or she needs to talk. Sometimes it is difficult because we feel frustrated when the victim does not leave or returns to the abusive partner. If you can be there for the victim when he/she needs to talk, there is a higher likelihood that he/she may come to you when he/she is ready to leave.
3. **Offer to help** the victim get aid from other resources such as a domestic violence shelter or counseling center. You can even offer to go with him/her for support.

4. **Talk to your friend** honestly about what you see and your concerns for his/her happiness. Initially, the victim may not believe you or want to talk about it, but it may make him/her think further about his/her own feelings and fears.

5. **Do not go after the abuser.** This could unintentionally cause further harm to the victim, as the abuser is more likely to retaliate against him/her rather than a family member or friend.

6. **Talk to a professional** if you are struggling to cope with your own feelings about the situation.

At the end of this chapter, you will get more information about where to receive assistance at NIU as you try to help others.

**Sexual Assault**

After exploring the areas of healthy relationships, sexual decision making, and relationship abuse, we must also address the issue of sexual assault. This is often a difficult topic to discuss as many of the messages we receive about sexual assault can be confusing; however, as noted earlier in the chapter, communication is key.

A 2008 study estimated that 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime. College women are 4 times as likely to be victims of sexual assault, and every 2 minutes someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted. These numbers are the best estimates by experts and they are important because they indicate the general scope of the problem. However, it is likely that you also will encounter reports and research in which statistics are slightly different or reported differently. This is due in part to low reporting by victims. Generally, victims of sexual assault report the crime to police at a rate of 20–30 percent. This means for every ten assaults, only two or three are reported. The reporting of these crimes, however, decreases even further when the victim is male. The additional numbers are compiled through interviews, surveys, and alternative reporting centers such as rape crisis centers and hospitals.

Sexual assault, as defined by Illinois law, is an act of sexual penetration including, but not limited to, the penis or finger in an orifice of another person's body, using force, threat of force, or when the victim is unable to give knowing consent. Force may be applied through physical restraint of a person or the use of weapons. Additionally, Illinois law includes blocking someone’s exit as a show of force. Threat of force is the use of threatening behaviors, intimidation, and/or verbal threats.

For the purposes of this course, we will only discuss the term “knowing consent” as it applies to the use of alcohol and/or drugs and not in terms of mental capacity or persons under the age of 18. “Knowing consent,” as it applies to sexual activity, means that a person’s judgment is not impaired by alcohol and/or drugs. In real-life situations, a person who is passed out, or coming in and out of consciousness, is unable to give knowing consent. Force may be applied through physical restraint of a person or the use of weapons. Additionally, Illinois law includes blocking someone’s exit as a show of force. Threat of force is the use of threatening behaviors, intimidation, and/or verbal threats.

For more information on where to receive assistance, please see the resources provided at NIU.

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**Student Tip**

In any type of relationship you develop in college, make sure it is with someone who supports your goals. Having someone who supports you will keep you focused on what you want to accomplish. In turn, make sure they are someone whose goals you can support.

—Amy Henkel
Senior
Art and Design Education major
Imagine that you are studying late one night in your residence hall room when your phone rings. It is a woman whom you care a great deal about. It could be your sister, your best friend, your partner, or your roommate. She is crying on the phone, and proceeds to tell you that she was raped. What would you do? What could you say to help her? The following is a list of ways that you can respond to victims of sexual assault to assist in the healing process.

1. **Listen, believe them, and let them tell you** as little or as much of their story as they want.

2. **Do not ask a lot of questions.** Sometimes, when we ask too many questions it can appear to victims that we are somehow blaming them for the assault against them. If they feel blamed or not believed by their friend or family member, they may be less likely to seek professional help.

3. **Encourage the person to seek medical, legal, and emotional assistance.** Offer to go with them to their appointments or ask if they would like you to call someone else. **Remind** them that just because they seek help doesn’t mean they have to press charges or prosecute the perpetrator if they are unsure. Do not make the decisions for them. During an assault, control is taken from the victim. As a friend, you want to help them regain a sense of control. Allow them to decide what kind of help they want, and respect it even if you want them to do something else.

4. **Offer support.** Tell them it is not their fault. Never blame the victim or tell them to “just get over it.”

5. **Do not go after the attacker.** Going after the attacker can actually cause further harm to the victim. The attacker could use this to further coerc the victim to refrain from pressing charges, or they may use this to further threaten the victim. Additionally, a victim of sexual assault has just been through an experience in which they had to try to calm down a violent person from perpetrating further harm. Going after the attacker places them in a similar situation with you and can cause further trauma.

6. **Get help for yourself.** If you find that you are struggling to cope with what has happened to your loved one, talk to a professional. Do not ask the victim to help you cope, as they have enough to handle themselves.
It is important to know where someone can get help related to relationship abuse or sexual assault on our campus. NIU has created an Interpersonal Violence Response Team (IVRT) as a way to ensure that victims of interpersonal violence receive the help and support they need and deserve. This team consists of the following five offices:

- Counseling & Student Development Center, Campus Life Building, Room 200, (815) 753-1206.
- Safe Passage, Inc., (815) 756-5228.
- Health Services, Health Services Building, (815) 756-5228.
- NIU Department of Police & Public Safety, Telephone and Security Building, (815) 753-1212 or 911.
- Community Standards & Student Conduct, Campus Life Building, Room 280, (815) 753-1571.

In general, there are several things that students at NIU can do to make a difference and to help end interpersonal violence on our campus.

- **Attend** a Healthy Relationships workshop offered in your residence hall.
- **Join** PAUSE OFF!, a peer education theater troupe; contact Health Enhancement for details.
- **Get involved** with Men Against Sexual and Interpersonal Violence (MASIV).
- **Support** campus/local sexual assault and relationship abuse prevention efforts such as Take Back the Night or activities during April’s Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
- **Be an example** to the peers of your residence hall floor, organization, or classes.
- **Confront** jokes or victim-blaming statements about rape and abuse. If you do not feel comfortable saying something, don’t join in the laughter, or walk away. Sometimes silence can be a powerful tool of confrontation.
- **Organize** or attend awareness-raising events on campus.
Available Resources

COUNSELING & STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CENTER
Campus Life Building, Room 200
(815) 753-1206
www.niu.edu/csd

HEALTH ENHANCEMENT
Chick Evans Field House, Room 139
(815) 753-9755
www.niu.edu/health

DEKALB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
2550 North Annie Glidden Road
(815) 758-6673
www.dekalbcounty.org/health/

COMMUNITY STANDARDS & STUDENT CONDUCT
Campus Life Building, Room 280
(815) 753-1571
www.niu.edu/communitystandards

HEALTH SERVICES
Health Services Building
(815) 753-1311
www.niu.edu/healthservices

Other Online Resources:

Students can use campus resources to stay healthy and happy.
Dear Students:

Relationships are all around us on campus. You’ll discover them as you walk to DuSable with one of your classmates, play video games with a friend on your floor, or practice a new dance routine in the Holmes Student Center.

Relationships aren’t always easy to develop and maintain, and college can create new challenges as you interact with roommates, friends, family, dating partners, faculty, staff, and others. While those interactions can provide support and comfort, they can sometimes create a source of confusion and stress that can affect you emotionally, physically, and mentally.

How do you maintain healthy relationships based on honesty, respect, and open communication? Talking, laughing, openly expressing emotions and thoughts, listening and respecting others’ opinions during good times and bad are ways to nourish a healthy relationship. Understanding yourself and setting healthy boundaries are other ways to develop positive relationships with a roommate, partner, co-worker, family member, or friend.

The NIU Counseling & Student Development Center (CSDC) offers a variety of services to help you learn ways to foster healthy relationships, including walk-in services, individual or group counseling, crisis/consultation services, and drop-in hours at our satellite office in Stevenson Residence Hall. Learning new information and gaining awareness about yourself can be challenging. However, with the support of a mentor, friend, professor, or staff at the CSDC, you can develop relationship skills that will help you thrive at Northern Illinois University and beyond.

Visit us at www.niu.edu/csdc, and “like” us on NIU Strive Facebook.

*Erica Barnes*
*Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor*
*Counseling & Student Development Center*

**Critical Thinking Questions**

- Do your relationships with friends, family, and significant others affect your success at NIU? How so?
- What are some ways you have maintained healthy relationships?
- What are some healthy ways you have communicated your feelings when coping with change or conflict?
- What feelings come up for you when you think of having to resolve a conflict with a roommate, a close friend, a romantic partner, a family member? Do you think you would react the same way in each situation? Why or why not?
Activity 1. Adding Your Perspective*

As a class, view the documentary Red-Blooded Men written and filmed by NIU students on NIU’s campus. Discuss your reactions to the video in class. Use the discussion questions below to write your own 1-page reflection.

1. What does power have to do with sexual assault? ________________________________________  

2. Are there different standards for men and women regarding drinking? Sex? Why do you think that is?  

3. Is there a way to react in and to the situations presented in the video that are neither submissive nor aggressive? Why is this important? ________________________________________  

4. What are some realistic ways to step in if someone may be in danger? ________________________  

5. What can you do to positively impact how our culture views sexual assault? ___________________  

*Video and questions borrowed from PACT5 Documentaries project and guide found here: pact5.org/pact5-documentaries/northern-illinois-university/
Chapter 10
Managing Your Finances

CHAPTER GOALS
As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Know where to go for help with financial aid, scholarships, student employment, and bill payments.

2. Understand that NIU has many options to help students afford their college education.

3. Learn and apply at least three tips for living well at NIU on a student’s budget.

Managing Your Finances • 163
Dear First-Year NIU Student,

College is an exciting life step but it also can be expensive. Between tuition and fees, living needs, and fun activities, it can seem like money just flies out the window. Although there are many expenses in college, there are steps you can take to manage your money.

First, write down all your expenses (tuition, textbooks, gas, social activities, etc.) and your income (grants, scholarships, paychecks, money from family, etc.). After you have a list, differentiate between what you “need” to buy and what you “want” to buy. (Keep reading this chapter for the difference between “wants” and “needs.”) Once you know your “wants” and “needs,” you can begin to create a budget.

A budget allows you to monitor your spending habits. Budgeting is not something you pick up right away, so don’t be discouraged if it doesn’t go smoothly at first. You have to decide the best way to create and maintain a budget. Some people collect receipts and use a notebook, others input income and expenses into an Excel spreadsheet, and still others use an app on their phone. If you have never budgeted before, an Excel spreadsheet or an app is a great way to start. If you want more help, go online. There are tons of websites, blogs, and videos that offer helpful budgeting tips.

To make budgeting easy, make sure your bank has online banking (many banks even have phone apps). Online banking allows you to compare your budget with your bank statement. If there are any discrepancies between the two, you know something is wrong, and can address it right away. Keep a record that includes descriptions of the purchases that you make and the payments you receive. This description comes in handy if questions arise, and also for prioritizing purchases and altering your future budget. If the plan doesn’t work, try a different one; trial and error are a huge part of budgeting.

Budgeting and financial planning can make your life easier and less stressful. As you know, your physical and mental health are very important but don’t forget about your financial health, too!

Sincerely,

Sarah Trygstad
Senior Political Science and Community Leadership and Civic Engagement
University Honors Program
Lambda Sigma Sophomore Honors Society
Committee for the Preservation of Wildlife
Basic Budgeting for College Students

It’s no secret that going to college can be expensive. In addition to tuition and room and board, students also need to consider costs such as books, travel to and from home, cell phone bills, course-related fees, technology needs, and incidental spending money. It all adds up quickly, and it is very easy for students to get in over their heads.

People attend college to learn as well as to develop new skills, so this is the perfect time for students to learn to budget, build their credit, and plan for life after graduation. The best way for students to start is by determining what is a “want” versus what is a “need.” A “want” is something that a person would like to have but is not a necessity. Wants may include a nice car, regular Starbucks trips, expensive shoes, or a new smart phone. A “need” is something important that a person cannot do without. Common needs for college students include school supplies, books, laundry money, and transportation.

Although it may be difficult, prioritizing needs before wants is crucial. Doing so is the foundation of basic budgeting. After needs are taken care of, students can determine how to spend any remaining money. Saving money and planning ahead for future or unforeseen expenses is always a good idea, but it is also important to use a little cash for fun! The trick is to be reasonable about it and not make hasty or irrational decisions.

College is also the perfect time for students to begin building their credit history. Good credit is necessary to qualify for loans, auto insurance, rental applications, and large purchases. Some employers even run a credit check as a standard component of the interview process. One way of building credit is to secure a credit card. Keeping the limit low and regularly paying off charges will help build solid credit.

Another option is to become an authorized user on a family member’s account. This allows students to begin building personal credit with the added protection of mom or dad helping to supervise usage. Additionally, students need to make a habit of paying all bills. Cell phone bills, utility charges, and rent all impact credit scores. Regular payments add credibility to one’s credit score whereas late and missed payments will cause damage.

Being financially savvy during college allows students to build a solid foundation for a lifetime of fiscal responsibility. It also affords new college graduates the flexibility to seek a wider array of opportunities regarding jobs, relocation, housing, and even travel. Purposeful planning today yields limitless possibilities tomorrow!

Navigating the Student Financial Aid Process

FROM APPLICATION TO AWARD

To be considered eligible for financial aid students must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) every academic year at www.fafsa.gov. All students are encouraged to apply by completing the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 each year.
The information on the FAFSA is sent to the Student Financial Aid Office (SFAO). If your FAFSA is selected by the Federal Processor for a process called “verification,” the SFAO will also be required to collect certain information and/or documents to complete the verification of information reported on your FAFSA. The SFAO will post to your MyNIU To Do List any requests for information and/or documents needed to complete verification of your application for financial aid.

After a student’s FAFSA and any other requested documents have been received and processed, an award notification will be posted to the student’s MyNIU Campus Finance page. The award notification will designate in which financial aid programs that student is eligible to participate and the amount of assistance the student will receive.

**TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID**

Financial aid is available from federal state, university, and private resources. There are four primary types of financial aid programs listed below:

**Grants**

Grants are gift aid that do not have to be repaid and are awarded based on demonstrated financial aid need as determined by completion of the FAFSA.

**Scholarships and Waivers**

Scholarships and waivers are gift aid that do not have to be repaid and are awarded based on a range of factors such as academic achievement, leadership, talent, field of study, and/or financial need.

**Loans**

Loans are aid funds that are borrowed by the student and/or the parent/guardian of dependent students. Loans need to be repaid with interest. Students are eligible for the Federal Direct Loan regardless of student and/or parent/guardian income and a credit check is not required.

**Employment**

Federal Work-Study is an opportunity for students to earn a wage for work performed. Students must apply for a Work-Study job and be hired in order to use the eligibility offered on their award notification.

**TYPES OF STUDENT AND PARENT LOANS**

Attending college is a great investment in a student’s future. Many students and parents/guardians will choose to take out educational loans to assist them with covering college expenses.

**Federal Student Direct Loans**

Direct subsidized and unsubsidized loans are low interest loans for students that are borrowed directly through the U.S. Department of Education. Direct Loans are offered on the student’s NIU award notification. The FAFSA must be completed for students to be eligible to receive Direct Loans.

- **Subsidized vs. Unsubsidized:** The subsidized loan is based on financial need, while students qualify for the unsubsidized loan regardless of financial need. Students eligible to borrow subsidized loans do not pay interest on the loans while they are enrolled at least half-time. Students borrowing
unsubsidized loans must pay the interest while they are enrolled in school. Students may choose to defer the interest payments on an unsubsidized loan until they begin repaying their loans. Students have a six-month grace period after they have completed their degree.

**Federal Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) Loan**

Parents/guardians of dependent undergraduate students have the option to apply for PLUS Loans to help pay their student’s educational expenses. The student must have completed a FAFSA and received an award notification before a PLUS Loan can be processed. The Parent PLUS application information is available on the SFOA website.

- **PLUS Loan Denied:** If a parent/guardian applies for and is denied the PLUS Loan due to adverse credit, the student may become eligible for additional unsubsidized Direct Loans ($4,000/year for freshmen and sophomores and $5,000/year for juniors and seniors).

- **Repayment of Parent PLUS Loans:** Repayment begins within 60 days of the final loan disbursement for an academic year. If a parent/guardian borrows a loan for the fall and spring terms, monthly repayment of the loan would begin following the second or spring term disbursement.

**Private Student Loans**

Private educational loans are available from private lenders for students who have exhausted all other sources for funding their education. Please visit [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) for a list of private student loan lenders. ([www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) has sole responsibility for providing accurate and updated content.)

**Financial Aid Tips**

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Each year the FAFSA asks for the previous year’s income information. Unfortunately, some students and/or parents/guardians may have a significant decrease in income and financial resources after completing the FAFSA. Should such a situation occur, please contact the SFAO once the student receives the award notification to see if the student may be eligible for a reevaluation of financial aid need.

**PURCHASING BOOKS AND SUPPLIES USING FINANCIAL AID**

Financial aid recipients may charge books and supplies to their Bursar’s account at either campus bookstores for a limited time at the start of each semester. It is important to note that the amount charged will be added to the student’s Bursar’s account. The student will be responsible for covering these charges either with financial aid or by paying out of pocket if their financial aid has been exhausted.

**FINANCIAL AID RESPONSIBILITY**

Students who receive financial aid have a responsibility to attend class and to make satisfactory academic progress. If a student does not begin attendance in all of their registered courses or if he or she ceases attendance prior to the end of the course, the student’s federal financial aid may be reduced or canceled. Academic attendance includes physically attending a class meeting, submitting an academic assignment, taking an exam or participating in an online discussion that is part of a course delivery. Students must make satisfactory academic progress to continue to receive financial aid for future terms. To review the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy please visit [www.niu.edu/fa/policies/sap.html](http://www.niu.edu/fa/policies/sap.html).
Scholarships at NIU

The NIU Scholarship Office, located in Swen Parson Hall 245K with Financial Aid, helps students search for scholarships and answers questions about scholarships students have already received. Students are seen on a walk-in basis between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Some NIU scholarships are awarded to new students based upon information submitted with their application for admission, including their ACT score and high school or transfer GPA. This office also manages scholarships for currently enrolled students. These awards may be based on merit (academic achievement) or financial need as determined by the FAFSA. Some academic departments offer limited scholarship assistance to students majoring in that discipline, but there are some scholarships available to students in any major.

To search for NIU scholarships, students can use the ScholarshipFinder search engine on the Scholarship Office’s website. This tool will ask you to provide your year in school, your GPA range, and your major(s). You will then receive a list of scholarships that you may be eligible to apply for. The next step involves clicking on each scholarship listing to locate the application and more specific requirements. Almost all scholarships offered by NIU have deadlines that fall on or around February 1. These scholarships will be for the following academic year. Most scholarships are awarded on an annual basis, so the amount is split evenly between the fall and spring semesters. Some scholarships are for one year, and some are renewable for more than one year.

Listings of private scholarships funded by donors outside the university also can be researched through the Scholarship Office. These awards tend to have varying deadlines throughout the year. Some of the criteria for eligibility may be very specific; if questions arise while looking at these scholarships, they should be directed to the donors. It makes sense to stop by the Scholarship Office several times each year to see if new scholarships are available. You can also “like” Scholarships at NIU on Facebook to receive occasional updates about scholarships offered.

NIU also encourages students to look in their local communities for scholarships. You might ask at your parent’s workplace, local hospitals, churches, banks, service organizations, and fraternal groups. You can also look beyond the NIU website at other scholarship resources such as fastweb.com or scholarships.com. If you sign up for these sites, you will receive e-mail alerts with updated scholarship information. Keep in mind when looking for scholarships outside of NIU that you should never have to pay to apply, and that you should never give personal information such as your Social Security number to a source you do not know or trust.

Many scholarship opportunities are available as long as a student is willing to put in the time and effort to search and apply. Remember that scholarships are competitive, and that just because you meet the minimum criteria doesn’t mean that you will be awarded a scholarship. Students are encouraged to apply for as many scholarships as they are qualified for, because the more you apply for, the more likely it is that you will receive scholarship assistance.

Stop by the Huskies Den for an affordable night out with friends to play pool or go bowling.
TOP TEN MONEY MANAGEMENT TIPS FROM STUDENT STAFF OF FIRST- AND SECOND-YEAR EXPERIENCE

• Use cash instead of credit or debit cards for your purchases. In this way you can physically see how much you are spending. Limit your cash amount per week, and use it as your only form of spending money.

• Limit the number of times you eat out or order in during the week.

• Apply for scholarships early instead of waiting until the last minute.

• Talk to your family about financing your education. Figure out who will be responsible for tuition, books, spending money, transportation, and other expenses.

• Renting a movie through Netflix or Redbox is a great way to watch a movie on a budget with friends.

• Monday nights in the Huskies Den is $1 Night! Rent shoes, bowl, and play pool all for a dollar each.

• Keep track of billing due dates. Use a planner, calendar, or cell phone reminders to organize due dates.

• Use an envelope system for various expenses (for example, shopping, entertainment). Only allow a certain amount of cash per envelope for the month.

• Keep track of expenses using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for tracking your online banking or balancing your checkbook.

• Make your own coffee at home instead of buying it at a coffee shop.

Student Employment

Each year at Northern Illinois University, approximately 3,000 students work on campus. Working while attending school is a great way to help offset expenses. Students are paid directly through electronic direct deposit to their personal bank account, so students can decide how to best use the earnings based on their individual circumstances. NIU offers a wide variety of employment options for students that help them establish employment history that can be used toward building a strong résumé as well as developing knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for career success.

Many student jobs at NIU do not require prior work experience. Most on-campus positions offer flexible scheduling and work locations on campus that do not require the student to have their own transportation. In addition, getting a job at NIU is a way to get involved in campus life and meet other students, faculty, and staff.

To be employed during the fall and spring semesters, an undergraduate student must be enrolled for a minimum of six credit hours. International undergraduate students enrolled for fewer than 12 credit hours during the fall or spring semester should consult with the International Student and Faculty Office prior to applying for a job.

During the summer, an undergraduate can work at NIU regardless of their summer enrollment status as long as they were enrolled during the prior spring semester or registered for classes for the following fall semester. Undergraduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or greater after their first
semester at NIU. If their cumulative GPA at NIU falls below 2.0, the student must obtain permission from their academic advisor in order to continue working.

Students can work a maximum of 20 hours per week when classes are in session. A student can hold more than one job at NIU simultaneously, provided that the total work hours between the jobs do not exceed 20 hours per week. Most departments also offer opportunities for employment below the maximum that work around a student’s class schedule. While many departments offer shifts on weekdays during the day, others offer opportunities for students to work in the evenings or on the weekends.

There are two types of student employment positions at NIU: regular student positions and work-study positions. All undergraduates who meet the minimum enrollment and GPA requirements qualify to apply for a regular student employment position. In order to apply for a work-study position, the student must qualify for the Federal Work-Study Program. To determine whether they qualify for work-study, a student can access their financial aid award through MyNIU. The type of employment will not typically affect the work hours or pay rate.

Many students in their first semester at NIU pursue employment opportunities. A majority of job openings become available in the weeks surrounding the start of a new semester. Students who prefer to wait before seeking employment may find that additional job openings occur throughout the semester and then in advance of the next semester. Some student jobs are temporary and short-term but the majority provide hours throughout the semester and academic year with the potential for ongoing employment for the student’s entire tenure at NIU.

The best way to apply for an on-campus job is to visit the Human Resource Services website at www.hr.niu.edu. On that website, a student can create an online application that can be used to apply for many different positions on campus. Each job description will provide information to the student to help them decide whether the job will be a good fit for them. After the application online is submitted for an opening, the department at NIU that has the job available will receive immediate electronic access to the student’s application. That department will review all applications submitted for the position and contact those students they determine are candidates for the opening.

After a department has selected the student they will hire and remove the opening from the website, all students who applied for the position will get an e-mail notifying them that the position has been filled and encouraging them to revisit the website to apply for additional openings that they are interested in. If a student has a specific department that they are interested in working for, they can also visit that department’s website to learn more information about that department. Any departmental website can be found through the A–Z index on the NIU homepage at www.niu.edu.

There are a number of student employment positions available on campus that can help to offset school expenses.

Buying coffee on a regular basis can really add up. Try making your own at home in order to save money.

There are a number of student employment positions available on campus that can help to offset school expenses.
Tuition, Billing, and Payment Information
In addition to collecting students’ tuition and fees, the Office of the Bursar provides a number of services for the NIU community. Here are four main areas that you might need to be familiar with:

• **Accounts Receivable Office (Swen Parson Hall 210)** This office maintains all NIU student accounts. You will access this office to pay tuition and fees for yourself or to set up a third-party contract. A third-party contract establishes that someone (e.g., your parents or guardians) or something else (e.g., a business) will pay your tuition and/or fees. They also maintain student accounts, process refunds and third-party contracts, issue account statements and 1098-T tax credit forms, and administer the Huskie Installment Plan (HIP) program.

• **Cashiering Office (Swen Parson Hall 235)** accepts and processes student account payments, and also accepts deposits for Huskie Bucks accounts.

• **Account Counseling Office (Swen Parson Hall 235)** addresses financial issues relating to student accounts, advises students on their financial obligations to NIU, and negotiates payment agreements for past due balances.

• **OneCard ID Services Office (lower level of Holmes Student Center)** issues the official NIU identification cards for students and manages the Huskie Bucks Program.

**BILLING**
Account statements are issued in accordance with NIU’s payment policy, which requires payment for a term one week prior to the start of classes for that term. Initial account statements for a term are issued one month prior to the due date for the term and mailed to your permanent address, or, if preferred, to an alternative billing address. All subsequent statements are issued every five weeks. The schedule of billing and payment due dates can be found on the Bursar website.

**Payments can be made as follows:**

• **Credit/debit card and e-check payments**
  - via MyNIU in the Finances section. Select the “Make a Payment” link and follow the simple directions.

• **Check payments** (make payable to Northern Illinois University and include your eight-digit student ID on the face of the check)
  - in person at the Cashiering Office;
  - by postal mail (allow at least 7 days for mail delivery and processing);
  - by drop box: located on the second floor of Holmes Student Center just to the left of the Guest Room desk; or, on the wall to the left of the main entrance of the Bursar Office.

Students can direct questions about their tuition bill to the Office of the Bursar in Swen Parson Hall, Room 210.
**Consequences for Non-Payment**—A student who does not pay, or pays less than the total amount due by the payment due date, will be assessed a late payment fee of 1.08% on the unpaid balance each month the balance remains past due. Additionally, a student with a past due balance will have a hold placed on his/her records prohibiting registration for future terms and/or receipt of official transcripts until the account balance is paid. Please see the **Financial Responsibility Statement** in the Undergraduate Catalog “Expenses” section under “Payment and Fees.”

**Huskie Installment Plan (HIP)**—A payment option where students can spread the payments for semester expenses over four monthly installments.

**Credit Balance Refunds** are processed by check and mailed to the student’s local address, or by direct deposit to the student’s bank account. Direct deposit is preferred for timely delivery. Direct deposit authorization forms can be obtained from the Bursar’s Office or their website.

Current information regarding your charges and payments can be accessed through *MyNIU*. In the Finances section, select the “Term Account Detail” link.

For more detailed information on the above and more, visit the Bursar’s website: [http://www.niu.edu/bursar](http://www.niu.edu/bursar).

Students who are struggling financially are advised to contact the Scholarship Office, the Financial Aid Office, or the Bursar’s Office. The University does not want financial concerns to prevent you from pursuing your NIU education.

**Available Resources**

**STUDENT FINANCIAL AID OFFICE**
Swen Parson Hall 245  
815-753-1395  
Finaid@niu.edu

**STUDENT EMPLOYMENT OFFICE**
Swen Parson Hall 232  
815-753-1394  
[www.hr.niu.edu/ServiceAreas/StudentEmployment/](http://www.hr.niu.edu/ServiceAreas/StudentEmployment/)

**SCHOLARSHIP OFFICE**
Swen Parson Hall 245K  
815-753-4289  
[www.niu.edu/scholarships](http://www.niu.edu/scholarships)

**OFFICE OF THE BURSAR**
Swen Parson Hall 245  
815-753-1885  
[www.niu.edu/bursar](http://www.niu.edu/bursar)

**IMPORTANT WEBSITES**

**Financial Aid Office**
[www.niu.edu/fa](http://www.niu.edu/fa)

**Bursar’s Office**
[www.niu.edu/bursar/](http://www.niu.edu/bursar/)

**FAFSA**
[www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)

**PLUS Loans**
[www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov)
### Activity 1. Budget Exercise
Know exactly where your money is going each semester. See how much you’re saving or losing, then adjust your expenses so you’re in even better financial shape next semester. Note: Most students will not have expenses in every category.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Income</th>
<th>Semester Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Earnings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>$</td>
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<td>Financial Aid/Scholarships</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total semester income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Semester Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room and Board/Rent</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities (electricity, gas, etc.)</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable/Internet</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groceries</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry/dry cleaning</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation (taxi, train, bus, etc.)</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parking/tolls</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Car repairs and maintenance</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prescriptions</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor appointments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts/special occasions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal hygiene products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
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<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
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<td>Textbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization/club fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total semester expenses** $  
**Total semester income** $  

\[- \text{Total semester expenses} \]$  
\[= \text{Total savings or deficit} \] $
Chapter 11
Discussing Diversity

CHAPTER GOALS
As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Gain background on inclusion issues, how they affect others, and of diversity issues of today.

2. Broaden awareness of the ever-increasing diversity of the NIU campus, the United States, and the world, and the value of human diversity and respect for others from a variety of backgrounds.

3. Understand the skills and competencies needed for success in a global society.

Adapted from “Successful Skills for Diversity: An Open Mind” by Kathy Matthews, M.A., Kennesaw State University
Dear First-Year NIU Student,

At NIU, you will find many opportunities to grow and learn about how to become part of our diverse culture. Don’t be afraid to step out and embrace those opportunities because diversity can open the doors to success and progress.

You can explore diversity through the multiple cultural and gender-based resource centers on campus such as the Asian American Center, Center for Black Studies, Latino Resource Center, and the LGBT Resource Center and Women’s Resource Center. All are ready to share their culture and help you learn more about your own. You can also join a student organization such as S.I.S.T.E.R.S., the Taiwanese Student Association, B.R.O.T.H.E.R.S., or the Nation of Islam Student Association to experience diversity firsthand. These groups, and others, are open to everyone and regularly put on educational, awareness, and social programs. By connecting with cultural centers and clubs, you can learn through unique experiences and stories. Also, engaging with diverse groups can provide great networking opportunities because you will meet different people who each have different contacts from you, widening your circle.

I encourage you to step out and embrace the diversity and people at NIU because you can never know what it may lead to.

Good luck this semester!

Antoinette Green
Senior Rehabilitation Services Major
Alpha Phi Omega Service Fraternity
S.I.S.T.E.R.S
TRIO Scholar
In this chapter, you will be introduced to an important skill set in interpersonal communication that will be useful if you want to successfully negotiate personal and professional relationships in today’s diverse world. You will work on developing the competencies that enable you to interact with others in a way that respects and values differences. The discussions on diversity are an important part of your education and career preparation. Why? Because many employers realize the importance of having a workforce that can compete in a multicultural society and global community, companies seek to hire students who have developed cultural competence. The ideas discussed in this chapter will lay the groundwork for that development.

You will learn the terminology needed to discuss the issues related to diversity, and you will learn how to critically examine situational contexts when diversity has and has not been valued, honored, and/or appreciated. You will have the opportunity to work with experiential contexts to deepen your understanding of differences, and you will use problem-solving skills related to diverse issues.

We hear more and more discussions about how our world is rapidly being transformed into a global community. Undoubtedly, you have been exposed to myriad situations that offer evidence that this observation is true. Later in this unit you will read some of the data and reports that support the idea that you are “living in a global community.”

The changes brought about by the “global community” can be viewed as challenging but also exciting. You need not be overly concerned about how you can manage these challenges because you will be prepared for the changes. College is an ideal place for you to acquire the skills you need to succeed in this diverse world.

If you haven’t noticed, the university community is, in many ways, a microcosm of society. It brings together many unique populations—people of all ages and backgrounds. Take advantage of the opportunities you will have to learn from your encounters with different people and benefit from the diversity that surrounds you. You can gain valuable experiences and information that will prepare you to work in a global economy and live in a multicultural society.

The primary focus of getting an education is learning about things you did not previously know—in other words, becoming open-minded in the fullest sense of the word. First, you will soon discover that people are more alike than different. You can achieve an appreciation and respect for diversity and cultural differences while continuing to take pride in your own culture.

Opening yourself up to a new environment enhances your understanding of diversity as you grow as a student.
Dimensions of Diversity

NIU has taken a leadership role in affirming the value of the human experience and the diversity that it represents. You can take pride in being a member of a campus community that promotes a commitment to cultural diversity.

The NIU population reflects differing backgrounds and experiences including, but not limited to, age, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, geographic region, giftedness, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. NIU works to foster a community in which every human being is treated with dignity, respect, and justice.

The “differing backgrounds and experiences” listed above appear frequently in the literature of The Anti-Defamation League and other organizations that offer diversity training workshops as primary and secondary dimensions of diversity. Evaluating “primary” and “secondary” dimensions of diversity often depends on categorizations by the immutable or mutable characteristics.

Primary dimensions of diversity are those immutable human differences that are inborn and/or that exert an important impact on our early socialization and an ongoing impact throughout our lives. These characteristics are those over which we have little control. We might try to disguise or to de-emphasize certain aspects about ourselves, but can we really change these?

![Figure 11.1. The Diversity Wheel](image-url)
The elements in the core of the diversity wheel are regarded as *primary dimensions* (Figure 11.1). Elements in the outer layer are referred to as *secondary dimensions*. The primary (immutable) dimensions are:

- Ethnicity
- Age
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Gender
- Ability

Although our physical abilities/disabilities may change over time, for the most part we do not choose our physical abilities/disabilities.

Some people think of the primary dimensions of diversity as factors that can be seen, but you need to be careful of forming opinions and judgments based on physical characteristics. Sadly, our society's history is full of accounts of discriminatory acts related to these primary dimensions. But people have also been discriminated against because of characteristics that are not visible at all.

*Secondary dimensions* of diversity are mainly the “invisible” characteristics. Unlike primary dimensions, secondary dimensions can be changed. They are mutable differences that are acquired, discarded, and/or modified throughout our lives. Some are elements that we identify with or choose to pursue because of our own particular interests. The secondary dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to:

- Educational background
- Learning styles
- Geographical location
- Socioeconomic status
- National citizenship
- Native language
- Political philosophy
- Religious/spiritual beliefs
- Family status
- Romantic relationship status
- Parental status
- Generation
- Military experience
- Work experience
- Personality styles

Often the secondary dimensions of diversity are those with which you most strongly identify. For instance, you may speak of yourself in these terms: “I’m a student,” or “I’m from the suburbs,” or “I’m a single parent,” or “I’m a conservative,” or “I’m a liberal.” The dynamic interactions among all the dimensions influence your self-image, values, opportunities, and expectations. These categories give definition to the multifaceted and unique personality and history that is you—the diverse person.

A key point for you to remember when you think about diversity is this: Diversity is YOU. You may have been encouraged to think of all people as “the same.” A nice idea, philosophically, but in reality, it is false. There is only one unique you. “Diversity” means different, and you are truly different from everyone else.
Discussing Diversity Issues

It is not easy to discuss diversity issues. Why? Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination can form barriers to communication. A clearer understanding of what these terms mean might make it easier to discuss and analyze diversity issues. Keep in mind what you have just learned about dimensions of diversity as you weigh these concepts. It will also be helpful to remember that diversity issues are viewed mainly as issues of social inequality. In this regard, the terms “majority” and “minority” refer to power and to privilege, not numbers. Majority refers to the group with power and privilege. Minority refers to the group at a disadvantage with regard to power and to privilege (Bucher, p. 128). In this context, it is easy to understand how some majority group members might also have minority status. Can you give an example? A more traditional use of the terms “majority” and “minority” referenced racial groups, with the term “majority” being assigned to whites and “minority” assigned to people of color. You will see how these basic terms and meanings factored in diversity issues.

STEREOTYPES

A stereotype is a preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for individual differences. The characteristics of a given social stereotype may or may not have much basis in fact; many stereotypes are based on images that were created. Movies, magazines, and other media encourage and reinforce stereotyping. Stereotypes can be positive or negative; however, even when stereotypes are positive, the impact of stereotyping is negative and can feed into discrimination. Negative stereotyping is a key feature in prejudicial beliefs, sexism, racism, ageism, and crimes of hate. While reading down the list of primary and secondary dimensions, you can gauge which concepts evoke a stereotyped image of someone of that group: women (gender), disabled (ability), elderly men (age), Muslims or Jews (religious beliefs), black males (racial/gender), or Midwesterners (geographic location).

PREJUDICE

Let’s face it: Everyone has been guilty of prejudicial thinking, but no one wants to say “I’m prejudiced,” mainly because of the pejorative and often hateful association with the term. Prejudice is “pre-judging” a person or a group, usually on the basis of characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or age. This preconceived judgment is usually based on stereotypes, some of which have been learned from family, peers, and community. Oftentimes, prejudice is an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics, and can lead to discrimination.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination means to “distinguish between.” Socially, this is to make a distinction between people on the basis of class or category without regard to individual merit. Prejudice often accompanies discrimination. Have you heard of cases where people expressed that they were the victims of discrimination, perhaps in being denied employment, housing, admission to school, or access to events? Discrimination has been a factor in cases where various dimensions of diversity were involved: race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, height, and size-related characteristics.
Acts of discrimination in the extreme can lead to violence and hate crimes. Criminologist Dr. Jack McDevitt points out that hate crimes are “message crimes.” They are different from other crimes in that the offender is sending a message to members of a certain group that they are unwelcome (Siasoco, 1999).

The Anti-Defamation League concentrates efforts to counteract hate crimes because of their widespread repercussions. The threat that hate crimes present to the security of communities is echoed in an ADL report: “Minority communities become fearful, angry, and suspicious of other groups—and of the power structure that is supposed to protect them—these incidents can damage the fabric of our society and fragment communities” (Hate Crimes, n.d., n.p.).

When you read about hate crimes such as the tragic cases of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, both in 1998, you understand how communities were left questioning and numb. These incidents exemplify the worst in human interaction—man’s inhumanity to man.

In recent years, the number of hate crimes has been escalating. Incidents in the hate crimes category include simple assault, aggravated assault, forcible sex offenses, and arson. Violent bigotry can also lead to manslaughter and murder.

The Southern Poverty Law Center encourages students to join in the fight against hate. Tolerance.org extracts concepts from UNESCO’s Declaration on the Principles of Tolerance that are helpful in thinking about ways you can promote tolerance: “Because things improve only when people like you take action. Because each student activist has the power to make a difference. And because apathy, in some ways, is as dangerous as hate. Tolerance is harmony in difference.”

**TEN WAYS TO FIGHT HATE ON CAMPUS**

1. Rise Up
2. Pull Together
3. Speak Out
4. Support the Victims
5. Name It, Know It
6. Understand the Media
7. Know Your Campus
8. Teach Tolerance
9. Maintain Momentum
10. Pass the Torch

“First they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew, Then they came for the Communists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak out for me.”

—Rev. Martin Niemöller
German theologian, imprisoned for his resistance to the Nazi regime from 1937–1945
DIVERSITY-RELATED CONCEPTS AND KEY TERMINOLOGY

To further appreciate diversity, take a look at how diversity is conceptualized in the form of "isms," define it, and analyze it for better understanding.

**Concepts**

**“isms”**

**Ableism:** discrimination or injustice toward people who are emotionally, mentally, or physically disabled.

**Ageism:** discrimination or injustice toward senior citizens, aged, or elderly.

**Classism:** discrimination or injustice against people of a lower socioeconomic class/status.

**Ethnocentrism:** the perspective that one’s own ethnic group or culture is superior while another’s is inferior or less important.

**Racism:** discrimination, injustice, and hatred based on skin color and asserting that one human race is superior to another.

**Sexism:** discrimination or injustice based on the inherent belief that one gender, biological makeup, or sex is more superior to another.

**Institutional racism:** discrimination or injustice that is culturally embedded in an organization that through policies and practices disadvantages a particular ethnic group.

**Multiculturalism:** a celebration of differences that preserves cultural identities within the same unified society or community.

**Nationalism:** excessive patriotism, devotion, and loyalty to one’s own nation and asserting its interest and needs over another nation.

**“phobias”**

**Homophobia:** discrimination due to an irrational fear and/or hatred toward homosexuals or homosexuality.

**Xenophobia:** discrimination and irrational fear or hatred toward strangers or foreigners.

**Terminology**

**Bias:** a prejudice or unreasonable judgment, view, or outlook drawn before gathering all the facts.

**Civility:** a conduct of courtesy or politeness toward humanity, or to act in a humane manner.

**Cross-cultural:** associating or comparing two different cultures or cultural regions.

**Cultural competence:** the knowledge and capability to interact with diverse cultures and people and with sufficiency.

**Discrimination:** the act or process of treating another unfairly or differently categorically or individually.

**Diversity:** the celebration and inclusion of different cultures and people.

**Ethnic group (Ethnicity):** those of the same group or shared cultural and personal characteristics and experiences.

**GLBT:** an acronym for people that practice gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender lifestyles.

**Prejudice:** a preconceived opinion or feeling, generally negative, formed without knowledge, thought, or reason.

**Privilege:** a bestowed right, advantage, or benefit given to a person, group, or position.

**Redlining:** a practice of discriminatingly withholding financial loans or investments from low socioeconomic areas or locations, historically African-American neighborhoods.

**Religious bigotry:** discrimination or injustice shown toward those with differing religious beliefs and practices.

**Scapegoat:** assigning blame to a person or group without particular justification or cause.

**Segregation:** the intentional, voluntary separation of a race, class, or ethnic group from another group.

**Socioeconomic status (SES):** the separation of people or groups into social classes based on levels of income or educational attainment.
DEVELOPING DIVERSITY SKILLS

Now that you have a better grasp of some of the concepts and terms fundamental to diversity discussions, you are ready to explore some of the issues that will help you develop your diversity skills. Begin with the concept itself: diversity. Diversity is a term that has many shades of meaning and can evoke strong feelings, both positive and negative. What kind of responses and feelings do you have when you use the word diversity? Perhaps you have encountered beliefs similar to those echoed in these statements:

1. “Diversity is about them—not me.” Usually “them” refers to women and to minorities. But the reality is that diversity is about everyone. Each of us brings different talents and perspectives to school and to work. You are uniquely different; there is no one else like you. Diversity begins with you.

2. “Diversity and multiculturalism are pulling America apart.” In truth, the division stems from the inability to respect and to learn from our differences. Being exposed to diversity can help bring people together.

METAPHORS FOR DIVERSITY

Recent criticisms about diversity and multiculturalism are related to a fear that something very “basic and fundamental” to America is being threatened. These comments relate to a metaphor for America that you may have heard about in your first lessons on American history. Do you remember the concept of America’s “melting pot”? For years, students were taught that the immigration of different people to the United States created the metaphorical “melting pot.” As diverse groups migrated to this land, their cultures and customs mixed into this American pot to create a new society. Truly, for many groups such as the Irish, French, and Germans, the “melting” was easily accomplished. These immigrants changed their names, gave up their native language, and learned English. Today, members of these groups are more likely to see themselves as “just American.” It is important to note, however, that many European Americans have retained strong ethnic ties.

The Experiment

On the day after Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered in April 1968, Jane Elliott’s third graders from the small, all-white town of Riceville, Iowa, came to class confused and upset. They recently had made King their “Hero of the Month,” and they couldn’t understand why someone would kill him. So Elliott decided to teach her class a daring lesson in the meaning of discrimination. She wanted to show her pupils what discrimination feels like, and what it can do to people.

Elliott divided her class by eye color—those with blue eyes and those with brown. On the first day, the blue-eyed children were told they were smarter, nicer, neater, and better than those with brown eyes. Throughout the day, Elliott praised them and allowed them privileges such as taking a longer recess and being first in the lunch line. In contrast, the brown-eyed children had to wear collars around their necks, and their behavior and performance were criticized and ridiculed by Elliott. On the second day, the roles were reversed, and the blue-eyed children were made to feel inferior while the brown-eyed were designated the dominant group.

Meeting and interacting with people of different backgrounds is an advantage of attending NIU.
What happened over the course of the unique two-day exercise astonished both students and teacher. On both days, children who were designated as inferior took on the look and behavior of genuinely inferior students, performing poorly on tests and other work. In contrast, the “superior” students—students who had been sweet and tolerant before the exercise—became mean-spirited and seemed to like discriminating against the “inferior” group.

“I watched what had been marvelous, cooperative, wonderful, thoughtful children turn into nasty, vicious, discriminating little third-graders in a space of fifteen minutes,” says Elliott. She says she realized then that she had “created a microcosm of society in a third-grade classroom.”

Elliott repeated the exercise with her new classes in the following year. The third time, in 1970, cameras were present. Fourteen years later, FRONTLINE’s “A Class Divided” chronicled a mini-reunion of that 1970 third-grade class. As young adults, Elliott’s former students watched themselves on film and talked about the impact Elliott’s lesson in bigotry had on their lives and attitudes. It was Jane Elliott’s first chance to find out how much of her lesson her students had retained.

“Nobody likes to be looked down upon. Nobody likes to be hated, teased or discriminated against,” says Verla, one of the former students.

Jane Elliott expresses what she hopes people who participate in the workshops she conducts or who view the tapes of her students’ experiences learn:

I think the films of the exercise teach some really important lessons. I think they prove you can “teach an old dog new tricks.” I think they demonstrate that racism is not human nature; it’s a learned response. We know that anything you learn you can unlearn, and the tapes give people who watch them hope that they can unlearn and, ultimately, give up their racism.

Equally important is the recognition that not all immigrant groups could be as easily assimilated into the melting pot. In addition to the obvious physical attributes that made “blending in” difficult, if not impossible, non-European groups—such as the Africans, Japanese, and Chinese—found both laws and racial barriers impeding their integration into the culture at large.

As a result, many sociologists and educators concluded that the uniqueness of America’s multicultural society is less like a melting pot and more like a vegetable stew or a “salad bowl.” Like the items on the salad bar or the vegetables that are put into the vegetable stew, each group in our society has its own unique characteristics and flavor. While each item could be enjoyed alone, there is a more delectable delight when they are combined. After years of stressing commonalities, the new focus highlighted differences.

Cultural pluralism displaced the melting pot theory. Under cultural pluralism, each group is free to celebrate and to practice its customs and traditions, and in return, each group is expected to participate in general mainstream culture and to abide by its laws.
Diversity is a topic that stimulates new and creative thinking, as this discussion on cultural metaphors shows. Asserting that these two metaphors may yet be inadequate to reflect the true nature of the diversity experience, Professor Joe Cuseo suggests a different metaphor to help us understand and appreciate the fabric of our society. In his book, *Thriving in College and Beyond*, Cuseo says that to describe American society, the image of a quilt is, figuratively, more appropriate:

The quilt metaphor acknowledges the identity and beauty of all cultures. It differs from the old American “melting pot” metaphor which viewed differences as something that should be melted down or eliminated, and the “salad bowl” metaphor which suggests that America is a hodgepodge or mishmash of different cultures thrown together without any common connection. In contrast, the quilt metaphor suggests that the cultures of different ethnic groups can and should be recognized. Yet these differences may be woven together to create a unified whole—as in the Latin expression: *E pluribus Unum* (“Out of many, one”). This expression has become a motto of the United States, and you will find it printed on all its coins (Cuseo et al., 2008, p. 254).

The “New Majority”
No matter what metaphor we use to discuss the many different elements of our society, we can all agree on one truth: our society is changing. By the time the population reaches 400 million—expected in 2043—the combined forces of immigration, aging, technological change, and globalization will have reshaped the country, experts say. One of the biggest changes will likely be in ethnic identity.

**IDENTITIES OUTSIDE THE BOX**
The blurring of racial identities is evident in recent Census reports. Data on racial groups reported on the U.S. Census reflect changes in the manner in which groups are identified. Earlier census takers would identify people by the way they looked. Today, however, the different racial categories are listed on the form; 2000 was the first time the multiracial box appeared as an option. Important, too, is that people are allowed to identify themselves. Many people who are of multiracial backgrounds decline to identify themselves in a racial category and choose instead to mark the box “Other.” Asserting one’s racial identity can indeed be complex, as Dwayne Johnson, “The Rock,” has shown. He has spoken proudly and often of his Samoan/African-American background. “The Rock” has also credited his childhood in Hawaii’s multi-ethnic cultural “stew” for having a significant influence on his adult values.

**Diversity Awareness: The National Picture**
The makeup of the American population is changing as a result of immigration patterns and significant increases among racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse populations already residing in the United States. Pulled from newly released census data, the analysis confirms that America is an increasingly multi-racial, multi-national, and multi-lingual nation. Many reports are punctuated with the refrain of the shifting demographics.
### Population Change By Race in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage in U.S.</th>
<th>Percent Increase from 2000–2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>72.40%</td>
<td>5.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>16.30%</td>
<td>43.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>12.60%</td>
<td>12.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>43.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>18.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>35.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Other Race</td>
<td>6.20%</td>
<td>24.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>2.90%</td>
<td>32.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 11.3. Source: 2010 U.S. Census*

### Developing Cultural Competence

**BRIDGING CULTURES**

What is *culture*? Culture can be defined as a distinctive pattern of beliefs and values that develop among a group of people who share the same social heritage and traditions. Culture is a neutral term, neither good nor bad. It refers to the collective historical patterns, values, societal arrangements, manners, ideas, and ways of living—which include style of speaking, fashion, food, art, and music—that people have used to order their society. It is made up of all those things people learn as part of growing up, including religion, beliefs about economic and social relations, political organization, and the thousands of “Dos and Don’ts” society deems important to know to become a functioning member of that group.

Culture plays an important role in any diversity situation. Different cultures can exist within the same nation—and are commonly called *multicultural differences*. Different cultures exist across different nations, which are often referred to as *cross-cultural differences*.

Cultural competence is the knowledge of others’ backgrounds, histories, customs, and perspectives. As you develop your cultural competence, you will want to be aware of the key patterns of the lives and peoples of the world. The appreciation of various cultures will help you to see the world as a mosaic and to challenge you to think of diversity as something to be valued. Chances are you will have several opportunities to interact with a different culture, mainly because of the degree to which technology is changing the world. Indeed, the advances in communication technology, computers, and satellites have brought the world closer together, enabling us to live *globally locally*.

Follow these strategies to help increase your understanding and sensitivity to other cultures:

1. Interact with people from backgrounds that are different from yours. NIU enrolls students from over 70 different countries. Some of these students will be your classmates; others you will see around campus. Reach out and engage someone in a conversation. Not sure what to talk about? Begin with the points you have in common: you are both students at NIU; briefly compare experiences of the semester. If you want to participate in a more structured program that affords you the chance to meet someone from another country, think about attending an event hosted by one of the five resource centers at NIU—Center for Black Studies, Latino Resource Center, Asian American Resource Center, Gender & Sexuality Resource Center, and Disability Resource Center—or take advantage of a leadership opportunity coordinated by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences External Programming called Global Leadership and Philanthropy Camp. Other information about international programs...
offered by NIU can be found through the Division of International Programs (International Student and Faculty Office).

2. Develop your cultural competence through travel and/or study abroad programs. The best way to learn about people from other cultures is to see and to experience those cultures firsthand. You can study abroad in countries including Australia, Brazil, China, Denmark, Germany, Portugal, Russia, and more. Programs include fall or spring semester sessions and shorter winter or summer sessions. Take advantage of study abroad opportunities to expand your knowledge, break down stereotypes, gain experience in communicating across cultures, and earn course credit. Program coordinators at the Study Abroad Office can help you find a way to participate in an affordable program (financial aid is available). An overseas experience can create new interests, abilities, and linguistic and cultural skills that are not only valuable to you, but could also be very attractive to your future employers.

3. Enroll in a course to study other cultures and customs. The General Education program provides course offerings that cover the culture, history, religion, or art of another group so you can expand your knowledge of other people’s background. Also, some majors require courses with global perspectives. You could also enroll in a global-themed course for elective credit, if you meet the prerequisites.

4. Attend cultural programs on topics of global concern. Watch for announcements of cultural activities and programming sponsored by any of the 33 Diversity and Cultural Student Organizations. These organizations sponsor events to highlight culture as well as sociopolitical concerns of global communities. Go beyond the role of spectator at these events; join a student group for more direct involvement.

You will need to remember that your intercultural experiences are learning experiences. Expect differences and accept differences. Your cultural competence grows when you do.

This chapter has presented you with concepts that will help you in your continual growth and development of a diversity consciousness. The goal of diversity and inclusion is one which intimately affects each of us, regardless of our race, ethnicity, gender, or other identifying features. In fact, we are all diverse individuals. Rely upon your knowledge and understanding of primary and secondary dimensions of diversity to give you more insights on other people’s backgrounds and the influences that shape their values, attitudes, and beliefs as well as your own. Begin to apply your diversity skills in your everyday interactions. Cultivate intercultural sensitivity, particularly across religious, racial, and socioeconomic lines.

One of the key lessons from this unit is the importance of acquiring cultural competence to participate fully in the changing multicultural society and global community. Cultural norms are always evaluated in a context. Be aware of difference and how you evaluate and react to it.

This first year of college will afford you many opportunities to develop and hone the important and necessary diversity skills. However, the first year is just that: a beginning. Continue to seek out and to use the information sources (books, films, courses, campus organizations, cultural events, community organizations) that will help you actively increase your cultural competence. Your intercultural communication skills comprise the value-added experiences that enhance your résumé.
Remember to take advantage of the most important resource available to assist you in your growth and development: the different people around you.

References


Available Resources

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION & DIVERSITY RESOURCES**
Human Resources (on West Lincoln Highway)
(815) 753-6000
www.hr.niu.edu

**ASIAN AMERICAN CENTER**
429 Garden Road (Jacobs House)
(815) 753-1177
www.niu.edu/aac

**CENTER FOR BLACK STUDIES**
Lincoln Terrace
(behind parking deck)
(815) 753-1709
www.cbs.niu.edu

**CENTER FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES**
520 College View Court
(815) 753-1981
www.cseas.niu.edu

**CENTER FOR LATINO & LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES**
515 Garden Road
(815) 753-1531
www.niu.edu/latinostudies

**DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER**
Health Services (Fourth floor)
(815) 753-1303
(815) 753-3000 (TTY)
www.niu.edu/caar

**GENDER & SEXUALITY RESOURCE CENTER**
105 Normal Road
(815) 753-0320
www.lgbt@niu.edu, women@niu.edu

**LATINO RESOURCE CENTER**
515 Garden Road
(815) 753-1986
www.niu.edu/lrc

**LGBT STUDIES**
(815) 753-6431
www.niu.edu/lgbt/lgbtstudies

**NATIONS**
(Native Americans Together Insuring Our Nation’s Sovereignty)
(815) 753-1406 or (815) 758-3604
www.sa.niu.edu/nations

**WOMEN’S STUDIES PROGRAM**
Reavis Hall, Room 103
(815) 753-1038
www.niu.edu/wstudies

Critical Thinking Questions

- What does diversity mean to you?
- How can you foster diversity competence and understanding on campus?
Greetings New NIU Students,

Welcome to Northern! In your brief time here, you may have already realized that college learning is as much about academics as it is about the experiences you’ll have outside the classroom. Indeed, throughout your college career, you’ll be exposed to countless new and diverse experiences, ideas, and perspectives.

I’d like to offer the advice that I was given when I first started college, but did not initially take. It took me a long time to realize that I needed to focus on learning more about the world beyond what was familiar and comfortable to me. That’s when I truly began my education.

The first question to ask yourself is this: “Why are you in college?” Most students will say that they came to college to get an education. However, education isn’t something that can be “got-ten.” Education is created—by you! Part of your education includes your courses, your program of study, and any practical or professional training you might complete. Another part of your college education will involve learning about the varied cultures, languages, ethnicities, abilities, social identities, generations, intellectual interests, sexual orientations, gender identities, religious backgrounds, and belief systems represented in the NIU community and beyond.

To begin creating your education, you’ll need to commit to being an active learner. In part, that means seeking out opportunities for new experiences. For example, meet new people outside of your usual group of friends. Participate in events at the various Resource Centers on campus. Attend presentations or workshops on unfamiliar topics. Above all else, listen and engage in respectful discussions with people. You’ll be amazed at how much you can learn.

In short, like most things, college is what you make of it. My advice is to keep your eyes, ears, and mind open, and allow yourself to be an active learner by experiencing the diversity that a college education offers. It may seem a little strange at first, but as with anything else, it gets easier with practice.

Again, welcome to NIU and welcome to college—experience it!

Sonya L. Armstrong, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor of Postsecondary Literacy
Director of the College Learning Enhancement Program
Activity 1
Think of yourself as an iceberg. Use the image of the iceberg to illustrate the primary and secondary dimensions that help define aspects of your background and identity. Remember, this is who you define yourself to be. List the characteristics that can be seen on that part of the iceberg above the waterline. Write some of your qualities or traits that might not be visible on the iceberg “beneath the surface.”
Activity 2. Race–Class Exercise

This exercise is useful to challenge our common assumptions of equal access. You may see after doing this exercise that not everyone starts life with the same opportunities. As you go through this exercise imagine that better jobs and lifestyle opportunities are at the top. Start in the center and move up or down according to how each statement applies to you. Then answer the reflection questions that follow this activity.

1. If your primary cultural identity is American, move up one space.
2. If you were ever called names because of your race, class, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, move down one space.
3. If there were people of color who worked in your household as housekeepers, child care providers, gardeners, etc., move up one space.
4. If your parent(s) or guardian(s) were professionals (e.g., doctors, lawyers, teachers) move up one space.
5. If you were raised in an area where there was prostitution, drug activity, or other problems, move down one space.
6. If you ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms, or behavior to avoid being judged or ridiculed, move down one space.
7. If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, move up one space.
8. If you went to a school speaking a language other than English, move down one space.
9. If there were more than 50 books in your house when you grew up, move up one space.
10. If you ever had to skip a meal or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food when you were growing up, move down one space.
11. If you were brought to art galleries or plays by your family, move up one space.
12. If one of your guardians were unemployed or laid off, not by choice, move down one space.
13. If you attended a private school or summer camp, move up one space.
14. If you had to rely primarily on public transportation, move down one space.
15. If your family ever had to move because they could not afford the rent, move down one space.
16. If you were told that you were beautiful, smart, and capable by your guardians, move up one space.
17. If you were ever discouraged from academics because of race, class, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, move down one space.
18. If you were ever encouraged to attend a college by your parent(s) or guardian(s), move up one space.
19. If prior to age 18 you took a vacation out of the country, move up one space.
20. If one of your parent(s) or guardian(s) did not complete high school, move down one space.
21. If your family owned their own house, move up one space.
22. If you saw members of your race, ethnic group, gender, or sexual orientation portrayed on television in degrading roles, move down one space.
23. If you were ever offered a good job because of your association with a friend or family member, move up one space.
24. If you were ever treated less fairly because of your race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, move down one space.
25. If you ever inherited money or property, move up one space.
26. If you were ever stopped or questioned by the police because of your race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, move down one space.
27. If you were ever afraid of violence because of your race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, move down one space.
28. If you ever felt uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, move down one space.
29. If your parents did not grow up in the United States, move down one space.
30. If your parents told you that you could be anything you wanted to be, move up one space.

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QUESTIONS
1. How did this exercise make you feel about where you are located on the continuum in comparison to where you think college peers are?

2. Were you surprised by where you ended up on the continuum? Did you think you would be higher or lower?

3. If this were done as an in-class exercise, where do you think students different than you (e.g., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic level, ability/disability, status, etc.) would be on the continuum and why? Do you think differences and diversity correlate to starting experiences in American society?
Chapter 12
Preparing for Academic and Career Success

CHAPTER GOALS
As a result of engaging with this chapter, new students will:

1. Learn the benefits of creating a good relationship with their academic advisors.
2. Become familiar with the Undergraduate Catalog.
3. Identify ways to begin working toward their career goals.
Dear NIU First-Year Student,

Let me start by welcoming our new Huskies to Northern Illinois University! There are so many opportunities available to you as a student on campus that you may never want to leave. Some of those resources are Career Services and academic advisors. Through these services, you can learn about internships, externships, and field experiences.

Coming to college I knew that I needed to gain experience in my career field. Even as a freshman, I had my mind set on finding connections to my desired career. I am a visual learner, so making a checklist of my goals was my first step. I created my own college "GPS"!

I set high goals for myself at the start of college. For example, I knew I wanted to achieve a high grade point average from the start, and I didn’t want to go a day without talking to someone new on campus. Every time I left my residence hall, my "GPS" pointed me in a different direction on campus. I worked hard academically and socially. I utilized my instructors, counselors, academic advisors, and of course, my fellow students.

I worked my first college internship the summer after my sophomore year. I interned at a video production company in Chicago, where I had the chance to be paid, shadow professionals working in the field, and even travel across America. This past summer, I interned for Chicago’s NBC-5 news station, which is my dream come true. I found out about this opportunity through an NIU instructor.

This is the beginning of my senior year, and I can say that my NIU experience has been a journey to remember. I recommend discovering your values, skills, and interests early in your college years. This exploration will help you define your career choices, and from there, you can use your NIU resources to help you reach your short-term (internship? campus job?) and long-term (graduate school? entry-level position?) goals. Create your own “GPS” and direct yourself to academic success and your dream career!

Ericka E. Wilson
Senior Journalism major
Intern, WMAQ/NBC-5 Chicago
President, National Association of Black Journalists
E.B.O.N.Y. Women
Volunteer, Save Chicago Campaign
A Definition of Academic Advising

Academic advising is a developmental process which helps students clarify their life/career goals and develop educational plans to meet those goals. Students realize their maximum educational potential through communication and interaction with an advisor; it is ongoing, multifaceted, and the responsibility of both student and advisor. The advisor facilitates communication, coordinates learning experiences through course and career planning and academic progress review, and refers to other campus agencies as necessary.¹

HOW DOES ACADEMIC ADVISING HELP YOU?

Advising is an important component of your academic life and a major resource for your academic success at NIU. There are academic advisors available in each of our more than 60 undergraduate majors and 6 undergraduate colleges who can provide specialized advising according to your chosen academic program. The Academic Advising Center provides advising for students who are “undecided, any college” or who are in transition between college majors.

Specifically, your advisor can help you:

• explore academic interests and determine an appropriate major;
• design a program of study to meet your individual interests and needs;
• map out your schedule and prepare for registration;
• monitor your academic progress;
• discuss appropriate courses of action when you are experiencing academic difficulty;
• clarify your educational and life goals; and
• find activities and opportunities to enhance your academic experience.

Students are responsible for their academic progress at NIU. You must make decisions based on the information, alternatives, limitations, and possible consequences you explore with your advisor. In order to develop and maintain a good advising relationship, it is your responsibility to:

• Read and use Northern Illinois University’s Undergraduate Catalog.
• Know the requirements of your particular academic program.
• Monitor your academic progress.
• Initiate and maintain regular contact with your advisor.
• Create and maintain an advising file that contains your Degree Progress Report and your college advising handbook.
• Bring your advising file to every advising meeting.
• Schedule and keep advising appointments.
• Be prepared for advising meetings (see assignment at the end of this chapter).

¹ Adapted from Crockett, D. S. (Ed.). 1987. Advising skills, techniques and resources: A compilation of materials related to the organization and delivery of advising services. Iowa City, IA: ACT Corporation.
EXPLORING AND CONFIRMING MAJORS
“What’s your major?” is a question that many NIU students will hear the first several weeks of classes. If you aren’t sure of your answer to that question, you are not alone. It is normal to be uncertain about the choice of a major and/or career direction at this point. In fact, many students come to NIU without a major or change their major at least once while at NIU.

Whether you are undecided or confirming a major you have already selected, college is a time of exploration and self-discovery. It is a time for opening new doors rather than prematurely closing them. Your major college academic advising office and Career Services can provide you with a basic model for decision-making, introduce you to the many major and career resources available at NIU, and assist you in developing a plan of action for finding or confirming a major and planning for a career.

HOW IMPORTANT IS YOUR CHOICE OF MAJOR?
The “right” major for you will be one that gives you academic, personal, and professional satisfaction. There are nearly 60 academic majors offered at NIU, and you want to choose a program that will challenge and stimulate you while you are here. However, your major choice is just one factor in determining your career. In fact, a college major alone is not enough to help you prepare adequately for a career. Internships, jobs, extracurricular activities, and volunteer experiences will also shape you as an individual and could lead you in a particular career direction.

HOW TO BEGIN MAJOR EXPLORATION/MAJOR CONFIRMATION
• Your academic advisor is a primary resource to help you confirm or explore a major.
• Major exploration is among the services offered by the academic advisors in the Academic Advising Center (815-753-2573). Students interested in major exploration should begin meeting with an advisor early in the semester.
• Review all the NIU majors. Begin to research majors that look interesting to you and/or eliminate programs that you know you don’t want.
• Visit the Internet home pages of the colleges and departments that interest you.
• Use the NIU Major WebLinks for more information about occupations related to undergraduate majors.
• Talk to friends and classmates about their majors, minors, and career paths. Talk to professors and advisors about programs and majors related to courses and subjects that interest you.
• Register for CAHC 211, Career Planning, a three-credit-hour course designed to assist you in selecting a major/career. Customized sections are offered for students who are sophomores as well as for those who are exploring careers and those who want to learn job search skills.
• Attend meetings of student/professional organizations that interest you. Consult your Student Handbook or the Student Involvement & Leadership Development Office in the Campus Life Building 150 for a list of organizations and volunteer opportunities.
• Pursue course work and co-curricular activities that expand your knowledge about fields of study and help you develop additional skills. This will aid you in self-assessment during the major and career decision-making process. Computer, foreign language, leadership, and communication skills are valuable in any profession.
• Call Career Services (815-753-1641) to schedule a career counseling appointment to discuss career interest testing and other assessments available to help you with exploration.

Active exploration is the key to finding the right major for you!
Getting to Know the Undergraduate Catalog

What is in the Undergraduate Catalog? Admittedly, students can find the catalog long and tedious, but understanding what is in the catalog and how to find needed information is vital to your success in college. You received a paper copy of the NIU catalog at orientation; it is also available online at catalog.niu.edu

Dividing the catalog into some key sections can help you understand it more easily.

The first part of the catalog includes the general information that all students need to know, regardless of their major, including:

- Academic Calendar
- Catalog Guide
- Introduction to NIU
- Undergraduate Academic Programs
- University Graduation Requirements
- General Education Requirements
- Academic Regulations
- Expenses
- Financial Aid and Scholarships

The latter part of the catalog contains specific information about the six undergraduate colleges and the majors that are offered. This is where you’ll find the requirements to earn a degree in your chosen major.

You are responsible for knowing and observing all regulations and procedures related to the major you are pursuing. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because you didn’t know the regulations or procedures.

IMPORTANT ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

While there are many policies that you will be required to know, there are a few that you may need to be familiar with right away. For example, you may have registered for a course that for whatever reason, you no longer wish to take. You have a couple of options to manage this, depending on when in the semester you make that decision.

Find the section of the catalog that explains schedule changes, dropping a course, and withdrawing from a course. When do you need the help of an academic advisor to complete these actions? You should be aware these decisions can have academic and/or financial consequences. Discuss this with your academic advising office to be sure you understand how this decision will impact you. You should also be aware that if you simply stop attending a course in which you are enrolled without officially dropping or withdrawing, you will receive an “F” for that course.

Additional information on schedule changes, dropping a course, and withdrawing from a course is available at www.niu.edu/withdrawals

Take advantage of opportunities to discover how NIU can help you decide what you want to do with your career and future.
GEN EDS (CORE COMPETENCIES AND DISTRIBUTIVE STUDIES)

The General Education courses enable students to develop their writing, speaking, and reasoning skills. Part of the General Education courses are the Core Competency Requirements. Every student must take these required courses in order to graduate.

General Education courses also explore a variety of disciplines in the humanities and arts, the physical sciences and mathematics, and the social sciences. These courses are called the Distributive Studies Requirements and are also required for every student in order to graduate. The Undergraduate Catalog has a list of courses that meet the requirements for the Distributive Studies. Generally, you will be able to pick the course of your interest from these lists to meet this requirement. However, depending on your major, there may be wiser choices for you to make in taking your Distributive Studies courses. You should always consult your academic advisor to be sure you are taking appropriate course work.

MAJORS AND MINORS

Whether you are exploring majors, confirming a major you have already declared, or looking for a minor, the catalog is one resource you can use to help in this process. Take time to look through the various undergraduate colleges and the majors/minors that they offer. Look at the required courses for the major to see if they interest you. You will need to make informed choices about your degree and what courses to register for. The Undergraduate Catalog is your guide. It will also help you to understand course designators such as “CHEM” which stands for “Chemistry” and abbreviations such as “PRQ” which means “prerequisite.”

Will you be pursuing a B.A., a B.S., or a B.S. Ed.? Understanding not only the major, but also the degree you are pursuing, is very helpful and will determine what courses you must take. Some majors allow you to choose between a B.A. and a B.S., so you will need to know what the difference is.

Check to see if the major is limited admissions or not. Some of the majors at NIU require that you meet certain criteria and complete a separate application to be admitted to the major. You should make an appointment to see an academic advisor in the area(s) you are interested in to be certain you understand the additional requirements.

A minor is a limited course of study in a specific subject and is optional for most majors. A minor may provide you with additional knowledge in an area once you graduate and are looking for a job. For example, you may be pursuing a degree in business and add a minor in communication studies. You should meet with your advisor to learn more about minors, to see whether one is required for your major, and to discuss which minor may fit well with your interests. Again, the Undergraduate Catalog can be the starting point to explore what options are available to you.
The Advising Meeting

WHEN TO SEE AN ADVISOR
- When exploring a major;
- When you need assistance with schedule changes (such as second-week drops, course withdrawals);
- When experiencing academic difficulty;
- When selecting courses;
- When you need help identifying and connecting to resources.

To make the most of your advising meetings, you need to prepare for the meetings by taking the following steps:

BEFORE SEEING YOUR ADVISOR
- Determine who your advisor is and where that person’s office is located. You can find your advisor by calling your major college office or visiting the Academic Advising Center online at www.advisingcenter.niu.edu/advising
- Set up an appointment with your advisor through your major college, or through the Academic Advising Center if you are undecided on any college. It’s a good idea to meet with an advisor at least once every semester and to schedule your appointments early in the semester. If you want assistance with major exploration or if you are experiencing academic difficulty, you should meet with your advisor more often.
- Review your Degree Progress Report. Your report explains your progress toward your degree. If you do not have a current copy of your Degree Progress Report, go to MyNIU, click on “MyNIU-Student System,” click on “Self-Service,” then click “My Academic Requirements,” then click “view report as pdf” and print it out.
- Access the four-year degree plan for your major or for majors you’re considering (available at www.niu.edu/osas/DegreePaths).
- Write down any questions and concerns that you have about your report and academic progress, and bring these questions and your report to your advising session.
- Review the NIU Undergraduate Catalog. The catalog from the year you entered NIU explains all University and Departmental requirements for all degrees.

DURING YOUR ADVISING SESSION
- Bring your Degree Progress Report, your college advising handbook, your four-year degree path, and your list of questions.
- Establish a target graduation date in consultation with your advisor.
- Work with your advisor to establish a program of study and an outline of the classes that you plan to take in the next 2 or 3 semesters.
- Ask any and all additional questions that you might have. Your advisor can help you best when you explain your academic/career goals and concerns.
- Keep notes from your advising meetings to remind you what was discussed.

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TIP!

What do those letters mean?
Baccalaureate Degrees
B.A. Bachelor of Arts
B.F.A. Bachelor of Fine Arts
B.G.S. Bachelor of General Studies
B.M. Bachelor of Music
B.S. Bachelor of Science
B.S. Ed. Bachelor of Science in Education

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Student Tip
If you meet a professor, a guest speaker, or anyone that is related to your academic interest or career path, utilize them as a resource; introduce yourself and ask questions.

—Sarah Trygstad
Senior
Civic Engagement and Leadership Development major

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Preparation for Academic and Career Success • 201
QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR ADVISOR

It’s not enough to just meet with your advisor. To make the most of this dynamic relationship, you have to ask the right questions. Here is a sample of questions that can be helpful to you in your meeting with an advisor:

• Can you provide me with a brief description of this major/academic program?
• What are the introductory or “try-out” courses for this major/academic program?
• Where else on campus can I research this major?
• What skills are needed to be successful in this program?
• Are there specific admission/retention requirements for this program?
• What special opportunities exist for someone that chooses this major/academic program?
• What are some of the common minors or double majors pursued with this program?
• What are the career options/possibilities for someone that chooses this major?
• I am not doing well in XYZ class. What are my options?
• Can you review my “shopping cart” to see if I have selected the appropriate classes for next semester?

Building Your Career: Why You Should Start Now

Students who work on career planning throughout their time at NIU usually secure post-graduation employment or graduate school admission more quickly than students who delay career planning. Why must students start so early? The answer is that students need to demonstrate that they possess the skills employers want through campus leadership experiences, academic success, and internships. It takes time and planning to acquire these qualifications. Students who don’t acquire these experiences prior to their senior year of college are going to face competition for jobs from students who have acquired these skills from the beginning of their time at NIU. The great news is that NIU provides outstanding resources to help you at all stages of the decision-making and career development process. As you plan your future, NIU is here to help you every step of the way.

Feeling hesitant about career planning? It’s important to identify what obstacles you might be encountering. Some students worry that career development will be intimidating. Others may believe (incorrectly) that career planning is a quick process that can be delayed until the senior year. Still others put off career planning because they are still deciding upon a major or career path and feel they are not ready to search for an internship or job.

Why do you believe students may avoid the subject of career planning? Students share many reasons for avoiding this issue:

• Fear of making a wrong decision and disliking one’s job;
• Uncertainty about how to begin the process of decision-making;
• Insecurity about what skills they might have to offer employers;
• A lack of knowledge about the world of full-time work;
A fear of rejection in the job search process; and,
Pressure imposed by themselves or by others to find a “perfect” career.

Some students report that working on career planning means acknowledging that they are “growing up” and will have to assume adult responsibilities in the near future.

No matter what the obstacle, it’s important to talk with a career counselor about your concern, work through it, and learn what career preparations you can make in your present circumstance. Those steps may include:

• Meeting with a career counselor to identify career pathways, interests, and abilities
• Learning from a career counselor how you can be a better qualified candidate through your GPA, campus activities, part-time work experiences, and internships
• Working on your résumé
• Using social media tools carefully to cultivate a professional image
• Attending events sponsored by NIU Career Services, such as workshops and career fairs, to get practice interacting with employers
• Creating an individualized internship or job search strategy
• Participating in practice interview opportunities. To practice your skills using virtual interview software, visit: www.perfectinterview.com/niu

Please contact NIU Career Services at 815-753-1641 for assistance in building your career as soon as possible.

**DEFINING “CAREER”**

What does the term “career” mean to you? Richard Bolles, a noted career author, described two different meanings for the word “career”:

• “Career” can be used interchangeably with the terms “occupation” or “job,” especially when the occupation or job described is one that provides advancement opportunities.
• “Career” can also be used to describe a sequence or pathway of jobs in the world of work.”\(^2\)

Creating a satisfying career, much like being physically fit, doesn’t happen by chance. Although the actual job you ultimately may be offered is somewhat dependent upon uncontrollable factors (for example, job availability with a particular employer, labor market availability of certain positions, where you choose to live), there are certain career development steps you can take to maximize the likelihood that you will “be in the right place at the right time.”

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CHECKLIST OF BEGINNING CAREER TASKS
The following is a list of career development tasks that students need to start as soon as possible. To get help with any of these items, plan to visit Career Services (815-753-1641) at least once during the fall and spring semesters of your first year at NIU.

- **Gather information about your interests (what you like to do), values (what is important to you), abilities, and personality traits.** Because this information should be gathered from a variety of sources, there is no one career test that will “tell you what to do.” Career counselors at NIU Career Services can also help you clarify your own preferences, personality, and strengths. This information will help you make good decisions.

- **Gather information about the world of work.** For most of us, our knowledge of careers is limited by what we’ve seen our family and friends do, occupations that we’ve seen in the media, or occupations that we were exposed to while growing up (such as teaching or health care). Occupations are continually being invented, while others are becoming obsolete. In order to maximize your options, you'll need to learn about as many careers as possible. To get started on this process, visit the Career Resource Center (Campus Life Building 235). Ask a staff member to show you how to use the following resources:
  - Online career guidance systems, which often include questionnaires and surveys to help you narrow your interests;
  - Major Weblinks ([www.niu.edu/careerservices/weblinks](http://www.niu.edu/careerservices/weblinks)) a website that answers the question, “What can I do with a major in __________?” and provides links to occupational information, job search listings, and professional organizations; and
  - Huskies Get Hired, NIU’s own database of internship, part-time, and full-time job opportunities. An online tutorial is available to familiarize you with how to use your Huskies Get Hired account, which is automatically established for every new NIU student ([www.niu.edu/careerservices/orientation](http://www.niu.edu/careerservices/orientation)).

- **Spend the equivalent of one hour per week on career development.** This isn’t as hard as it sounds! You could schedule a career counseling appointment, work on your LinkedIn profile, visit the Career Resource Center to get help with your résumé, or view websites to learn about all of the options available to you in the world of work. If you’re finding it difficult to get started, schedule yourself for one hour of career activity in the Career Resource Center every week. The staff will teach you how to gather the information you need. All you need to do is show up.

- **Learn about the relationship between academic majors and careers.** Some majors have a direct relationship to specific jobs, suggesting a more targeted job search; other majors have an indirect relationship to specific jobs, suggesting greater flexibility for the job seeker. Both types of majors have pros and cons.

- **Start building your career-related skills immediately.** No matter how “in demand” your academic major might be, all students need to be developing the attributes that are most desired by employers: adaptability, initiative, teamwork, leadership, conflict resolution, communication skills, and self-management skills, among others. Employers will look for evidence of these traits via your organizational involvement, part-time and summer jobs, volunteer experiences, study abroad experiences, and internships. Make it a point to try at least one different experience each semester. **Need help identifying involvement or growth opportunities? Call to schedule an appointment with a Career Services counselor (815-753-1641).**
• **Do your best to earn the highest grades possible.** Most employers, as well as graduate and professional schools, place considerable importance on grades, typically requiring a GPA of 3.0 or higher. **If you are struggling with your classes, it is vitally important that you seek assistance immediately.** Otherwise, your future career options could be significantly affected. You might decide to seek out tutors for specific classes using ACCESS or visit the Writing Center for help organizing and editing papers.

• **Start building your network.** A network is comprised of family, friends, acquaintances, instructors, employers, and anyone you know who might be willing to share information that helps you further your career development, or provide suggestions or leads about locating employment. In addition to your network at NIU, don’t forget about the people in your network at home. Keep your address book updated, and don’t forget to send the occasional e-mail to keep those connections alive. Ask yourself what you can offer to help the people in your network. Feeling shy about networking? Schedule a career counseling appointment for assistance. Your career counselor will have lots of practical strategies to help you establish, maintain, and expand your network. Approximately 50% of all job offers are a direct result of networking. Establish and regularly update a LinkedIn profile. Not sure how to use LinkedIn? Visit the Carer Resource Center for assistance.

• **Attend NIU career fairs during your first year and at every opportunity thereafter.** Career Services typically sponsors seven fairs annually; internship fairs and fairs for full-time employment are held in the fall and the spring; an Educators’ Fair is held every spring, a graduate school fair is held in the fall, and a recruiting event for professional retail positions is held in the spring. Even if you aren’t actively looking for an internship or job, it’s important to gain familiarity with how career fairs are organized. Also, observing your fellow students interacting with recruiters at career fairs will help you learn the interviewing skills you need (and will help you plan for the job search wardrobe you’ll need to acquire). If you have questions about the protocol for observing NIU career fairs, contact Career Services or send an e-mail with your question to careerservices@niu.edu.

![An NIU student meets a prospective employer at a recent career fair.](image)

**Internships**

In today’s challenging career climate, students often wonder what they can do to enhance their job prospects after graduation. The answer is simple: obtain one or more internships. An internship is a career-related experience for which you might or might not be paid, depending upon the resources of the employer. What differentiates an internship from a volunteer opportunity or a job is that the primary focus is upon the knowledge and experience you will gain from completing the internship. Your major college or academic department might grant academic credit to you for completing an internship. To inquire about this possibility, be sure to discuss your internship ideas with your academic advisor. Even if you do not receive academic credit, an internship is a powerful tool to enhance your marketability in the job search and can also help you determine whether you are interested in pursuing full-time employment in a particular field.
Students can locate internships through attending Career Services-sponsored Internship and Job Fairs (held every fall and spring); searching NIU’s internship and job search database (Huskies Get Hired); and through constructing their own internship search strategies, ideally with the assistance of one of NIU’s career counselors. Just like searching for a full-time job, looking for an internship will require time, dedication, a well-written résumé, and flexibility in how you see an internship fitting into your career development plan. Internships can vary a great deal:

- Internships can be found on campus and off campus (both local to NIU and near students’ hometowns).
- Internships can be offered during the fall semester, spring semester, or over the summer.
- Depending on the employer, internships might be offered as part-time or full-time opportunities.
- Internships can be completed as early as the summer after the freshman year.

We strongly encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career counselor (815-753-1641) during your first year so that you can plan your internship search as early in your academic career as possible. Once you’ve received an internship offer, it’s important to report your offer to Career Services (http://www.niu.edu/careerservices/reporting) so that a training agreement can be sent to your employer and help you document your internship learning experiences.

Résumé Writing

Whether you’ve already written a résumé or not, it’s important to know that your résumé is a living document that undergoes continuous change as you acquire new experiences and skills. Students are strongly encouraged to bring their résumés to the Career Resource Center (Campus Life Building 235) for a friendly review. The staff will point out areas of strength and areas for improvement. If you’ve never written a résumé, the staff will direct you to resources to help you get started.

We’ve included some résumé writing hints in this chapter. Since you never know when your dream internship or ideal part-time job may present itself, it’s never too early to create a résumé that showcases the value you can bring to an employer.

RÉSUMÉ BASICS

The purpose of a résumé is to make an employer interested enough to want to learn more about you. A résumé is a written summary of your personal history and qualifications for a particular job. It highlights your accomplishments and skills. As a freshman, you may have limited work experience; that’s okay. For now you can just list and describe any and all jobs and experiences that occurred during high school. As you gain additional work experience, get involved with campus and community activities, and develop new skills, you will replace your high school activities with your new and career-relevant activities.

You might consider including the following information in your résumé:

**Identification:** Give your name, phone number, and a professional-sounding e-mail address. You might also list your temporary and permanent addresses.
Objective (also called Career or Job Objective): This should be a statement identifying what kind of employment you are seeking right now. (An indication of future career direction may also be included.)

Education: Indicate the degree you are pursuing (B.A., B.S., or B.S. Ed.), your major, and your minor (if applicable). Include Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, and the month and year you anticipate graduating.

Experience: List job title or position; the name, city, and state of employer or organization; dates of employment (use months and years); and a brief description of your duties and responsibilities. Mention any significant accomplishments and skills that you obtained.

Honors/Awards: List scholarships, academic awards, athletic awards, and any other honors that you have received.

Activities: Emphasize activities that would enhance your image in the employer’s eye. Treat them just like paid positions. Provide a job title (e.g., “Volunteer,” “Committee Chairperson”), the name, city, and state of the organization or activity, and dates of involvement.
RÉSUMÉ CHECKLIST

- Print the résumé on white or off-white, 24 lb. paper, using black ink. Do not use colored paper.
- Avoid the use of italics, underlining, symbols, and tables. These make your text difficult to read, electronically scan, or photocopy clearly.
- Section headings should stand out with the use of bolding and or capitalizing.
- Set margins between .8 to 1.2 inches.
- Make all indentations even. Use the tab key to be precise.
- Use *Times New Roman*, *Arial*, *Tahoma*, or another standard font between sizes 10–12 point. Use the same font throughout. Your name is an exception. It can be as large as size 20 font.
- Use standard/conservative and closed (filled in) bullets. Do not insert symbols in place of bullets.
- Keep the layout simple, uncluttered, and easy to read.
- Each position description should have a heading containing the same information given in the same order each time. (For example: position title, employer name, city and state, dates)
- More important jobs and activities should be described more extensively than less important positions.
- If a bulleted line contains more than one line, the second line should begin at the same tab position as the first line.
- Check for spelling errors!
- Be consistent in the use of abbreviations, such as IL (Illinois). Only use abbreviations that all readers will recognize.
- Description phrases should begin with a variety of action verbs. Avoid repeating verbs and phrases.
- Don’t use the pronoun “I.” (“I” can be used in the “Objective,” if necessary, but only there.)
- Eliminate pronouns.
- Eliminate phrases like “responsibilities were” and “duties included.”
- Avoid empty words like “various” and “numerous.”
- Don’t end your résumé with “References available upon request.”
This is a typical résumé of a first-semester NIU freshman. Note that all the activities occurred during the high school years. As you engage in additional jobs and activities, and develop new skills, you should drop the activities that occurred during the high school years.

Chris Smith
123 Elm St.
DeKalb, IL 60115
(815) 555-5555
chrissmith@hotmail.com

OBJECTIVE
A part-time position at the DeKalb Public Library

EDUCATION
Bachelor of Arts in English
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL
Anticipated Graduation, May 2018

COMMUNITY SERVICE
Volunteer, Clairmont Community Hospital, Clairmont, IL, August 2012 – May 2013
- Staffed hospital front desk twice monthly for four hour shifts
- Directed visitors to patient rooms and hospital departments, received deliveries, answered phones, logged in visitors
- Participated in a four hour training program on customer service and communication skills

WORK EXPERIENCE
Sales Associate, Mattress Warehouse, Clairmont, IL, Summer 2013
- Assisted manager with sales, loading, and assembling of beds, futons, and mattresses
- Independently staffed store during manager’s absence
- Answered phones, described products to customers

Lifeguard, Clairmont Park District, Clairmont, IL, Summers 2011 & 2012
- Performed lifeguard duties at a public pool
- Ensured safety and well being of patrons

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES
Clairmont High School, Clairmont, IL
First Class Leader, September 2013 – May 2014
- Spoke to freshman classes about high school demands and expectations, appropriate classroom behavior, and the importance of extracurricular activities

Student Ambassador, September 2012 – May 2013
- Oriented new students and parents to the high school at Open House events

Peer Tutor, September 2011 – May 2013
- Assisted fellow students with homework and classroom assignments one hour per school day

ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES
- Freshman/Sophomore & Varsity Soccer Team Member Fall 2010 – 2011
- Downstate Eight All-Academic Award Fall 2013 & 2014
- Downstate Eight Honorable Mention in Soccer Fall 2011

COMPUTER SKILLS
- MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, MS Publisher, Macromedia Fireworks, Macromedia DreamWeaver, Macromedia Flash, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe ImageReady 7.0

Figure 12.1
This is the résumé of an especially well-prepared graduating senior. Note all his relevant accomplishments, skills, and activities.

CHRIS SMITH
123 Elm Street
DeKalb, IL 60115
(815) 555-5555
chrissmith@hotmail.com

OBJECTIVE
A position in the field of Marketing or Marketing Research

EDUCATION
Bachelor of Science in Marketing
Northern Illinois University DeKalb, IL May 2014
Minor: Communication Studies GPA: 3.4/4.0

Financed 75% of educational expenses by working an average of 20 hours per week while attending college full-time

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
Marketing Research Associate, Clancy & McGregor, Bloomingdale, IL, Summer 2013
• Conducted consumer phone surveys for major corporations (McDonald’s, Kraft Foods, Altoids)
• Entered responses on proprietary computerized database
• Gained first-hand knowledge of coordinated strategic market analysis to identify product growth
• Learned procedures for initiating improvements in marketing targeting consumers

Customer Service/Sales Representative, AT&T Broadband, Schaumburg, IL, Summer 2012
• Handled customer inquiries concerning services and billing statements
• Used CSG to create work orders for new and already existing accounts
• Provided quality customer service for a high volume incoming call center

Interviewer, Public Opinion Laboratory, Northern Illinois University, Jan 2011 – May 2013
• Compiled and entered responses on computerized database
• Conducted phone surveys regarding public health concerns and medical visitations

ACTIVITIES
• Serve as chief executive officer for the NIU chapter comprised of 60+ members
• While Events Coordinator, NRJ-AMA received the third highest AMA accreditation score among 52 chapters across the nation

Study Abroad Advisor, NIU Study Abroad Program, Sep 2011 – May 2012
• Coordinated committee activities, assisted with report writing, scheduled events
• Managed a budget in excess of $30,000
• Participated in decision-making with committee chairpersons

Volunteer, American Heart Association, Chicago, IL, Aug 2010
• Worked on a 10-person team developing and implementing fund-raising events throughout Chicagoland
• Wrote press releases and public service announcements, distributed flyers, solicited contributions from corporate sponsors

HONORS & AWARDS
• Stephen Stim Award for Academic Excellence, 2013 & 2014
• NIU Dean’s List five semesters
• American Heart Association Certificate for three years of devoted service

SKILLS
Computer: MS Word, MS PowerPoint, MS Excel, MS Access; Adobe Illustrator, Macromedia, DreamWeaver, Photoshop Premiere
Languages: Fluent in Spanish, conversant in French

Figure 12.2
Available Resources

FIRST- AND SECOND-YEAR EXPERIENCE
Altgeld Hall, Room 100
(815) 753-0028
www.niu.edu/fsye

CAREER SERVICES
Campus Life Building, Room 220
(815) 753-1641
www.niu.edu/careerservices

CAREER RESOURCE CENTER
Campus Life Building, Room 235
(815) 753-1641
www.niu.edu/careerservices

ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTER
633 West Locust St.
(815) 753-2573
www.advisingcenter.niu.edu

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES
Advising Office
Zulauf Hall, Room 201
(815) 753-0114
www.niu.edu/clas

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
Advising Office
Barsema Hall, Room 201
(815) 753-1325
www.cob.niu.edu/ugadvising

COLLEGE OF HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES
Advising Office
Wirtz Hall, Room 227
(815) 753-1891
www.chhs.niu.edu

COLLEGE OF VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS
Advising Office
Music Building, Room 141
(815) 753-1635
www.vpa.niu.edu

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Gabel Room 138
(815) 753-8352
www.cedu.niu.edu

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY
Central Advising Office
Engineering Building, Third Floor
(815) 753-1442
www.ceet.niu.edu

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS
Academic Advising Center, Room 113
(815) 753-5721
www.niu.edu/osas

OFFICE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
Altgeld Hall, Room 100
(815) 753-8152
www.niu.edu/engagedlearning
Dear UNIV Student,

Congratulations on making it this far into the book and completing the exercises; pat yourself on the back! These are the indicators that you will be successful in preparing for your future. Perhaps this is the first time you are on your own with many responsibilities. You are well aware how hard it is to keep up with classes, let alone plan for your future. So you may think to yourself, “Graduation is so far away. Why worry about the future?” Well, nothing could be further from the truth.

What you do now with your time at NIU will have a direct influence on your future. I honestly wish I could have read this letter when I started out college. Like most students, I just got by doing the basics—never thinking about where I wanted to be later in life. While I am very happy as a university professor here at NIU, the path to get here was not easy and could have been smoother had I done some basic planning.

Of course, you may be thinking to yourself that this does not apply to you; things always have a way of working out (that’s what I thought). Perhaps, you are reading this and saying, “I have no idea what I want to do today, let alone four years from now; so why bother.” This is not just about picking a career and finding a way to make it there and be successful. This is about enjoying life to the fullest and leaving no stone unturned during your journey through life.

If you are taking the UNIV course and have made it this far, it is because you want to succeed in life. This course is structured to provide you the opportunity to take advantage of all the services available to you, like academic advising or Career Services, so that you can prepare yourself for your future. In addition, this course is your time to discuss the issues and learn from your instructor. Now that you are on your own, no one will tell you what to do—they will just offer suggestions. You must navigate through it all and decide where to go and what to do for yourself to succeed. It is a scary thought, but if you practice now in college and learn from your mistakes, then you will have had four solid years of experience in getting ready for your future. That future is your next job, your career, your family, your retirement.

Life is what you make it, and being here at NIU in this UNIV course is the start to a truly wonderful life. Enjoy!

Federico M. Sciammarella, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Critical Thinking Questions

• What are your expectations of your advisor?

• How do you communicate your expectations with your advisor?

• What do you think it means to take responsibility for your career development?
Activity 1. Meeting with Your Academic Advisor

Your academic advisor is essential in helping you plan your schedule of classes throughout your academic career at NIU. If you have already selected a major, you may meet with an academic advisor in your department. If you have decided simply on a college, you can visit a more general academic advisor. The Academic Advising Center is also available for students who are undecided.

There is space provided below to list the contact information of your academic advisor. By filling out the following guidelines for before and after the meeting, you will be able to get the most out of your discussion with your advisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Advisor’s Name:</th>
<th>Phone Number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Address:</td>
<td>Office Location:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BEFORE THE MEETING:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and time of meeting:</th>
<th>Purpose of meeting:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Major exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Course selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Making advising connection/resource connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to be prepared to answer:</th>
<th>Questions to ask my advisor:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What do I enjoy learning/doing?</td>
<td>• What are my academic goals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Which classes interest me the most?</td>
<td>• Are there any clubs or organizations I am interested in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are my academic goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there any clubs or organizations I am interested in?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| What I will bring with me: | |
|---------------------------| |
**AFTER THE MEETING:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I discussed with my advisor:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I need to accomplish in the next semester:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources I need to connect with:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write a one-page journal/essay reflecting your advising experience, using one of the following prompts:

- The most important insight I’m taking away from my advising appointment is...
- My level of commitment to my major/career right now is...
- In order to be successful in completing my major and entering my career field, I will need to...