

## Tips from PFLs for PFLs

The President's Focused Learner Program asked PFL students to share what makes them successful at KSU. The following list was created by PFLs for PFLs and includes success tips as well as recommended professors.

### Success Tips:

"Some things that I would I recommend are getting to know your professors and taking advantage of any opportunities the professor may present for extra credit or learning opportunities. "

"Get a good schedule going to get your schoolwork done on time every week. Structure creates routine, and routine makes everything easier."

"Making a list of all the assignments and tasks you have to do helps you organize your work. I also found it easier to focus in the library than in my room."

"Two factors led to my success this past semester and those include time management and guidance. Prior to the beginning of the semester, I sat down with my parents and formulated a plan that we felt would work best with my schedule as far as how many courses were needed and what classes I would need. Next came the selection of the specific courses once into OwlExpress and this is when research became highly crucial. I recommend that everyone do their research when having a variety of professors to choose from because this element can make or break your experience in a course."

"What helped me throughout the semester is writing down my notes in with a pencil/ pen. One of my professors from my social problems is anti-technology, as he would say. So that helped because writing instead of typing helped me remember more of the content. Also, making sure I go to every class and keep my attendance good. I also invested in an iPad which made my organizing skills much better!"

"Planning my week out in a planner that I would write in, like what homework I would do on this certain day, really helped. I took advantage of office hours when I felt I needed to...Overall, I recommend a planner, setting reminders, and allowing yourself away time from the studying that way your brain isn't overwhelmed."

"Things that helped me is taking time every day to study and go over work so that I wasn't stressed out when tests or assignments came up. I also went to my teacher's office hours quite often to make sure I was understanding assignments and especially in Chemistry to make sure I was understanding everything to the fullest."

“My best advice to fellow students would be to always stay focused and have a well-structured schedule to work around to get things done and prevent procrastination.”

“I would say reaching out to professors and making a schedule for my homework and studying definitely helped me to raise my GPA.”

“The best tip I'd have for anybody is to pace yourself. Know exactly how many classes you want to take at a time and structure your schedule to where you're confident in being able to show up for each class at those specific times. I'd also say that checking up on your mental health is another big step as well. Mental health also doesn't have to be this perfect one-track thing where you fix the problems easily. I found that improving bit by bit each day and being more proactive is what helped me most. You don't necessarily need a therapist, but I would recommend one and always be sure to give yourself positive affirmations and reinforcement. Finally, know that it's completely fine to ask for help from fellow classmates or the professor themselves and it could also never hurt to help other people as well.”

“The best thing for me was scheduling and not procrastinating. I use homework apps (MyHomework Student Planner for Android) so I always know what's due and when, which allows me to properly plan when I should have stuff done by.”

“I would say staying organized throughout my classes, and making sure all my assignments were done and up to date. In addition, I would say that we all shouldn't stress. Taking it a day at a time really helped to improve myself most importantly for the better.”

“Some advice I have for others is to set yourself up for success always! I set aside 3-4 days where I solely focus on schoolwork and the other days I go to work at my job or hang out with friends. Setting aside this time has made school very stress free for me! Also, do not be afraid to ask questions to your professors! That's what they are there for! Some things I would not recommend are constantly pushing your assignments aside because you want to go do other things like shopping or go to parties. While you should have fun in college, you need to find a balance!”

“The SMART center was an amazing help for me in math. A woman there named Sarah (I don't know her last name) was able to help me out with my algebra homework and class. My teacher had a very thick accent I couldn't understand and due to that I didn't learn in the course. So, I used the website Aleks to help me learn all the material I needed to know, and Sarah was an amazing help. I would not have passed that class without her.”

“Honestly, I never expected to make it this far. I never gave up due to the fact that I've failed before and I just kept on going. What really worked for me was my time management and avoiding distractions. I did enjoy my professors; they actually helped me when needed and they did their best to make sure I succeeded.”

“Get your work turned in on time, even if you aren't great at the subject. A grade of C or a low B, is far preferable than a 0. Just get the work done.”

“The pulse app was invaluable as both a tool and a remind system. I can't recommend people check it out enough. It saved me many times when I forgot about assignments completely.”

“Always do extra credit. It seems easy not to do it because you're not punished for ignoring it but it can save your skin. No matter how good of a student you are, you will mess up and that extra credit can be the difference between passing and failing.”

“Most teachers don't mind answering stupid questions. If you don't understand something just grit your teeth and deal with the embarrassment. It is way better than having your GPA take a hit. Even for the most minor questions if you genuinely can't find an answer ask your teacher. “

“When studying for classes, I relied on the practice my teachers would offer. For example, with calculus and chemistry both teachers offered study guides before unit tests which helped a lot for studying. Both teachers also would also allow for handicaps on unit tests like cheat sheets or having formulas up to make tests easier... So, I would say my success came from my great teachers.”

“My best advice would be to make sure you're in class. If you're in class and ever need anything your professors have a face to your name and sometimes will be a little more lenient and help you out when needed. Know what assignments you have coming up and make sure you get it done!!”

“I'd say mainly, never take your strengths for granted or dwell too long on your weaknesses. Many times, we can be caught up in college and striving for that 4.0 or whatever the achievement may be. Regardless, at the bottom line it's always important to do your best. Remember that even if you may not have hit that achievement this year, life will always go on and you'll get more chances to shine. Truthfully, none of us know what we're truly capable of until the chance to arises so keep striving, keep believing and prospering. I believe in you no matter what :)”

“My main tip is that time management is really the most important thing. Show up to your classes, mark time on your calendar for studying and working on projects. And pay attention to your energy levels and what makes you gain/lose energy, because it doesn't matter if you have time if you don't have the energy to be productive during it “

“I started taking my organization and planner seriously during the spring semester and I noticed that I was constantly on top of my assignments, and I found that I was significantly less stressed about deadlines. I used a regular monthly planner and wrote down any deadlines and events and I loved it! I tried digital planners as well, but I found those less effective than the notebook planners but that's just my personal preference. I would suggest trying out both and picking whichever works best for you.”

“ I suggest making use of all the resources that professors provide as well as blocking out time to learn the material (not just doing the classwork).”

“If I were to share anything, it'd be to trust yourself and to remember what we are here for in order to continue forward to our college degrees. I have my goals so we must do our best to achieve success.”

“I recommend forming relationships with your professors and taking full advantage of office hours. I also recommend using any and every resource that helps make learning material easier.”

“The main thing that I would share with people and what really worked for me is putting my assignments on a spreadsheet and putting the due dates and a check mark box and color coding them to what classes they belong too and then setting the spread sheet up to sort the assignments by due date.”

“One tip especially for students with art majors is to plan a schedule ahead of time for working on schoolwork, projects or just studying.”

“I felt that this semester was very much a matter of me thinking hard rather than studying more. I did a lot of brainstorming and thinking out loud applying what I was learning rather than simply retaining knowledge. I think getting to this final stretch I see that so much more often and it empowers me in every way.”

“A tip I would share is, to not over study too much, it's ok to take a break.”

“One thing that helped me was I had sticky notes on the wall above my desk with the work that was due for the week. Once I completed something, I'd check it off the list. It helped me stay on top of my work.”

“I think for this semester what really helped was having some classes online and some in-person. Having that balance was incredibly beneficial to ending this semester well. I had a pretty set schedule but also a good amount of free time that allowed me to take a break when needed.”

“This semester was filled with focus, communicating with professors, and learning new things. I mainly had essays and readings, but it really came down to time management and learning to focus on 50-100 pages for an assignment.”

“The tip that I would like to share with other PFL students is that you will have to sacrifice something to achieve your goals. This may sound controversial, but this has worked for me. For me personally, at times you can't have any breaks. I personally never take breaks; I work until the work is fully completed. At times, I have to disconnect from others just to focus on my goals in school and what I want to do with my career as my fate. It is up to the

individual to manage their goals and success. One more thing that I can also advise on is time management. I sometimes struggle with it, so it is something that I must work on, and I can advise others to do the same. One quote I keep in mind is "There is no fate but what we make." "

"I really made sure I stayed on top of all my work completing it two days before the due date. I also made tons of Quizlet's to study for exams."

"Here are some of my tips:

- Quizlet- I used Quizlet religiously. Pro tip: When making your quizlet for your exam, add some quiz questions to your quizlet, add some quiz questions in the same format because you might see them on it, and when creating your quizlet, add the keywords. Some things I used for Quizlet:
  - Quizlet learn (I had the questions as multiple choices in the exam) (so I turned off the written option)
  - Quizlet match:- To know if I knew the definitions and terms correctly.
  - Test: I include all the terms and set the test in what format I was given, whether as the answer or term as the answer. (Give yourself like 30 mins ) to focus and answer the questions. Do the test session the night before or the day of the test (if you do not have an 8 am test).
- Study with a Friend or friends (in the same class as you)- Studying with other people helped me tremendously by keeping me focused and not distracted, especially in Biocalculus. We could find time, whether it was for an hour or just 20 minutes.
- Stay on top of Assignments- You might think that one assignment or two missed or not completed is nothing but during the final weeks, those assignments can push your grade from a B to an A or from a C to a B.
- When you are studying for a math class- Practice, Practice, and Practice. If you are using Aleks, if I remember distinctly, as a way to practice another question, use it religiously so that you can be able to do it. Even if you are woken up to do a problem, you can do it.
- Practice quizzes- Do the practice quizzes multiple times before you have a quiz or even when you have an exam. It will be very beneficial for you.
- Find your study time and style- Before you find your studying time, you must first determine if you are morning person or a night owl. For me, I am a morning person, whether it is an exam period or quizzes, I sleep around 10pm and wake up by 3am or 4 am at the latest to study until I need to start getting ready for the day. I am still able to be 90 percent active the rest of the day. My friend however is a night owl, she is able to

pull an all-nighter but once it is 6 am, she has to go to sleep in order for her to function for the remember part of the day. There are different study styles like passive learning, blurting method, summarization and so much more. And it is up to each one to know what type works for them. For me, it is repetition especially with concepts, recently I have been creating Quizlets so that I can be able to study on my device anytime and anywhere.

- *Find a teacher whose teaching style is similar to your learning style.* ”

### **Recommend Professors:**

“I highly recommend M. Livingston for British Literature. Her class was very fun and interesting, and she's one of the sweetest professors I've had in my three years here at KSU. Also if anyone is interested in learning Japanese, I highly recommend Hashimoto Sensei. She is super fun and nice, and her class was the one class I ALWAYS looked forward to attending every week.”

“Professors that I recommend based on my experience are: John Bradbury (ECON 1000), Joseph Reidy (HIST 1111), Luciane Rocha (AADS 1102), Muna Elhassey (BIOL 2221) and Mia Oberlton (HPE 3250)”

“As a human services major, I enjoyed Dr. Hans Skott-Myhre's class and lectures. He is a professor that shows he cares about what he teaches.”

“I liked my Health/Welfare professor Shannon Troccoli and my U.S. History professor, Joseph Moore.”

“My favorite professor was Mandy McGrew (American Identities). She was extremely helpful and available throughout the entire semester. My highest grade was in her class.”

“My favorite teacher has to be Dr. Sumner (chemistry)! He is very diligent in explaining things and was always open to answering or explaining anything and everything a student would need.”

“I recommend the following professors:

- Sandy Chandler for MATH 1111. Professor Chandler is flexible and helps you with your ALEKS work.
- Mike Martinez for POLS 1111. Professor Martinez is very passionate about government and goes deep in his lectures but does open notes for exams.
- Kristin Rajan for ENGL 2110. Professor Rajan made an effort to learn our names. You will have to interact in class.

- Tyler Graham for POLS 1101. Tyler is very laid back. You'll do acting exercises in groups and learn about culture and theatre."

"A reason I did well was my English teacher, Alfred Carson. He is an amazing teacher and just a good person and I looked forward to his class."

"With calculus and chemistry both teachers offered study guides before unit tests which helped a lot for studying. Both teachers also would also allow for handicaps on unit tests like cheat sheets or having formulas up to make tests easier. Even with my other subjects my teachers were amazing. I would recommend every teacher on my schedule to other PFL members:

- CHEM 1211- Yvonne Single
- CHEM 1211L- Anthony Rojas
- ENGL 1102- Brandi Bradley
- MATH 1190- Neda Yazdianpour
- POLS 1101- David Shock"

"I really enjoyed Professor Holly Deal, and Dr. Wendy Sanchez."

"Justin Downey was a good philosophy teacher, very unorthodox but I think a good introduction to how the world really works, which is good for a college student."

"I loved Professor Burnham's Quantitative Reasoning course. His class was perfectly paced, and he would provide a lot of helpful resources such as completed notes and weekly update videos. It was a perfect class and was very enjoyable as someone who doesn't particularly love math!"

"Some professors I enjoyed this semester were Bridgette Pricket for Quantitative Reasoning, Chris Prince for English Composition I, and Rebecca Brown for 2-D Design and Color Theory as they were all delightful, created a positive environment in the classroom, and were very helpful."

"I really enjoyed Professor Gregory Quinet and Professor Bruce Bryant this semester. They were so supportive and kind to me in every aspect from a personal standpoint to academically and professionally. They encouraged me to think outside the box and work hard."

"I very much liked my Operating Systems professor, Patrick Bobbie, and my Real Analysis lecturer, Henry Riely. Bobbie's lecturing style might not be for everyone, but it worked well for me, he spoke in analogies (some might even say riddles) to keep students engaged and had a quick wit and a constant smile. He really cares about his students, he got to know everyone by name within the first few days and would always notice when someone was

missing from class and check if they were alright. Meanwhile Riely was an excellent math lecturer who was very focused on building his students' understanding. He refrained from giving us the answers to questions but rather guided the classroom on the process to "discover" it for ourselves, and had an excellent strategy of asking students what to do next, and then going along with it even if it was incorrect to see where the problem was. I would strongly recommend these two professors to any Computer Science or Math majors."

"Professor Darin Morrow for my Software Acquisition and Project Management course was truly someone that I will remember going into my career and hope to take for any other courses possible!"

"A professor I would recommend is Max Crocker. He was my SCI 1102 professor, and it was the easiest class I've had in my year and a half here."

"I enjoyed having Professor Madison teach Topics in Media, where we learned about creating and promoting your brand. She also does freelance work on the side, so I was able to get advice from her since I would like to do it for a living."

"One professor that stood out to me and I enjoyed their class was Professor Vahal. I would recommend her to anyone taking English 1101. When giving assignments we were given the creative freedom to choose whatever media we wanted, and I believe that really made the class play to their strengths and achieve the best grade possible."

Want to add to the list? Email your advice and  
recommendations to Ellie Thomson at  
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I look forward to hearing from you!