I’m Too Busy to Manage My Time!

With all of the responsibilities confronting college students, it is amazing that anything is ever accomplished. Think about it: Clubs, classes, papers, research projects, rush, reading lists, spring fling, problem sets…the litany goes on. Little wonder the earnest student, hands thrown high, says with unmistakable conviction, “I’m too busy to sit around planning my day or week or entire semester. I’ll just take it as it comes.”

However, consider the fact that how you manage your time is the only aspect of college that is totally in your control. You have little or no say in the books assigned; tests are given at the discretion of the instructor; the weight given to a particular graded assignment is someone else’s decision. So any feelings of powerlessness a student harbors – regardless of how fleeting – are not without reason. Effective time management is the single most important empowerment tool the overburdened college student can acquire.

In picking out or devising your system of time management, be mindful of the following rules of thumb:

**You must plan for the short-term and the long-term.** Focusing on one aspect at the expense of the other can lead to scheduling conflicts and forgotten obligations.

**Don’t take too much time to plan out your study schedule for the week.** If your system of time management is too time consuming, chances are you are using this method of “time management” as a means of procrastination.

**Be honest about your concentration.** If you know your concentration diminishes after an hour, do not schedule yourself for a four-hour, no-break study session.

**Shop for a system that works for you and meets your needs.** Planners and calendars, for instance, come in a wide variety of styles and sizes.

**Your time management system must be written.** If it’s not written down, it doesn’t exist.
You are entitled to a life. Effective time management does not mean taking an “all business, all the time” approach. Managing your time should provide you not only with a means of accomplishing what you need to do, but also to engage in what you want to do.

You absolutely need to prioritize your activities. Be honest. That which is most important deserves the lion’s share of your time, even if it is not academics. If your social calendar and pre-graduation networking are most important, so be it. Just realize that success in any endeavor is directly proportional to the amount of time one applies towards its accomplishment.

Stick to your system. This does not mean become totally inflexible. Make sure your system can handle those unforeseen circumstances that affect us all.

Ultimately, the goal in managing your time is to put yourself in control. You may, however, want to work with a Learning Instructor to define your priorities and create an effective time management system.