

Seven Steps to Making the Most of Your Time Here

1. Acknowledge yourself and your needs.

Recognize that, as a human being, you need healthy food, exercise and sleep, and as an individual, you also need a unique variety of relationships and experiences that you will find rewarding. Your days will fill up fast, so make sure to leave time to take care of *yourself*.

2. Understand your purpose.

Realize that your time here is one part of your life, but it is a very important part. There are many different reasons for going to college, for going to *this* college. Identify your reason even if it is simply to acquire skills, discover more about yourself, and figure out your next step.

Spend some amount of time thinking about these first two steps before you do anything else and let it give you a perspective that will guide your choices and help you make good use of your time here.

3. Know your surroundings.

Explore the entire campus, every corner. Learn what Northfield has to offer and how to get around. If there is something you might want or need that is not available in this community, figure out either where and how to get it or how to get along without it.

4. Look ahead each semester.

Take the time to study every syllabus. Preview the textbooks. Estimate the time it will take to do the work for each class. Plot out the assignments for all of your classes on one calendar. Get a good sense for the whole picture, and then remember #1 and #2 above. Assess, and adjust if necessary.

5. Learn from your teachers.

Your professors are smart and thoughtful people, who have worked hard to choose materials, craft assignments and create environments that will help you learn. Listen and absorb what they have to offer, and connect with them in ways that show you are tuned in to their course.

Learn from your other teachers as well – your advisors, coaches, tutors, RAs, campus staff, upperclassmen, and so on. Respect their wisdom, and use it when you can.

6. Do the work.

There are lots of strategies for getting good grades, but the only way to really learn is to do the work. So review #2 above, be responsible for yourself, take charge of your own learning, and do the work.

7. Get help when you need it.

From time to time, you may get distracted, overwhelmed or stuck. Take advantage of this moment! This is your opportunity to make use of the many support services that are here for you. You are studying a variety of subjects, but you are also learning to join the academic conversation that is going on in each of those fields of study. At the same time, you are building a foundation for your professional and personal future and transitioning into becoming an independent adult. Find the teachers allies from across the campus who can help and advise you as you figure all of this out.