

Time Management: Organization for the College Experience and Beyond

By: Kyle Fischer

As a busy college student juggling activities, school, and work, time management is a crucial part of life.

Normally, I generate a list of things to do for each class. But as the semester comes to an end, and assignments and activities pile on, the list grows, along with my stress. I need a better way to manage my time.

Therefore, I visited Lauren Fiori, assistant director for the Office of Student Success, and she gave me a calendar to schedule every block of time in every day for a week with her advice.

“You have to schedule out the week with each class, food, exercise, breaks, sleep, and activities,” she said.

To do this, we planned the week by color coding each class and activity. The method was old school—paper and markers. Each class and the work for that class was assigned a different color. Clubs had their own color, too. The rest of the calendar includes free time for food, exercise, breaks, and sleep. With Fiori’s help, I scheduled about 23 hours of work from Monday to Sunday the week of March 20.

The first day I tried to implement the schedule and get used to it. It did not work out well, because I tend to work ahead due to not knowing when to end at an appropriate time.

On Wednesday I had to add a scheduled conference with a professor. On Thursday I had to pick up my cap and gown for graduation which required some adjustment to how much time

to spend with classwork scheduled for that time. On Friday, I went to a conference with my advisor, so I had to squeeze that in, too.

The biggest problem with such a detailed schedule is that I had trouble staying in the blocks of time. If I kept working beyond the allotted time for a subject, it threw off my schedule. It also was not flexible.

Feeling like the schedule did not work out for me, I went to the Office of Student Disability Services and talked to Patricia Gregg, the Disabilities Support Specialist. Gregg said she manages her time with a calendar that includes appointments, Post-It notes that she can see, and a Google Document.

Like Gregg, Samantha Byron, '17, uses multiple tools to manage her time. Her system includes a small planner, a desk calendar, and a notebook.

“I use a combination of a desk calendar, a small planner that I carry with me throughout the day along with just a normal notebook that I use to jot down things that I need to remember,” Byron said.

“Different things work for different people,” Gregg said, adding that some may not like the color coding calendar and other people live by it.

Gregg suggests with students who meet with her an application called My Study Life, which can be downloaded on a phone or a computer.

“My Study Life is like a reminder app,” she said, urging me to give it a try.

If anybody needs an all-in-one application to manage his time, it is Kyle Chalmers '17. Chalmers has two majors, a minor, is in Delta Sigma Pi, and is a Hawk Host Tour Captain. He

also plays tennis as a Division I athlete which adds to his demanding schedule. In the past, Chalmers was an Orientation Leader, a Resident Assistant, and an Ignite Retreat Leader.

Chalmers said he manages his time with very precise scheduling and discipline. He stores all his reminders digitally and does not write anything down.

“I use the Calendar application on my phone to schedule everything and set reminders for when I have class, athletics, meetings, and time to do work,” he said. “I get a little notification on my phone 15 minutes before something is happening.”

Chalmers mentioned that he likes the digital way since he does not have to constantly check a notebook. Instead, his phone vibrates or sounds off so he knows about events.

“I like using digital calendars better as opposed to handwritten calendars because they will give me a notification before something is happening so I don’t have to always pull out and check the handbook or something,” Chalmers said.

Meanwhile, Brida manages her time with a handwritten planner. She did not mention any use of technology for her scheduling.

“I use a planner, and write down classes for each day,” she said.

In other words, she does it the old-fashioned the way, which reminded me that I am an old-fashioned planner. I do not need an electronic calendar or a fancy application—I just need to find something that works for me. I am still searching—when I have time.

Sources:

Lauren Fiori, MA, Assistant Director for Student Success

Patricia Gregg, Disabilities Support Specialist

Kyle Chalmers '17

Samantha Byron, '17

Rachel Brida, '16