

## Success Tip: Working with College Professors

**Professors are the primary source of information and assistance for any college course.** Students are encouraged to meet with professors to seek help with difficult content, clarify expectations, ask for feedback, or even discuss your interest in the subject.

Students are sometimes reluctant to work with their professors for various reasons. Perhaps they feel intimidated, are unsure of what to ask, or are afraid to admit they are having trouble or that they have not been putting the necessary time and effort into the course. As resources, professors are willing to meet and discuss course topics, test grades, and career-related issues. Remember, each professor is unique and will interact with students differently.

### **Here are some helpful hints for approaching and working with your professors:**

#### ***Visit your professor during office hours***

Avoid trying to approach professors right before or after class because they are often going to/from another class and may be in a rush. Schedule an appointment to make sure they are available and not with another student. Be sure to be prompt and have questions ready. If you must cancel an appointment, be courteous and inform your professor in advance. Take along your textbook, lecture notes, handouts, syllabus, and other course materials. This is especially necessary if you have specific questions.

#### ***Be professional and courteous***

Use appropriate language, whether speaking in class or corresponding via email. When talking directly to a professor, speak up and look at them. Make sure you know how to pronounce your professor's name.

#### ***Listen attentively, take notes, ask questions***

Feedback given should not be taken as a personal affront but as constructive guidance for successful completion of the course. The ability to accept and learn from constructive feedback is an essential life/learning skill.

### ***Be attentive and participate in class***

This includes showing up on time, paying attention to the lecture, being involved in discussions, turning off your cell phone, and limiting distractions. If you use a computer or tablet to take notes, make sure that is the only task you are using it for (disregard checking emails, getting on Facebook or Youtube, etc.) and that sounds are turned off.

### ***Stick to the syllabus***

Do homework when scheduled and plan ahead for major projects and exams. With a syllabus, there is no excuse for not completing your work. **Reading through the syllabus will often answer questions you may have.**

### ***Missing a class***

Check the course syllabus for the professor's policy on absences and know if/how class attendance counts toward your grade. Inform your professor ahead of time, if possible, and turn assignments in early. Make the effort to get lecture notes from a fellow student, review and clarify those notes, and read the associated material in the text.

### ***Teaching and learning is a two-way process***

Attending classes, arriving on time, doing your homework, informing professors of an absence ahead of time, and participating in class discussions are responsibilities of the student. The communication skills learned and practiced with professors will be invaluable as students progress in their intended majors and careers.