



**Academic Success Center**  
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

# Academic Coaching Manual

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# 2017



# Table of Contents

<b>About the Academic Success Center</b> .....	1
Organizational Chart.....	1
Accolade.....	1
Mission.....	1
Vision.....	2
Values.....	2
<b>What is Academic Coaching?</b> .....	2
Counseling vs. Advising vs. Coaching.....	2
<b>Why is Academic Coaching Important?</b> .....	3
<b>Academic Success Center Coaching Philosophies</b> .....	3
Coaching Components.....	4
University Collaboration.....	4
Certificate Program and Workshops.....	4-5
<b>Who uses Academic Coaching?</b> .....	5
Academic Success Center Demographics.....	6
Texas A&M University Demographics.....	6
<b>Hiring Academic Coaches</b> .....	7
Background of Coaches.....	7
<b>Training Academic Coaches</b> .....	7
<b>Meeting with Students</b> .....	8
Appointment Scheduling, Duration, and Record-Keeping.....	8
Before a Meeting.....	8
During a Meeting.....	8
Discussing Grades and Other Important Topics.....	9
After a Meeting.....	9
Coaching Do's and Don'ts.....	10
<b>Professional Development</b> .....	10
Training.....	10
<b>Appendix A</b>	
“Academic Success Center Coaching Intake Form”.....	11-12
<b>Appendix B</b>	
“Common Questions/Statements During an Appointment”.....	13
<b>Appendix C</b>	
“5-Day Study Plan”.....	14-17
“Using a Fixed Commitment Calendar”.....	18-19
“Levels of Understanding”.....	20
“SQ4R Reading System (for traditional textbooks)”.....	21
“P2R Reading System (non-traditional textbooks)”.....	22
“Post-Test Analysis”.....	23
“Post-Test Analysis Form”.....	24

## About the Academic Success Center

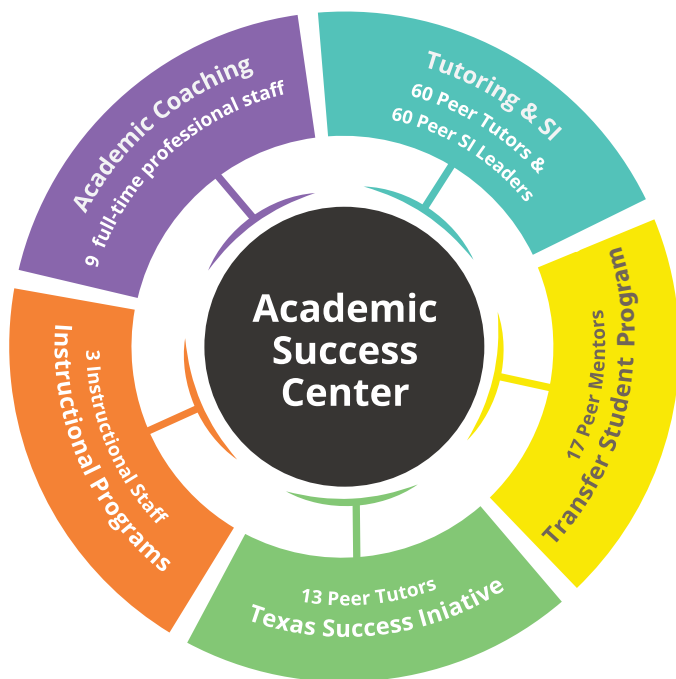
The Texas A&M University Academic Success Center is a resource for students who wish to improve academically. We provide workshops and classes on study strategies and time management. We also provide tutoring, Supplemental Instruction (SI), academic coaching, and peer mentoring. Our programs encourage excellent academic performance, especially, but not exclusively, in courses and subjects with traditionally high rates of failure.

We encourage students to engage in experiences that

further their academic goals, and we connect students to resources and support across campus. We cultivate skills and attitudes that enhance academic performance and prepare students for lifelong learning. Our holistic approach fosters mental and physical well-being and encourages students to identify roadblocks, set realistic, attainable, and personally fulfilling academic goals, and take ownership of their learning.

## Organizational Chart

Although not shown in the figure to the right, the Academic Success Center is a unit within Undergraduate Studies in the Office of the Provost. Our services are funded by a collaboration between the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.



**Fig. 1** The Academic Success Center is comprised of five programs and/or services: academic coaching, tutoring and SI, Transfer Student Program, Texas Success Initiative, and instructional programs. To learn more about our programs and services, visit [successcenter.tamu.edu](http://successcenter.tamu.edu).

## Accolade

In 2015, the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA) awarded the Academic Success Center the “Learning Center of Excellence” designation. As one of two learning centers in the nation to receive this designation that year, the Texas A&M Academic Success Center is recognized as a model learning center throughout the nation.

## Mission

*To support all Aggies to achieve their academic goals and fulfill their academic potential.*

As a unit of Undergraduate Studies, we affirm their mission to “help undergraduates reach their full academic potential, enrich their educational program with deep and purposeful learning experiences, and gain the skills needed to continue professional development throughout their lives.”

## Vision

*All Aggies find their success.*

In pursuit of our vision, we will provide exceptional quality academic support services and resources that:

- Students actively seek, embrace and recommend to others.
- Faculty and staff select as the first option for students in need of support.
- Employees are proud and enthusiastic to be a part of.
- Peers regard as a role model for student success initiatives.



## Values

At the Academic Success Center, we value:

**Students:** Why we are here

**Excellence:** Doing our best, with integrity

**Leadership:** Seeking innovation and responsibility

**Enthusiasm:** Excited to do our job

**Respect:** Embracing individuals and their diversity of thought, experience, and culture

## What is Academic Coaching?

Academic Coaching is a relatively new component of student success initiatives in the United States. It combines aspects of advising, counseling, education, and coaching into a dynamic and personal interaction between a student and a coach. According to the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) (About Us, n.d.):

“Academic coaching is an interactive process that focuses on the personal relationship created between the student and the coach. The coach challenges the student to think about his or her personal and/or professional goals in order to relate them to his or her academic/educational goals. In this learning process, it is important for the coach to encourage the student to become more self-aware by understanding his or her strengths, values, interests, purpose, and passion.”

## Advising vs. Counseling vs. Coaching

It is important to note that academic coaching is different from academic advising or counseling. All three fields often use very similar skills and sometimes encounter the same issues.

**Academic advisors** typically help students craft class schedules, answer questions regarding degree plan progress, identify available educational opportunities such as study abroad or internships, and guide students toward successful graduation.

**Counselors** mainly focus on mental health issues and helping students cope with the variety of life-changing experiences they encounter during their college experience.

**Academic coaches** identify any roadblocks to academic success and give students the necessary resources to overcome those hurdles.

## Why is Academic Coaching Important?

Academic coaching is a unique resource on campus that helps students navigate obstacles during their academic career because of the individualized and holistic approach coaches use. Some hurdles, like transitions between institutions or a new environment, are shared by many students; others, such as how individuals react to stress, may be quite unique.

Transitioning from high school to college can be a trying time for even the highest achieving students. High school is a highly structured learning environment in which teachers have more opportunities to meet students in and out of the classroom to provide reminders and offer additional instruction. In college, however, a majority of the learning takes place outside of the classroom and material is covered at a much faster pace compared to high school. High school students sometimes have an entire academic year to learn a core subject, while in college that same material will be covered in about half that time.

Another challenge new college students may face is the loss of the security that living at home provides. For instance, at home, many high school students are not in charge of cooking their own meals, scheduling doctor's appointments, or performing daily household chores. If students are away from home, they may not have anyone to help them during especially busy times or to reinforce the importance of doing homework.

While not all students come to college with the same background, experience, or home life, the transition from high school to college is a major change in a student's life; therefore, academic coaching strives to teach students the skills and habits they need to master this transition and foster life-long learning and growth.

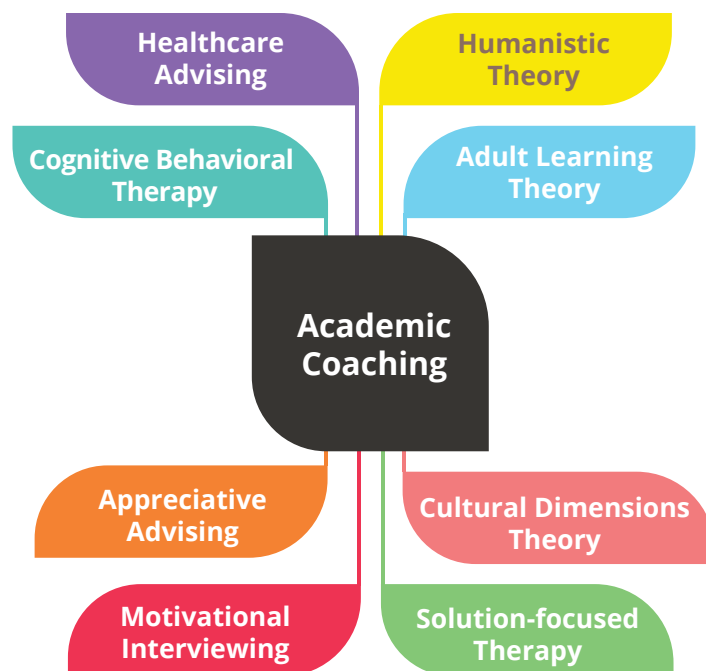
**Fig. 2** The figure to the right illustrates the areas of research from which we developed our academic coaching model.

## Academic Success Center Coaching Philosophies

The foundation of what academic coaches do is foster professional collaborative relationships with individual students. This allows the student to feel they can open up to coaches about what brought them into the appointment. Positive relationships facilitate the teaching of strategies and resources, and coaches can follow up by evaluating student success (as defined by the student).

At the Texas A&M Academic Success Center, we adhere to the idea that there is not a “one size fits all” approach. Every student and every situation is different; so, as coaches we approach each student with fresh eyes, not a script. This also applies to the way we coach—we are all striving towards the same goal, student-defined success, but the paths can look very different.

The field of academic coaching is young and, as a result, there is no comprehensive coaching model. Our client-centered academic coaching process is informed from a combination of staff experience as well as several research areas, which are depicted below:



## Coaching Components

Using the suggested skills outlined by the NACADA (About Us, n.d.), we conceptualize the components of academic coaching in the following way:

- **Relationship building components:** Encouragement, humor, empathy, welcoming environment, support, listening, hope, patience, tough love
- **Education components:** Informing, referring, teaching
- **Evaluation/follow up components:** Diagnosis, accountability

Academic coaching is a practice that is finely-tuned according to the student's needs each session. Coaches will use their judgment on how to proceed based on their interaction with the student during each appointment. It is possible to move through the categories several times throughout a coaching session or just stay focused on one area the entire time.

It is important to note that this is a fluid process rather than a series of steps to be followed in each coaching session. As appropriate, coaches engage in all three components—relationship building, education, and evaluation—based on the situation and the student's needs. However, positive relationship building is always at the core of what we do with students.

## University Collaboration

While one-on-one appointments are the ideal situation to help students achieve academic success, we recognize that a limited staff cannot meet the demands of all students in need. Therefore, we engage in university collaboration with other departments and organizations on campus as well as offer in-house workshops to serve more people. As an example, here are several organizations we refer students to:

- Student Counseling Services
- Disability Services
- Veteran Resource and Support Center

- Scholarships and Financial Aid
- University Writing Center
- Multicultural Services
- Student Assistance Services
- Professional School of Advising
- Career Center
- Money Education Center
- Help Desks Within Departments

In addition to working with the general student population, we also collaborate with colleges and departments across campus to serve their students specifically. These students may be on academic probation, and they may be required by their department to complete a "Certificate Program." Academic coaching is one method students can choose to complete such a program, which is described in the next section.

Academic coaches also fulfill presentation and training requests from a variety of organizations (both on- and off-campus) including academic departments, student organizations, and university-related clubs. Coaches help train peer mentors in academic departments and learning communities, as well as residence hall staff. Our "train the trainer" approach allows coaches to share study techniques with others who work closely with students. This allows staff across campus to triage students in crisis until they can make an appointment to work with an academic coach.

## Certificate Program & Workshops

Since colleges or departments may require or recommend that students work with the Academic Success Center (often as a condition of scholastic probation), we developed a certificate program to meet this need. This program outlines a series of steps students can take to earn a certificate through participation in workshops, courses, or academic coaching sessions. All students, regardless of their academic standing with the university, are welcomed to participate.

The following is an outline of the steps students need to take in order to earn a certificate:

### Step 1: Attend “Fresh Start Orientation”

This one-time orientation class is held at the beginning of each semester and explains the certificate process. We offer multiple orientation classes the first month of each semester.

### Step 2: Registration

During the orientation, students are required to register for one of the following four options:

**1. STLC 101:** This is a semester long, 2-credit hour course. Students may only choose this option if the course fits their schedule and they register before the drop/add deadline, which is on the 5th class day of each semester. To successfully complete STLC 101, students must earn a letter grade of C or higher.

**2. Commit to Success (CTS):** is a 3-week, 6-session seminar. Among the topics covered are time management, note taking, text-book reading, test preparation, memory, metacognition, motivation, and effective study strategies. CTS has a required attendance policy.

**3. Academic Performance Program (APP):** APP is, like CTS, a 3-week, 6-session seminar. APP is open to students who have previously completed a certificate program or who are close to graduation. APP focuses on topics such as motivation and mind-set to help students develop mental skills conducive to success in college and beyond.

**4. Academic Coaching:** Students are given information at Fresh Start Orientation about how to schedule the first coaching appointment. At this initial coaching session, students and their Academic Coach will collaborate to develop a plan of action to help develop effective study strategies and connect them to appropriate academic resources. There are not a fixed number of coaching appointments required in order to earn a certificate. Since this option is tailored to the student’s specific needs, their academic coach will determine when they have successfully completed this

option and have earned a certificate.

### Step 3: Completion and Certificate

Once students have successfully completed their certificate program, we recommend they take a copy of their certificate to the college or department that required/recommended working with ASC.

“Wednesday Workshops” are not part of the certificate program and are also open to any student. Every week a different topic is introduced and discussed. We offer two workshops on Wednesday afternoons. The topics are rotated throughout the semester and include dealing with tardiness, note-taking techniques, test preparation, information processing, memory retention, and concentration. Coaches teach one to two of these each semester.

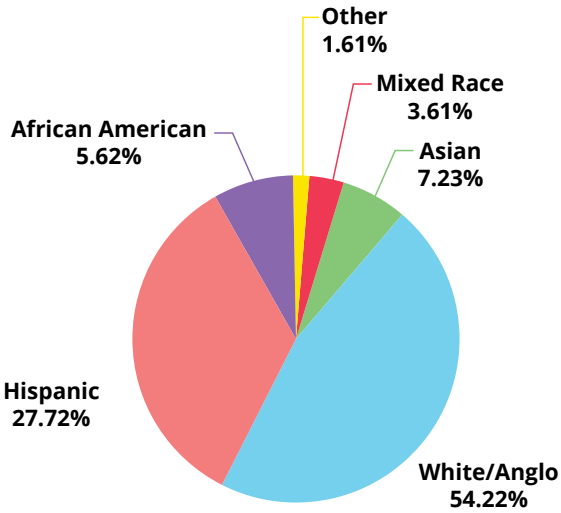


## Who uses Academic Coaching?

We work with any student who walks through our door. This includes traditional, non-traditional, readmitted, transfer, dual-enrollment, provisionally admitted, graduate students, veterans, and athletes. While the Academic Success Center does not turn away any level of student, we work almost exclusively with undergraduate students.

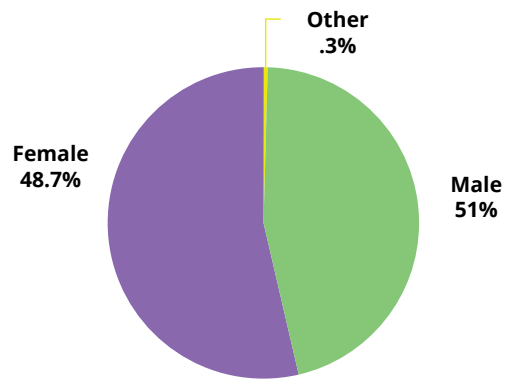
## Academic Success Center Student Demographics

*Ethnicity*



**Fig. 3** Ethnicity of students who have visited the Academic Success Center in Spring 2017.

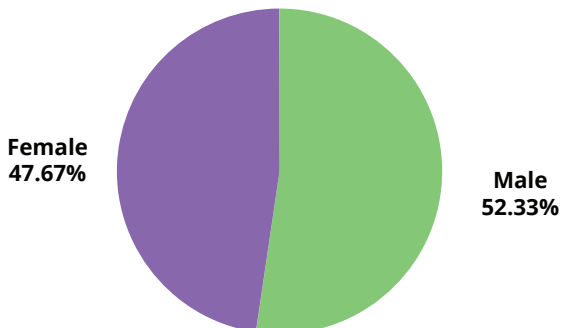
*Gender*



**Fig. 4** Gender of students who have visited the Academic Success Center in Spring 2017.

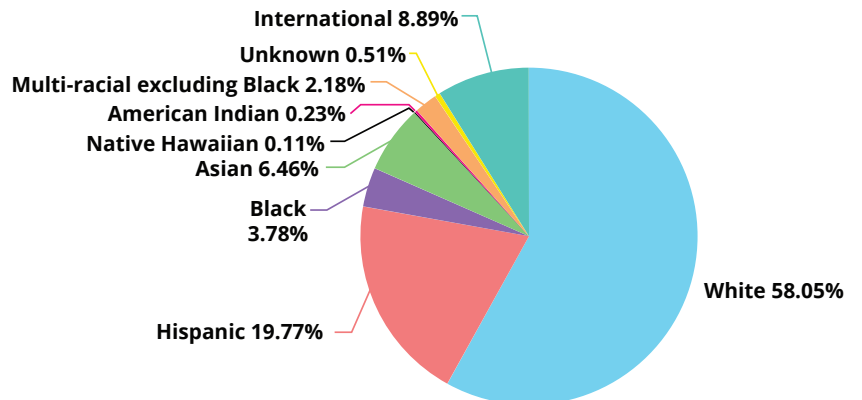
## Texas A&M University Student Demographics

*Gender*



**Fig. 5** Gender of Texas A&M University student population for the Fall of 2017.

*Ethnicity*



**Fig. 6** Ethnicity of Texas A&M University student population for the Fall of 2017.



## Hiring Academic Coaches

### Background of Coaches

Coaches at the Academic Success Center are required to have a bachelor's degree and two years of experience in advising, recruiting, teaching, coaching, student affairs, or other related areas or a master's degree with no experience. Many coaches have advanced degrees, as well as years of experience in related fields.

We value a diverse staff. Our coaches come from a wide array of backgrounds and have a variety of experiences: higher education, counseling, military, leadership, education, psychology, nonprofit, and advising. Very few of our staff intended to become academic coaches; rather, their innate desire to help students brought them to the Academic Success Center. As a result, each coach has their own preferred coaching style. This allows students to be able to find a coach that compliments them and allows the coaches to bring a wide variety of knowledge to the entire Academic Success Center staff as a whole.



New coaches select a veteran coach as a mentor and meet with them throughout the training process. A majority of a new coach's time is spent shadowing coaching appointments; trainees are encouraged to develop their preferred coaching style. For example, some coaches might prefer a more empathetic approach while others would do well with an authoritative style.

After about one month of shadowing, new coaches will then begin meeting with students on a limited basis, eventually working up to a full schedule over the course of two months. As a way to refine and strengthen their coaching skills, mentor coaches assess the progress of their mentee, answer questions, sit in on early coaching sessions, and provide feedback.

In addition to training related to conducting coaching sessions, coaches are also trained on emergency student situations, motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2012), listening skills (Bachelor, 1988, Cormier & Cormier, 1991, Egan, 1994, and Fine, 1996), college level study strategies (Blerkom, 2012) and in-house processes, programs, and philosophies.

We believe training for coaches should be ongoing, so our coaches participate in professional development activities throughout the semester. (See "Professional Development" section.)



### Training Academic Coaches

Training generally takes three months, depending on the experience of the new coach. Training methods are comprehensive and include written materials, one-on-one training sessions, observation, and mentoring.

## Meeting with Students

### Appointment Scheduling, Duration, and Record-Keeping

The Academic Success Center uses three online systems to ensure academic coaches can successfully prepare for and record appointments. Specifically, these systems are used for scheduling and viewing appointment details, viewing student records and class schedule, and recording notes summarizing what happened during each session.

Initial appointments with an academic coach are scheduled to last up to 45 minutes; however, most coaches complete them 5-10 minutes early to allow time to write notes and prepare for the next session. Follow-up appointments, if necessary, are scheduled at the end of each appointment and generally last no more than 30 minutes. Depending on the need, follow ups can sometimes be scheduled for the next week or can be many weeks away. Usually, we try to follow up every 3-4 weeks, as needed. Again, this is where coaches have the flexibility to evaluate each individual student's situation and make an appropriate plan for them.

Coaches average 20 initial appointment spots a week on their schedules, with follow up appointments filling in the gaps as the semester goes on. Coaches schedule no more than 9-10 students a day in order to have time for other duties. Our peak times are usually the first couple of weeks of the semester and the weeks around the release of midterm grades. Our direct contact hours increase significantly as we start to schedule follow-up appointments with students.

As previously mentioned, our office works closely with academic departments across campus in assisting students who are not in good academic standing. Departments will require these students to meet with us and complete the certificate program. Students who select academic coaching as their preferred method for completing their certificate program must follow a few guidelines to successfully complete their program. Students not on probation decide if they wish to meet

again; however, students on probation are required to meet with a coach at the coach's discretion. Each coach will determine how often they need to meet with the student and how to evaluate a student's progress. Coaches may evaluate success based on the student's effort in trying new study habits, improving their grades, or using relevant campus resources.

### Before a Student Meeting

- Review the student's transcripts and any other information from the student's last contact with our office, if available.
- Mentally reset from previous meeting.

### During a Student Meeting

During an initial meeting, coaches assess the student's needs by reviewing the intake form (Appendix A) and asking clarifying questions. For any meeting, however, it is important that coaches frame their questions to be open-ended and allow the student to describe where they feel they need the most academic assistance. While by no means comprehensive, a list of commonly used questions can be found in Appendix B.

A general outline of the coaching session is as follows:

- Develop rapport with the student by building a foundational relationship focused on positive intentions
- Identify the area of needs and address the potential skills to provide to the student
- Provide the student with applicable skills to implement immediately after the meeting. This could be through worksheets, study strategies to implement, and/or referrals to campus resources/other departments. (Appendix C)
- Schedule a follow-up appointment, if necessary.

When a student walks into our office, chances are

## Discussing Grades and Other Important Topics

they are interested in improving their grades. Whether their overall academic standing is in need of improvement, or they underperformed on a single exam, grades are generally the common denominator; however, poor grades are often the symptom of bigger problems. Although we may address issues unrelated to study strategies, grades are the measurement of success used on campus when it comes to retention, financial aid awards, etc.

As coaches, we coach for progress, not grades. Grades are not our focus, but we acknowledge that they do have an impact. We hope that the resources and strategies we provide help the student overall; better grades should follow as a result. Coaches provide examples/resources, but students have the ultimate responsibility to use what is discussed during coaching sessions.

To the right are six topic areas that are commonly discussed in coaching appointments. Many issues will fall under multiple areas. The coach determines how to proceed based on the information provided by the student.

### After a Student Meeting

Coaches write session notes after each meeting to document any pertinent demographic information, why they came in to see a coach, their concerns and struggles, what was talked about during the meeting, and any plans for future meetings.

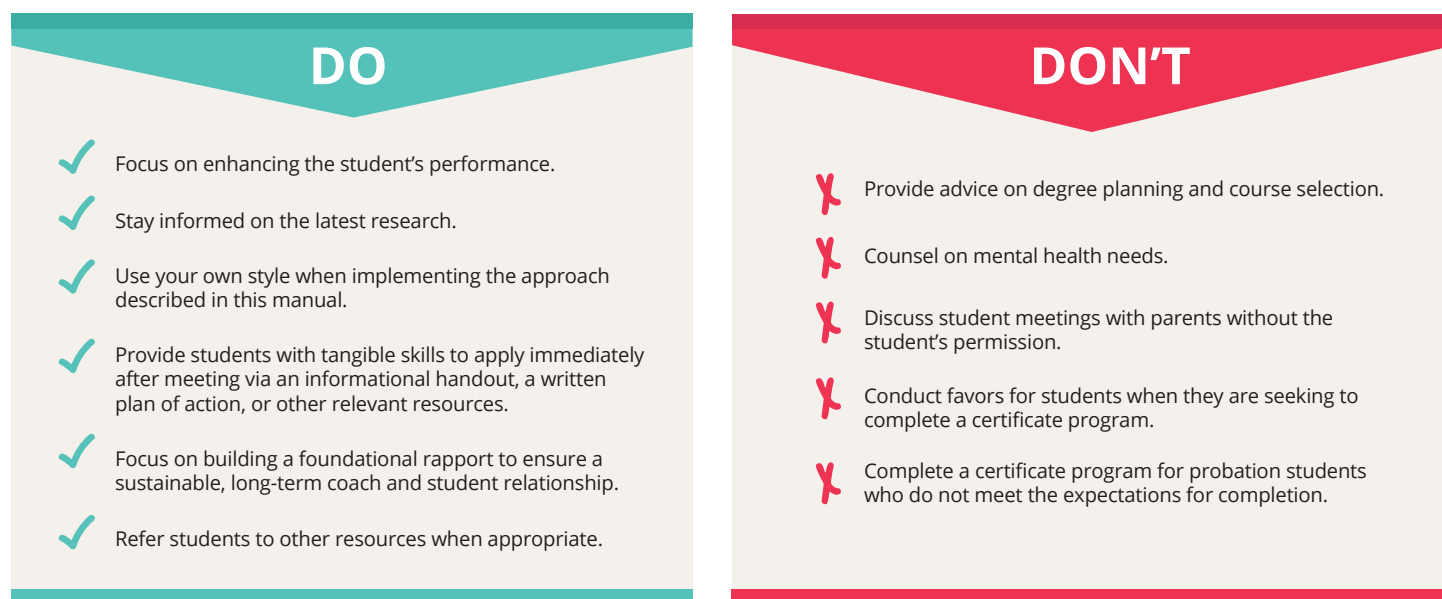
**Sample notes:** “Student is a freshman Chemistry major from Houston. He is not on probation and is not required to complete a certificate program. Student is taking CHEM 101, BIOL 111, ENGL 104, HIST 105, and KINE 199. He reports struggling with time management and prioritizing, resulting in turning in assignments at the last minute. We talked about using a planner, creating a fixed commitment calendar, and establishing a routine. Our next meeting

is on July 7th at 1:30. We will discuss implemented strategies and any other concerns.”



**Fig. 7** Issues negatively affecting academic performance that are commonly addressed during coaching sessions.

## Coaching Do's and Don'ts



**Fig. 8** A list of things to do and avoid during an academic coaching session.

## Professional Development

For professional development, coaches are members of Texas A&M's "University Advisors and Counselors (UAC)" organization and participate in the organization's ongoing activities, meetings, and yearly symposium. In addition, coaches are members of a variety of other professional organizations and attend national conferences conducted by NCLCA (National College Learning Center Association), NACADA, FYE (First-Year Experience), and TASS (Teaching Academic Survival Skills), as well as other regional, state, local/university conferences that focus on student success and diversity.

## Trainings

We have weekly team meetings where we focus on a variety of topics such as:

- Guest speakers from campus offices/departments for updates.
- Fun on- and off-campus team building exercises.
- Round-table/brainstorming discussions on study strategies.
- Learning our strengths, communication styles, personality types, etc.

As a team, we have continued to improve on our coaching styles and ability to share our knowledge with other departments. To continue to grow professionally, we take any opportunities to learn more about our university and the coaching profession as a whole.

# Academic Success Center Coaching Intake Form

Please fill out this form **legibly** and give it to your coach at your first meeting.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

UIN: \_\_\_\_\_ Major and possible career choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Current residence:  On campus  Off campus

Number of hours you're taking this semester (A&M and others): \_\_\_\_\_

What concern(s) bring you in to see a coach?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you on Academic Probation?  Yes  No If so, with which College/Department? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you believe has prevented you from achieving your preferred level of academic success? (check all that apply)

## Time Challenges

- Too overextended in extracurricular activities
- Too much 'wasted' time
- Work too many hours
- Procrastination
- Lack of sleep

## Academic Challenges

- Not happy with major
- Dislike college & studying
- Learning disability
- Poor study environment
- Poor concentration
- Poor note-taking skills
- Inadequate reading skills
- Inadequate writing skills
- Inadequate math skills
- Inadequate study skills

## Personal Challenges

- New independent status
- Roommate problems
- Housing problems
- Relationship worries/breakup
- Previous failure
- Parental pressure
- Loss of a family member
- Significant family change
- Health/mental health concerns
- Making friends/loneliness
- Worried about money/inadequate financial aid
- Motivation
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours per week do you spend on the following:

Work \_\_\_\_\_

Extracurricular activities \_\_\_\_\_

Academic tasks/studying \_\_\_\_\_

In what way(s) do you manage your time? \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

I feel that I manage my time well.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I attend all of my classes every week (unless excused).	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I complete my homework and other assignments on time.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I put off "fun" when I need to study or work on school assignments.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Which academic assistance have you used this semester?

- SI
- Tutoring:  on campus and/or  off campus
- Week in Review and Help Desks
- Office hours
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any diagnosed learning issues?  Yes  No

If so, are you registered with Disability Services?  Yes  No

Are you willing to ask for help if you find yourself struggling in your classes?  Yes  No

If no, why?

What challenges do you have with your current classes? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

When I go to class, my materials are well-organized.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I am able to stay focused in class.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
At the end of a lecture, I can summarize what was presented.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

When you have an exam:

How far in advance do you study? \_\_\_\_\_

What study methods do you use? \_\_\_\_\_

How much stress does it cause?  None  Some  A lot  Freaks me out Since when? \_\_\_\_\_

What about it causes you stress? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

My notes help me prepare adequately for tests.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I use a variety of <b>active</b> study strategies when I prepare for tests.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I review tests when I get them back and analyze my performance.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

What are your academic goals? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything else that you think your Academic Coach should know about you?

\_\_\_\_\_

What questions do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

I am a hard worker in school.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I am motivated by my own expectations, not someone else's.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I feel that I am a vital part of the Aggie family.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I believe I am capable of being a successful student at A&M.	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

## Common Questions/Statements During an Appointment

How are things going?  
Tell me a little about what's going on.  
What are you concerned about?

It sounds like...  
I'm wondering if...  
Is this something you have struggled with in the past?  
Tell me more about that.  
Is there something else that's been on your mind?

How often do you attend/miss class?  
Are you making it to all of your classes?  
How do you use your daytime hours?  
How do you know what to do each day?  
Do you take lots of naps? Stay up late?  
(for a more challenging class) Do you set aside time each day to stay immersed?  
Are you missing assignments/letting things get past you?  
Are you turning in assignments at the last minute?  
What do you do between classes?

Tell me how you prep for a test.  
When you study for a test, what does that normally look like?  
Do you see a connection between the way you study and the way your professor tests?  
Is there a difference in your study effort on exam weeks vs. non-exam weeks?  
Are you getting any help with this? Using resources?  
How much time do you spend on school work outside of class?  
Do you study for each class each week in some way?  
Can you recall what you studied last week?  
What study changes did you make after the last round of tests and why did you make them?

## The 5-Day Study Plan

When you have a large amount of material to study for a test, commit yourself to about two hours per day of very structured study time. By carefully following this approach, you will be able to systematically cover all of the material. With planning ahead, many students have found that the 5-Day Study Plan gets good results. Keys to the plan are:

1. Space out your learning over a period of at least 5 days
2. Divide material so you can work on it in chunks.
3. Each day, prepare a new chunk of information, and review previous days' material.
4. Use active learning strategies to study the material (see chart on next page).
5. Use self-testing techniques to monitor your learning (see chart on next page).

Eight to 10 hours of studying may be required to get an A or a B on an exam. This is just a general guideline. You may need to allow for more time depending on the difficulty of the class.

Start early!

More than any other technique, the key to performing well on exams is starting early and using short, frequent study sessions. The human brain learns academic material faster and better on an exam if done in brief blocks of time spread out over longer periods of time, rather than in a few lengthy sessions. For example, you will perform better on an exam if you spend one hour studying each day for 20 days than if you spend 10 hours studying each day for two days before an exam.

Avoid cramming!

If you have to cram, try to focus on remembering the information you do know, rather than trying to teach yourself new information. You will typically not remember what you tried to learn the night before the exam anyway, so it is best to make sure you really know some part of the information for the test. If you do have a few days, try to spread the studying out so you aren't doing it all in one night.

Get organized!

The 5-Day Study Plan begins with dividing the material you need to study (e.g., chapters in your text and corresponding lecture notes) into 4 about equal parts: A, B, C & D (with "A" being the oldest and/or most difficult material and "D" being the most recently covered material). For example, if chapters 1-8 of your PSYC textbook will be on your upcoming test, you could divide them as follows. A = chapters 1-2, B = chapters 3-4, C = chapters 5-6, D = chapters 7-8. List your four groups of study materials here.

A \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_



Next, for each of your four groups of study materials, you need to select at least two (2) preparation and two (2) review strategies. Take a look at the examples below. Make sure that your review strategies fit with your preparation strategies. (*For example, if you make flashcards as part of preparation, then review the flashcards; if you made charts of related material, recreate those charts from memory.*)

### Examples of ways to prepare and review

Preparation strategies	Review strategies
Develop study sheets	Recite study sheets
Develop concept maps	Replicate concept maps from memory
Make word cards	Recite word cards
Make question cards	Recite question cards
Make formula cards	Practice writing formulas
Make problem cards	Work problems
Make self-tests	Take self-tests
Do study guides	Practice study guide info out loud
Re-mark text material	Take notes on re-marked text
Make a list of 20 topics that might be on the exam	Recite the list of 20 topics
Do problems	Do “missed” problems
Make an outline	Recite notes from recall cues
Summarize material	Recite out loud
Make charts of related material	Re-create chart from memory
List steps in a process	Recite steps from memory
Predict essay questions	Answer essay questions
Answer questions at the end of the chapter	Practice reciting main points
Prepare material for study group	Explain material to group members

#### Preparation Strategies

#### Review Strategies

**Section A** 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Section B** 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Section C** 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Section D** 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_

### Creating your 5-Day Study Plan (without a day off)

On Days 1-4 you will prepare one section of material (preparation strategies from previous page). On Days 2-5 you will review the material you prepared the day(s) before (review strategies from previous page). On Day 5 you will only review and then self-test over all material. Follow your plan, noting the rotation of the different groups of materials (A, B, C, D) and about how much time is spent on each one. An example Day 3 of a 5 Day Study Plan is below.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Prepare Portion A—2 hrs.	Prepare Portion B—2 hrs. Review Portion A—30 min.	Prepare Portion C—1.5 hrs. Review Portion B—30 min. Review Portion A—15 min.	Prepare Portion D—1 hr. Review Portion C—30 min. Review Portion B—15 min. Review Portion A—15 min.	Review Portion D—25 min. Review Portion C—15 min. Review Portion B—10 min. Review Portion A—10 min. Self-test on all parts—1 hr.
Total: 2 hours	Total: 2.5 hours	Total: 2 hrs. 15 min.	Total: ~ 2 hours	Total: ~ 2 hours

### Sample Day 3

Prepare Ch. 3

1. Re-mark highlighting
2. Make study sheets
3. Make word cards
4. Make questions cards

Review Ch. 2

1. Recite re-highlighted material, mark unknowns (recite main points)
2. Mark and recite study sheets
3. Recite word cards
4. Recite questions cards

Review Ch. 1

1. Make a list of information still not known from text or study sheets- recite
2. Recite cards still not known
3. Make self-tests questions

# It's possible to study for more than one final at a time!

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues
POLS Day 1	POLS Day 2	POLS Day 3	POLS Day 4	POLS Day 5	POLS EXAM				
	MATH Day 1	MATH Day 2	MATH Day 3	MATH Day 4		MATH Day 5a	MATH Day 5b	MATH EXAM	
			PSYC Day 1	PSYC Day 2	PSYC Day 3	PSYC Day 4	PSYC Day 5	PSYC EXAM	
CHEM Day 1		CHEM Day 2		CHEM Day 3	CHEM Day 4	CHEM Day 5	CHEM Day 6	CHEM Day 7	CHEM EXAM







# Using a Fixed Commitment Calendar

**Purpose:** Using a fixed commitment calendar helps account for *all* of your time, so you will be less likely to waste time. It shows you how you are using all 168 hours you get each week, and can train you to make the most of every block of time you have. Use a different color for each type of time use, such as green for exercise, red for class, etc. It's easier to see how much time you're devoting to each "chunk" this way. It can also be a little bit more fun to fill in this calendar using crayons (or markers or highlighters)!

1. Start by filling in all your *class* times, including labs. Also schedule a **preview time** (5-30 minutes) before each class whenever possible. At that time, review all or some of your notes in preparation for the upcoming lecture or discussion. If you have 2 or 3 classes in a row, preview from last to first class. Then schedule a **review time** after your classes (5-30 minutes) whenever possible. Use this time to edit and summarize your notes while they're still fresh. You can also use this time to look over any assignments that were given and begin to plan when and how you will do them. You can also write down any questions you have that you can ask the instructor.
2. If you have a job, add *work* responsibilities (shifts, staff meetings, training). Then add other regularly scheduled *commitments* (clubs, organizations, meetings, church, etc.).
3. *Add in your daily chores/normal routine* (shower/getting ready, meals; work out time, laundry, etc.). Make sure you are scheduling in realistic timeframes here; you don't need 90 minutes to make and eat every meal; maybe you would like to work out for 2 hours, but really can only fit in 45 minutes daily. Again, keep it realistic. Also keep in mind that you can multitask with some things: laundry and reading for example; take your textbook or blank notecards to the laundry room with you.
4. *Commit to study times*, keeping in mind that you want 2-3 hours of studying for every one hour of class time per week (i.e., a 3-hour class should have 6-9 hours of studying per week). Remember to try to keep your study blocks to no more than 2 hours at a time. Also remember that varying your study location is beneficial (go to the library, the MSC, an empty classroom, a lounge area). Try to get away from areas that will tempt you (your room), or distract you (roommates, or friends around). Schedule time each day for each class, even if some need more attention than others. Think in terms of "blocks of time" for specific tasks, not hours of studying.
5. *Schedule time for sleep*. A reasonable sleep schedule means don't sleep till 2 p.m. on the weekends if you are used to waking up by 7a.m. during the week. Allow yourself some weekend sleep-in, but keep a reasonable schedule. Don't sleep until noon on Saturday and then take a nap from 4-7 p.m. too. The point is to sleep as much as you need, not as much as you want. Also keep time open every day for physical activity! Research shows that regular exercise not only gives you a sense of well-being, it also reduces tension!
6. Make space for *downtime* and socializing. This is another area to be realistic about. Would it be nice to veg out and watch 3 hours of television in the middle of the week? Sure! Is it beneficial and helping you succeed academically? Probably not. Give yourself an hour or so of downtime each day, along with shorter time around your daily schedule to make phone calls to family and friends, send emails or texts. Multitasking is good here too. Eat with friends and have some social time while you get a meal in. Save your bigger blocks of downtime for the weekend, and use them as a reward for sticking to your class and study schedule during the week. Always keep in mind that the weekend should not be a blow-off time, or a total catch-up time. There are 7 days in the week—use them evenly and you'll have an easier time staying on top of your studies—and have time to have a life! Get the have-to done, so the want-to is guiltless fun.
7. *Bi-weekly & random commitments*: When you have appointments or meetings that only occur occasionally, add them to your schedule, but let them share time with other commitments. For example: you have a club meeting that meets every other week, schedule that in with a block of downtime or extra study time. That way the weeks you have your meeting, you attend that, the weeks you don't, you do the extra study or downtime (depending on what you have it scheduled with). Remember the goal of the commitment schedule is to account for all your time, so you're not tempted to waste time.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5:00 am							
5:30							
6:00 am							
6:30							
7:00 am							
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8:00 am							
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1:00 am							
2:00 am							
3:00 am							
4:00 am							

# Levels of Understanding

<h2>Remember</h2>			<h2>Analyze</h2>		
<i>Retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory</i>			<i>Separate a whole into parts and determine their relationship</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you recall...?</li> <li>• Where is...? Who is...?</li> <li>• Can you list four...?</li> <li>• How would you describe...?</li> <li>• How could you explain...?</li> <li>• Which of these is true...? false...?</li> </ul> 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you think...?</li> <li>• What is the relationship...?</li> <li>• Can you compare...? contrast...?</li> <li>• What idea is relevant to...?</li> <li>• How would you categorize...?</li> <li>• What can you infer...?</li> </ul> 		
Showing	Restating	Choosing	Classifying	Experimenting	Simplifying
Naming	Finding	Matching	Investigating	Dividing	Differentiating
Listing	Recognizing	Relating	Dissecting	Discovering	Researching
<h2>Understand</h2>			<h2>Evaluate</h2>		
<i>Construct meaning from instructional messages</i>			<i>Make judgments based on criteria and standards</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the main idea of...?</li> <li>• Can you find an example of...?</li> <li>• How would you summarize...?</li> <li>• What might happen next...?</li> <li>• How do you explain...?</li> <li>• What ideas or facts show...?</li> </ul> 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which is more important?</li> <li>• Is there a better solution to...?</li> <li>• Can you defend...?</li> <li>• What are the pros of...? cons...?</li> <li>• Why is ... of value?</li> <li>• How would you feel if...?</li> </ul> 		
Organizing	Paraphrasing	Reviewing	Validating	Justifying	Critiquing
Discussing	Extending	Inferring	Debating	Monitoring	Selecting
Interpreting	Outlining	Showing	Assessing	Prioritizing	Rating
<h2>Apply</h2>			<h2>Create</h2>		
<i>Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation</i>			<i>Combine elements or ideas to form a new whole</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would happen if...?</li> <li>• How could you clarify...?</li> <li>• Who do you think...?</li> <li>• Which approach would you...?</li> <li>• How would you use...?</li> <li>• What is a situation like...?</li> </ul> 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is an alternative...?</li> <li>• Could you invent...?</li> <li>• Can you compose a...?</li> <li>• What is your theory about...?</li> <li>• How can you imagine...?</li> <li>• What could you design to...?</li> </ul> 		
Practicing	Implementing	Interviewing	Building	Constructing	Changing
Choosing	Operating	Solving	Combining	Devising	Adapting
Planning	Developing	Generalizing	Formulating	Improving	Producing

## SQ4R Reading System (for traditional textbooks)

### **Survey** – *Overview of chapter*

1. Read learning objectives.
2. Read introductory paragraph.
3. Read chapter title, headings, and subheadings.
4. Look at charts, pictures, and graphs.
5. Read summary, “words to remember,” other help at end of chapter.
6. Read chapter questions.

### **Question** – *Purpose for reading*

1. Turn a heading or a subheading into a question by asking “who, what, when, where, why, or how.”
2. If no headings, turn a topic sentence into a question

### **Read** – *For comprehension*

1. Read one section actively to answer the questions asked.
2. Compare or contrast with earlier materials studied.
3. Answer to the question should be the main idea of paragraph or section—highlight it.
4. Locate details and underline in pencil.
5. Study tables, graphs, and charts for that section, relating them to the text reading.

### **Record** – *Brief notes of chapter*

1. Write a brief chapter outline, summary, or bullet points of the information **in your own words**.
2. Make 3x5 note cards for vocabulary.

### **Recite** – *For understanding*

1. Read aloud highlighted answer to question asked or summary/points from record step.
2. State answer aloud from memory.
3. To understand—talk aloud to yourself about what is highlighted/underlined or written down.

### **Review** – *For retention*

1. Answer text questions.
2. Study highlighted and annotated information from text.
3. Use helpful memory cues.
4. Review vocabulary note cards.
5. Compare text notes to lecture notes.
6. Repeat this review weekly.

## P2R Reading System (non-traditional textbooks)

- PREVIEW:** Begin by reading the introduction or, if there is none, the first couple of paragraphs. Next, page through the book and read the headings. Glance at any charts, graphs, diagrams, or pictures. Finally, read the last paragraph or two. The goal of this step is to get an overview of the material and develop a sense of progression of ideas.
- READ:** Now mark ten pages of reading and read the material, taking notes or highlighting important information. The number of pages you read can be adapted to the particular book you are reading.
- REVIEW:** After reading ten pages, review the information. You can do this in a number of ways: 1.) summarize, in your own words, the author's main points; 2.) write down three or four sentences summarizing what you've read; 3.) close the book and recite the key information under each heading; 3.) quiz yourself on questions or problems at the end of the chapter; 5.) create questions you may see on the exam about this material and answer them.

## S-RUN-R Reading System (problems based classes)

- SURVEY:** First, survey the chapter. Read the title and the introduction, as well as all headings, charts, diagrams, and graphs.
- READ:** Now read the section.
- UNDERLINE:** Underline the material that explains the section's heading.
- NOTETAKING:** After completing the previous steps, take notes on the material. Summarize the main points of the section.
- REVIEW:** Review the material to reinforce your learning.

Adapted from: VanBlerkom, D.L. (1994). *College study skills: becoming a strategic learner*.



## Post-Test Analysis

*You can help yourself perform better on tests by analyzing your strengths and weaknesses as a test-taker. Using the form in this packet, follow the directions below. This process should help you determine how you can improve in the way you prepare for and take tests.*

### Directions

- Complete the top portion of the form on the back of this page. Be as specific and honest as possible in describing the way you studied (or didn't study).
- Under "Questions missed," write in the number of the actual test questions that were incorrect on your test. If you missed questions 5, 8, 13, and 29, those are the numbers you should write in that column.
- Now, go across the rows of the chart. For example, if you got #5 wrong, determine:
  - How many points were taken off?
  - What kind of question or problem was it?
  - What do you think was the reason you got it wrong?
- Look for patterns. Ask yourself:
  - What kinds of questions did I have the most difficulty with?
  - Which questions were worth the most points?
  - What can I do to improve on my next test?
  - How can I make sure I get more of the high-value questions right next time?
- Ask yourself what you still don't understand about the test or test question(s) that you answered incorrectly.
  - Did you have difficulty understanding the instructor's comments?
  - Write down any questions you need to ask your instructor.
  - If you have questions for the professor, or want to clarify how you can improve on your next test, make an appointment to discuss these issues (don't mob the prof at the end of class).
- Make a list of the things you need to do to be more successful in your next test. Ask questions such as:
  - How can I make sure I understand the material?
  - Do I need to manage my time better so I can spend more time preparing?
  - How can I figure out what is important to study?
  - How can I self-test before the real test to see how well I know it?
  - What strategies should I use while taking the test?
- Look at tests from other courses and see if there is a pattern. What can you learn from your successes and failures?
- If you see that you have difficulty with a particular kind of test question, such as essay questions, or you want to learn more about test taking strategies, enroll in a study skills course or seek assistance from Student Counseling Services or your Academic Coach.

