



INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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12 WAYS TO MAKE SURE YOU FLUNK THIS CLASS

Sometimes, some students do not get the message that college is not a “give me.” They may think that since they paid for it (or someone else paid for them) that they are entitled to a grade, and a good grade, at that. It does not hurt to remind them—in writing—of some behaviors that negatively affect their potential for success.

Some educators may argue that we should “accentuate the positive.” Sometimes it is worthwhile to concentrate on “eliminating the negative.” Here, then, are some suggestions for students.

1. Don't study the text, lecture material, or additional assigned recommended reading. Reading once or twice the night before the exam “doesn't cut it.”
2. Don't observe due dates. Late work, no matter what the excuse, is usually downgraded or not accepted.
3. Urge the instructor to “cut you some slack” or “give you a break.” If he or she did that for someone else and not you, what would your reaction be?
4. Do not attend class. While you may think class is boring, the teacher might just provide some insights that will help you better understand the content of the course.
5. Come to class late. If you really want to get on the wrong side of the instructor, just make this a habit.
6. Play with your cell phone, iPod, or other electronic device in class. Unless you have child-care problems or are a first-responder, these actions tell the instructor that something else is more important than what is being taught.
7. Copy stuff from Wikipedia, a Google search, or someone else's work without proper citations. Teachers usually can identify plagiarism and material that is not yours.
8. Sleep in class. We know that school interferes with your social life, but do not make it so obvious!
9. Try to con. Telling an instructor that this is the last course you need to graduate or transfer when it is *not*, will not earn you any leniency.
10. Tell the teacher that this class is the only one with which you are struggling and you have “A's and B's” in all other classes. Don't give the impression that your other teachers are too easy.
11. Tell the teacher that you must have a good grade or you will lose your eligibility for sports, scholarship, or grant; or be on academic probation.
12. Don't really, really try to learn.

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A STUDENT-CENTERED COLLEGE

Walk on to any community college campus, and the level of emphasis on student accommodation and success is palpable. As an employee of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and a student in the Community College Leadership Program (CCLP), I have had the opportunity to visit a number of community colleges around the country. Some college facilities are impressive, with beautiful landscapes, waterfalls, and sculptures. However, it is evident that, for some colleges, the most important elements are the student populations that they serve.

A recent visit to a community college included a tour by the college president. As the president showed us facility after facility, we occasionally stopped in a hallway to admire a piece of art or discuss specifics of a certain classroom. If students walked along the hall we were blocking, the president made it a point to ask us to make way for them. This sent a strong message to our visiting group; students are a major priority, and that message is driven home by the actions from the college leader. If the college president's actions made such a significant impact on this visiting group, what impact do these actions have on students?

A visit to another student-centered college included a campus tour, conducted by the Executive Assistant to the President. Every stop included student voices.

We were able to see the college from the students' eyes. Programs highlighted during the tour were described by groups of students. A group talked about satisfaction with facilities; another joined us for lunch and described how proud they are of their college and themselves for all their accomplishments. Similarly, faculty and staff encountered during the tour spoke positively when describing their students as "brave and inspiring." This college's emphasis on students made a lasting impression on these visitors.

The climate and culture of a college can be assessed by visiting a college campus and walking the grounds. Are college leaders visible, and how do they interact with students? What do students, faculty, and staff say about students and the college as a whole? It is easy to become comfortable with a routine and lose sight of the college's mission, vision, and values as they affect students. An outsider's perspective might shed some light on climate and culture. How would an outsider view your college?

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MONDAY, MAY 25
Wright Lassiter
Chancellor, Dallas County
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2009 Suanne Davis Roueche
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TUESDAY, MAY 26
Samuel Cargile
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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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