



Academic Success

Because so much of a student's first year is adjusting to life away from home and making connections on campus, it's often in their second year when they start really focusing on their academics. If a student came into college without a major, it's during this year that they decide on what they will pursue. It's also the year when some of their classes may begin to be more directly related to their major and can become more advanced.

It's important that your student starts taking advantage of all the academic resources on campus and starts taking ownership over their academic success. One great way to do this is by connecting with their professors. The students who get to know their professors by asking questions in class or by going to their office hours will often be more successful. It's important that your student starts to think about how they can utilize this expertise in their area of interest and build relationships that could land them a great recommendation in the future.

It's also important that your student is meeting with their academic advisor to ensure you're staying on track to fulfill your degree requirements. Some scholarships (not UT Promise) can be affected if the student is not enrolled in courses that align with their program of study. It's vital that they meet at least once a semester with their advisor. They can also make sure courses they've taken previously will count toward their degree, especially if they've changed majors.

We encourage you to ask your student some of the following questions to get them considering their academic success:

What are your favorite classes from this past semester? Which classes are you looking forward to next year?

- How are you getting to know your professors?
- Who is your favorite professor and why?
- How are you utilizing your professors as a resource to you for your career?
- How often do you meet with your academic advisor?
- When's the last time you met with your advisor?
- What other resources on campus are you utilizing for your academic success, like the writing center or tutoring?

For further discussion, you and your student can check out the articles below on other tips for academic success. You can also do your own research together on the importance of academic success and communicating with professors, department heads, and deans. Ask your student if there is anything they want to work on or grow in and find out how they plan to do that over the coming months.



Our campuses have many resources available to assist our students with academic success. Check out the links below for more information on the following categories:

- [Communicating with Instructors](#)
- [Note-taking and Participating in Class](#)
- [Critical Thinking](#)
- [Preparing for Exams](#)
- [Reading Tips](#)
- [Test Anxiety](#)
- [Tips for Before, During and After the Test](#)

Other Tips for Communicating with Instructors

Talking to Your Professor:

- Address instructors by their proper title.
- Talk to your instructor at the beginning of the semester to establish a rapport.
- Be respectful of your instructor's time—utilize office hours or schedule appointments.
- Be prepared with specific questions or discussion topics when meeting with your instructor.
- Illustrate your own interest in the course and your desire to do well.

E-mailing Your Professor:

- Use your UT e-mail address.
- Put your course and section number in the subject line.
- Know your instructor's preferences and policies regarding e-mail.
- Format your e-mail properly.
- Be clear and specific.
- Don't e-mail in anger.
- Use proper language and punctuation.
- When in doubt, use formal language.
- Be sure that your instructor is the best person to ask before e-mailing.



Goal Setting

Now that you and your mentee have broken the ice, it's now time to dig deeper and discuss your student's goals for the semester, year, and beyond. It is important that students begin thinking about what they want out of their college experience and how they are going to achieve that.

Figure out what goals you and your mentee have. Can you help them develop skills and learn from your expertise?

Check out the video below to learn how to set SMART goals.

[Setting SMART Goals - How To Properly Set a Goal \(animated\)](#)





Strengths and Personality

Our strengths, passions, and personality can be telling in what is the best career path for us. Further, understanding our strengths and personality types helps us to know how to improve our communication and relationships with others, as well as help us understand our weaknesses and areas for improvement. At this point in a student's collegiate journey, they may be beginning to consider what they want to do after college (you'll talk about this next month!) and learning more about themselves is a great place to start!

This semester is a great time to start discussing what they are passionate about, what they are skilled at, what their strengths are, and what they need to work on so they can set themselves up for success for the remainder of college and beyond. As a mentor with potential experience in self-development, you can encourage your mentee in this area and provide them with useful tips.

To begin the conversation about strengths and personality types, you can ask your mentee some of the following questions:

- What personality tests have you taken?
- How can personality tests assist you in both your career and personal life?
- What are the benefits of learning more about yourself?
- How can you utilize knowledge of yourself when applying to jobs and dealing with conflict?
- When was the last time you took a personality test? Should you take one again? Have you ever discussed your results with someone?
- How does what you've learned about yourself contribute to your leadership style?
- How can resources on campus, such as the Career Center, help you explore your strengths and learn how to best utilize them in your career?

We encourage students to consider taking multiple assessments and reviewing their results. You can do this too! Then you can discuss what you both learned and how to best utilize your strengths and personality types to your advantage. A great place to start is researching [Clifton Strengths](#), [Myers-Briggs](#), and the [Enneagram](#), and maybe even taking the assessment. Some of our campuses also offer skills assessments through their Career Center. Encourage your student to do some research and outreach of their own in this area.



Study Skills

If students struggled last semester to study effectively, now is the time to discuss opportunities for growth in this area. Depending on when you are meeting, finals may be quickly approaching, and students can make choices that will help them succeed as the semester ends.

Help your students begin thinking about this by asking some of the following questions:

- What tools do you use to study?
- How many hours per week do you spend studying?
- How would you rate your study habits on a scale of 1 to 10?
- What area do you need improvement in when it comes to studying?
- How often do you utilize your professors for help?
- How does your schedule (both academic, social, personal) affect your study habits?
- How does your study style differ from class to class?
- Which class do you know you will need to prioritize studying this semester? How do you plan to do that?

You can also check out these articles for more tips on how students can improve their study skills.

[Study Smarter, Not Harder](#)

Now would also be a great time to discuss how you and your mentee would like to stay in touch over the coming months. Would you like to continue meeting or communicating over the summer? How often do you plan to touch base? What support does the student need over the summer? If you haven't already, now would be a good time to exchange personal contact information for easier communication.

Make sure you tell your student how much this experience has meant to you this year and how much you have enjoyed getting to know them thus far. Now is the time to show how proud you are of their accomplishments and to celebrate them finishing their first year! That is no small feat, and you played a large role in that. Make sure you celebrate this joint accomplishment together!



Time Management

At this point in a student's collegiate journey, they have probably begun to see both positive and negative patterns in the way they manage their time and the demands of college. This semester is a great time to start discussing how to overcome some of their time management challenges so they can set themselves up for success for the remainder of college. As a mentor with many demands yourself, you can encourage your mentees in this area and provide them with useful tips.

To begin the conversation about time management, you can ask your mentee some of the following questions:

- What kind of planning system do you use?
- Do you have a hard time managing your schedule?
- What activities do you need or want to prioritize?
- How many hours of sleep do you get? How could you get more?
- How often do you exercise? Do you feel better when you prioritize your health?
- As a freshman, what do you expect to be different and/or more difficult this semester than your previous semester?
- What were challenges you encountered last semester that you can improve on this semester?
- Have you utilized any resources that can help you with time management? Are you aware of offices or resources on campus that can help you with this?
- Create a list of your top priorities. Map out everything you do for a week and see where there is time you could use better!
- How often do you set goals? What are your yearly, semesterly, monthly, weekly, and daily goals?

These questions should help get your student thinking about how to be proactive in their collegiate journey. Students can take ownership over their college experience and make deliberate choices to make it what they want it to be. Encourage them to start thinking about what they want and how to get there. Let them know you are always there to help guide them, provide advice, and support them as they develop these skills that will last well beyond college.



Visit the [UT Promise website](#) for more mentor resources. To stay up to date on important deadlines for UT Promise students, click [here](#).