Organization/Time Management

Organization

- Find some sort of calendar system, paper or online, and commit to using it. If needed, find support in Project Success, Disability Services, or Tutoring to help you set it up and be accountable.
- Create a filing system that works for you:
  - A separate folder/notebook system for each course, color coded, is most recommended
  - An accordion file where you can file everything in one place
  - A binder with clearly marked sections for each class, work that's due/work that's returned
- Do a once a week dump of your backpack to "clean house" and start over. Ask an organized friend for assistance if needed.
- Keep a pencil bag in your backpack full of often needed supplies like pencils, pens, highlighters, sticky notes, a small stapler, index cards, erasers, a USB drive. Keep it all together in one pouch so you always have the study tools you need at your fingertips.
- Keep track of your grades in the front cover of your notebook or folder for each class so you know where you stand.
- Transfer all important dates for ALL classes onto one calendar at the beginning of the semester so you don't have to always search for each syllabus/schedule.
- Save and label one side of your folder "Keep or Returned" and the other side "Hand In." Religiously file papers in one pocket or the other as soon as you get them.
- Save your work to the cloud via an app like Dropbox so you can't lose your work or forget it.
- Create a "launch pad" at home where you have everything you need by the front door (keys, backpack, jacket, ID, etc…). Maybe use some sort of basket that you can easily throw things in.
- Get a white board to hang in your room or entryway. Write important "to dos" any time you think of them so they are constantly visible.
- Consolidate your passwords and record them either in an app (LastPass or LogMeOnce), or on paper (unsafe, but efficient – saves time searching around or figuring out).
- Carry a small notepad or use the notes app on your phone to jot down quick reminders. This will remove things from your working and short-term memory and leave space for other important information.

Time Management

- Track how long tasks take you – i.e. how long does it take me to read 5 pages, write a couple paragraphs, do 10 math problems. Plan your study schedule based on your findings.
- Find out where your "time thieves" are. Use an app like RescueTime to track how much time you spend on certain apps/sites. Adjust accordingly. This app can block or limit time on sites that suck away your time.
- Use an app like Evernote to remind yourself of due dates, appointments, etc…
- Make your time and deadlines visual – put them on calendars
    - Use different colors for class, work, study, social
    - Use different colors to mark importance or nearness to due date
    - "Plan time to plan" - Pick one day a week and a short amount of time to plan the upcoming week, each week
- Just start a task, do something, even a little bit. Write a thesis statement, do one math problem, look up just a few vocabulary words, read 2 pages of a chapter, etc…Once you start you tend to get more done than you might imagine.
- Use tiny spaces of down time to get things done – always having a to do list that you can refer to so you use time well – 10-15 minutes? Find research materials, write one paragraph or an outline, file all things in your backpack, make a few flashcards, review your flashcards, meet with an instructor, etc…
- Put your phone in airplane mode to block incoming distracting messages
- Disable WiFi while you study.
- Move away from screens while you study.
- Check messages, etc… before you begin study.
- Use the Pomodoro Method – study in small blocks, take a 5 minute break, then get back at it for another block. This method is supposed to help keep you focused and fresh.