



## The Importance of Getting to Know Your Professors

Your professors are more than lecturers and researchers; they have real life experiences to share. Actually, your professors can be your biggest partner. He/She can help you succeed academically and prepare for your future. Studies have shown that students who make an effort to get to know their professors outside of the classroom setting, are more likely to succeed in college. Here are some reasons why you should form relationships with your professors:

- ✓ When you get to know them, professors are really fascinating people.
- ✓ When you create a good impression, your professor is more likely to help you with a question or later request.
- ✓ Professors can help answer your questions for up and coming exams.
- ✓ Professors can clarify points from their lectures and class discussions.
- ✓ Professors can offer career advice.
- ✓ Professors can write letters of recommendations for jobs, internships or graduate school.
- ✓ Professors can suggest professional or academic clubs or organizations to consider joining.
- ✓ Professors can serve as mentors, or help you locate someone else who could be.
- ✓ Professors can serve as a source for an on-campus job, summer internship or co-op, or research opportunity.



### Tips for Forming Good Relationships with Professors

Professors want their students to succeed, but they can only help you if YOU take the first step. Here are some tips to help you make that first step and to develop a good relationship with your professors:

- ✓ **Be sure to introduce yourself to your professor at the end of your first class**
- ✓ **Be sure to use the title the professor prefers:** Does he/she like to be called by their first name? Is it “Professor” Smith or “Dr.” Jones?
- ✓ **Drop by his/her office during posted office hours;** send an email; say hello when you see him/her walking across campus.
- ✓ **Invite him/her to have lunch with you in the University Center.**
- ✓ **GO TO CLASS** – Regular class attendance is important not only for good relations with your professors, but also for ensuring that you don’t miss anything.
- ✓ **DON’T BE LATE!!** Professors usually use the first few minutes of class to make vital announcements about upcoming tests, due dates for assignments, etc.
- ✓ **If emergencies arise, that cause you to miss class, be sure to get notes from a classmate whose work you respect.** At the next class meeting after your absence, tell the professor you’ve gotten the notes, but you want to double-check to make sure you didn’t miss any announcements regarding upcoming tests and assignments.
- ✓ **Sit toward the FRONT of the class and act like you are paying attention.** There is a strange, but definite, relationship between your distance from the professor and your distance from an “A” letter grade.
- ✓ **Always bring your notebook, textbooks and other needed supplies to class.** This communicates preparedness and interest, even if neither of these qualities applies to you.
- ✓ **Be courteous in class.** However, being courteous doesn’t mean you have to agree with everything that the professor says. When asking questions, don’t be hostile or demanding and don’t back the professor in a corner. When you disagree or don’t understand a point, be positive. Begin your question with leads like, “Could you clarify the relationship between . . . ?”; “Could you explain . . . ?” Avoid negative leads like “I don’t see how. . .”; “Don’t you think . . . ?”
- ✓ **GET ASSIGNMENTS IN ON TIME!!** Earthquake, fire, flood, catastrophic illness and death are the only excuses for turning assignments in late. There is a definite relationship between students who do poorly on tests, receive low final grades, or fail courses and those who turn assignments in late.
- ✓ When making an appointment for an office visit with your professor, here are a few things to do before you go:
  - **Preview your text or readings** to familiarize yourself with topics for the course or next class discussion.
  - **Review your notes and identify the areas that you’re struggling with or issues that you don’t understand.**
  - **Write down a few questions about the course,** effective ways to study course material, and possible topics for papers or projects.
  - **Locate your professor’s office ahead of time so that you won’t be late for your appointments.** (See the Clayton State Personnel and Student Directory on DUCK at <http://academicinfo.clayton.edu/directory> )
  - **Be sure to address your professor by his/her proper title (Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.) and know how to pronounce his/her name.**



## Contacting Your Instructors

Here is a table that you can use to log your professors' office hours and contact information. Keep this handy so that you can effectively make arrangements to meet with your professor regarding coursework and other forms of assistance that you may need.

Course	Instructor	E-mail	Phone	Office Location	Office Hours

### Information Adapted From

Iowa State University's, Department of Public Safety's, Get a Grip University, [Knowing Your Professors:](http://dps.iastate.edu/getagrip/college/topics/professors.php)  
<http://dps.iastate.edu/getagrip/college/topics/professors.php>

Salt Lake Community College Academic and Career Advisement, [Getting to Know Your Instructor:](http://www.slcc.edu/pages/2735.asp)  
<http://www.slcc.edu/pages/2735.asp>

Texas A&M University Student Counseling Service, [How to Get Along with Your College Professor:](http://scs.tamu.edu/selfhelp/library/professor.asp)  
<http://scs.tamu.edu/selfhelp/library/professor.asp>

University of South Carolina Office of Housing and Residential Services, [Getting to Know Professors:](http://www.housing.sc.edu/pdf/academicinitiatives/GTKYP/Gettoknowprofessorspresentation.pdf)  
<http://www.housing.sc.edu/pdf/academicinitiatives/GTKYP/Gettoknowprofessorspresentation.pdf>

Prepared By:



**Center for Academic Success**  
**Library Building (Lower Level)**  
**Library (Lower Level)**  
**Phone: (678) 466-4070**  
**Dr. Mark Daddona, Director**