Howdy, Ags!

I hope everyone’s semester is off to a wonderful start, and I wish you the best of luck on your exams! October is going to be a very exciting month for RSO. Our general meeting is on October 14th at 8:30 p.m. This general meeting is also the deadline for applications and membership dues ($17 for the semester or $25 for the year), so don’t forget to bring them!

This month we will be participating in Replant for our community service event. We will be planting trees around Bryan and College Station to show our appreciation to the community. Go to replant.tamu.edu and click on the registration link. Fill out the form and pick the Regents’ Scholars Program Student Organization as your student organization. The deadline to register is October 7th, so register as soon as possible. I can’t wait to see you all out there! Also, be on the lookout for emails that will talk about social events like watching The Dark Knight for $1 in Rudder Theatre or having a Halloween Party!

I hope to see you all soon!

Salma Abdullah
Regents’ Scholars Organization, President
Texas A&M University ’10
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GRADE EXCLUSIONS:
MY ACADEMIC GPR VS. MY FINANCIAL AID GPR

While your academic GPR may improve if you grade-exclude a class... your financial aid GPR will not. It will still take into account that grade-excluded class.

Undergraduate students receiving financial aid are required to maintain a GPR of 2.0. Financial Aid does not recognize the GPR that results from the submission of the Grade Exclusion Form. Financial aid eligibility will still be determined using the GPR that includes those classes you wish to exclude.

Students receiving financial aid must also complete 75% of all classes that they have registered for at Texas A&M University. The hours that you exclude will still show as registered hours, but by excluding them you will not earn credit for those hours. This can affect the cumulative hours completed and leave you below the 75% completion rate that is required for financial aid.

Clear as mud?
If you still have questions, contact Scholarships & Financial Aid at 979.845.3236.

SEPTEMBER OPINION POLL WINNERS

Question: Give an example of how someone has helped or encouraged you in some way, demonstrating the Aggie Spirit.

After I moved into the dorms, I decided to walk and get my books from the MSC, as well as get my laptop configured for wireless internet at the SCC. Well, I went and picked up my books first- and they were much heavier than I expected...but I brought them with me anyway. I headed to the SCC for my laptop next and got lost at least 3 times on the way, but finally made it, frustrated and hot. Then, about halfway to my dorm, my back killing me, sweaty and icky, on the verge of tears, a guy asked if I needed help. I told him I was on my way back to my dorm, and he said that since he was going the same way...he would carry my books all the way there for me! I told him how grateful I was for his help, and he told me “No problem, Aggies always help out other Aggies in need!” It was my first week and it really gave me a positive attitude about being here, knowing that everyone was so friendly and willing to lend a helping hand.

--Kenicia Wright ’12

Howdy,

My friend told me this story and it encouraged me to do the same. While he was at fish camp, his counselor who was usually loud and the life of the party was unusually quiet one day at lunch. Rather than talking, he kept looking over his shoulder repeatedly. Finally, his counselor picked his tray up and walked to another table, where he set his tray down. The counselor sat down across from a freshman who was sitting all alone. Hoping to lift a fellow Aggie’s spirits, the counselor did his small part as an Aggie and made friends with someone who was sitting alone. As Aggies, it is our responsibility to help those who are in need, and to step out of our usual daily motion and give a helping hand where it is needed. Now, every time I sit down in Sbisa, I invite whoever is sitting nearby to eat with me and enjoy the company of each other. --Joshua Landman ’12

Congratulations Kenicia & Joshua!
“TO Q, OR NOT TO Q...”

Ahhh! It’s that lovely time of year when it starts to get cool outside, the sun is shining, and every freshman across campus is deliriously happy because they are getting straight A’s in all of their classes! Oh, wait…well…at least it’s getting cooler outside! Actually, now’s the time of year every student begins to realize that there may be a class or two where they’re having significant problems! But don’t worry! We’re going to take a look at a few of the “safety nets” that the University has created for you to deal with these problem classes before they become a permanent mark on your GPR!

While no advisor is going to want to see you drop courses without seriously thinking it over, we do want you to know that it is completely normal to have problems with some of your classes. If you discuss your problem areas with an Academic Advisor, they will discuss strategies for addressing these problems, and they will also give you information on the two ways that you can "drop" a course. As a freshman enrolled in college for the first time (i.e. you are not a transfer student), you have two available options to drop a course: Q-drop, and FYGE (which advisors pronounce Fig-ee, or First Year Grade Exclusion). Transfer students only have three Q-drops, but as a first-time-in-college freshman, you have three Grade Exclusions too. Let’s take a look at the differences between the two:

Q-Drops

- 3 Q-drops during entire A&M career
- Must Q-Drop before the deadline each semester (Fall '08: Oct 31)
- You drop the class before you receive your final course grade
- If you drop below 12 hours, you drop below “full-time” student status. This can affect your insurance, financial aid, athletic eligibility, & international student status.
- 1-hour courses NOT in the College of Science and Geosciences (KINE 199, KINE 198, AGLS 101, BIMS 101, etc) DO NOT count toward your 3 Q-drops
- If you drop a science lab and lecture on the SAME DAY, it will only count as 1 Q-Drop

FYGE (Grade Exclusions)

- You may exclude 3 grades of D, F, or U from your freshman year only
- You must wait until you receive your final grade to exclude it
- Excluded courses are NOT calculated into your academic TAMU GPR
- The final grade IS recorded on your transcript with a Grade Exclusion symbol (#) and it CAN be calculated back into your GPR for graduate or professional schools/programs
- You stay enrolled as a full-time student for the entire semester—health insurance isn’t affected
- Gives you the opportunity to finish the class and see how your grade turns out, what the curve is, etc.
- Allows you to save your 3 Q-Drops for later on, just in case

Regardless of which method you use, you would lose the money, course credit, & hours from the course, and you may have to repeat the class if your degree plan requires it. Of course, both Q-Drops and Grade Exclusions can affect your scholarships and financial aid, so make sure to talk to your Academic Advisor AND your Financial Aid Advisor before deciding what to do!

As always, we’re here to help you!

Sam Murdock
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Bioenvironmental Sciences
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What if I get sick?

If you are sick and need medical attention, you should contact Student Health Services (http://shs.tamu.edu/) where, depending on your condition, you may need to make an appointment to see a medical practitioner. Remember, while most of the services at Student Health Services are free of charge, other services, such as prescription and over-the-counter drugs, are available to students for a minimal charge. Review your course syllabi for each professor’s policy on missed classes. If you are able to attend class, you should do so, though not if getting to or attending class will cause you to be extremely uncomfortable. If you are unable to attend class, telephone or e-mail your professor as soon as possible to find out how to make up missed work. Make arrangements to get class notes from another student in the class.

If you will be out of class for three or more days due to illness or injury, you may contact the Office of the Dean of Students (845-3111) and request that an absence notification be sent to your professors. This notification does not excuse your absence, it merely explains the absence; your professor might ask for further documentation.

Regents’ Scholars Peer Mentors:

Words of Wisdom

What do you feel is the greatest campus resource available?

Jon Brown: The transit bus system.
Ana Garcia: SI tutoring.
Ghazal Asrar: Libraries! Being in a library helps to minimize distractions.
Susana Reyna: FREE TUTORING...why pay if its free?!
Agustin Diaz: The Student Learning Center (SLC) helps students with ANYTHING.
Andy Nguyen: Probably Sbisa!
Nazia Saleem: The Student Computing Center (SCC): it is open all night and if your computer crashes, you can always go and finish your work there!

Marcela Marron: The Student Counseling Services (SCS) really helped with my studies!
Kaytlin Huseman: The Rec Center and the intramural sports are a good way to unwind and the Student Health Center in Beutel is a godsend.
Ahmad Zayed: Supplemental Instruction!
David Marquez: Any of the campus libraries are a great tool to research papers, study for exams, or just get away from the crazy roommate!
Juan Burgos: Professors...students...Aggies in general!
Yvette Aguinaga: The Writing Center in Evans Library; I’m not super talented in the writing department, so I appreciate all of their help.

Geography Field Experience in Costa Rica Open to Regents’ Scholars

All Regents’ Scholars, and especially those Regents’ Scholars in the College of Geosciences, should explore participating in a geography field experience being offered this spring semester in Costa Rica. Information meetings will be held Oct. 15 and Oct. 23 at 5:30 p.m. in CSA Room 303.

Students accepted into a special section of Geography 203 – Planet Earth will complete the course’s lab requirement by spending the week of spring break (March 16-20) at Texas A&M University’s new Casa Verde Research Center in Costa Rica. The 20 students accepted for the trip will be the first Aggies to use this new facility.

For more information contact Geography Assistant Professor Chris Houser at chooser@tamu.edu or find out more online at http://geography.tamu.edu/Field-Intro.html.

Ready for Replant?

In 1990 the idea of Replant was thought of to help counteract the effects of the annual bonfire on the environment. In 1991, 400 volunteers, including many bonfire leaders, planted a few hundred small trees. The following fall, Replant was recognized as an official Aggie tradition by the Texas A&M Tradition’s Council.

Replant Day is a one-day environmental service project which strives to improve the Bryan/College Station Community, bring students together through tradition, and provide an avenue for environmental service and action through a yearly tree planting event. Replant Day is coordinated and put on by the Replant Committee, a Texas A&M University recognized student organization.

This year, participate with the Regents’ Scholars Organization (RSO) at Replant! For more information, read the RSO article on page 1.
DO YOU KNOW THE CODE?

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

You have probably heard someone mention this phrase in class or on campus. But, what does this really mean? Breaking the Aggie Code constitutes committing academic misconduct, can result in undesirable consequences, and may lead to expulsion from the university.

Before you start biting your nails and reflecting on your every academic behavior, we have identified and provided examples of what constitutes academic misconduct. Your job is to familiarize yourself with these examples and avoid situations that promote such actions.

According to the Texas A&M University Student Rules, academic misconduct may include, but is not limited to, the following acts: cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submissions, plagiarism, complicity, abuse and misuse of access and unauthorized access, violation of departmental or college rules, violation of university rules on research. However, if you have committed one of these acts in "honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data," this does not constitute academic dishonesty (http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/acadmisconduct.htm)

An example of cheating:
During an examination, looking at another student's examination or using external aids (for example, books, notes, calculators, conversation with others, or electronic devices) unless specifically allowed in advance by the instructor.

An example of fabrication:
Using "invented" information in any laboratory experiment, report of results or academic exercise. It would be improper, for example, to analyze one sample in an experiment and then "invent" data based on that single experiment for several more required analyses.

An example of falsification:
Changing the measurements in an experiment in a laboratory exercise so as to obtain results more closely conforming to theoretically expected values.

An example of multiple submissions:
Submitting the same work for credit in more than one course without the instructor's permission.

An example of plagiarism:
Failing to credit sources used in a work product in an attempt to pass off the work as one's own.

An example of complicity:
Collaborating on academic work knowing that the collaboration will not be reported.

AVOID FOOT-IN-MOUTH SITUATIONS WITH COLLEGE ETIQUETTE 101

The way you communicate and interact with others is basically a representation of yourself...and you want to represent yourself well, right? Part of doing that is knowing the basics in etiquette. When corresponding with your professors today and potential employers tomorrow, it is essential to be aware of proper communication and etiquette skills.

Telephone Etiquette:
If you must leave a message, always identify yourself and leave a number where you can be reached.

If you are returning a call and the caller left you a message, listen to the message FIRST, then return the phone call.

When calling someone, always identify yourself.

Email Etiquette:
Properly address the person you are sending the email.

Use "Dr." when emailing your professor.

Write in proper sentences and use punctuation and proper grammar.

Do not send an email in all caps or all lower case with no punctuation.

Writing in all caps is the same as SHOUTING at someone.

Don’t over use punctuation!!!!!

Sign your email with your first and last name to ensure the recipient knows who sent the email.

Abuse and Misuse of Access and Unauthorized Access
Students may not abuse of misuse computer access or gain unauthorized access to information in any academic exercise. See student rule 22: http://student-rules.tamu.edu

Violation of Departmental or College Rules
Students may not violate any announced departmental or college rule relating to academic matters.

University Rules on Research
Students involved in conducting research and/or scholarly activities at Texas A&M University must also adhere to standards set forth in University Rule 15.99.03.M1 - Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship. For additional information please see: http://rules.tamu.edu/urules/100/159903m1.htm

The Aggie Honor Code website has a wealth of information and more examples of academic misconduct. All examples and information taken from: “Know the code”: http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor

Networking and Event Etiquette:
Turn your cell phone off during presentations, class, receptions, banquets or any event where important people are in attendance.

Appointments:
Always arrive on time.

The person you are meeting with has set aside time out of his/her schedule to meet with you.

If for some reason you cannot make it or will be late, notify the person you are meeting with as soon as possible.

Always dress appropriate to the situation.

Facebook and MySpace:
Be careful what information you are sharing to the world on these sites. Potential employers have access to the sites and check them on all applicants. You do not want any shady or improper pictures or information for them to see.
Midterms can be a stressful time of the semester. There are often multiple exams in a week and, in some cases, it is the first major exam of the semester for a course. Furthermore, activities with various clubs and societies are in full swing, and, let’s face it; there is always Fightin’ Texas Aggie Football on the weekends. So, how do you survive this time of year and what exactly do your midterm grades mean?

Look ahead at least a week to see what assignments and tests are coming up so that you can plan your school, work and leisure schedules accordingly.

Plan your schedule in that order. School comes first.

Do not wait until the last minute to study. Unlike high school, where an exam might cover one to two chapters, most major exams at Texas A&M will cover multiple chapters, homework assignments and laboratory sessions, perhaps even books. Therefore, begin studying early and continue to read and study a little each day for all of your courses. Last, get a good night’s rest. In most cases, pulling an “all-nighter” will only hinder your reasoning capabilities and usually does more harm than good. Furthermore, a good night’s rest will ensure that you stay healthy. Should you get sick on the day of a midterm, please contact the professor immediately to discern the type of documentation required to substantiate your absence. You will also want to inquire about a make-up exam. If you have questions about what constitutes a university excused absence, please see http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule7.htm for further information.

What happens after all those exams are complete? All students classified as U1 (freshmen) will receive midterm grades. These will be accessible on myrecord.tamu.edu and are an indication of how you are doing in a course. Please make sure that you check these. Some professors will enter an “I” (incomplete) or “X” (the professor did not turn in a grade.) Do not worry if you see these; you can ask the professor what your grade is. Also, look in the absence column. Some professors keep roll and will record how many absences you have along with your grades. If your absences seem excessive, meet with your professor about the discrepancy.

It is imperative that you meet with your professor, as they care about how you perform in their course. Make sure that you take any tests or homework with you so that you can go over what you missed. Also, try asking how you can better study for the work you are misunderstanding. It indicates that you have been studying, but wish to improve. Also, remember that there are several points of help for you on campus. Your academic advisor is available to you! They are wonderful sources of help in that they can give you an indication of what the department expects of you thus far, point you towards the proper tutors, help desks, and supplemental instructors, or refer you to the Student Learning Center (845-2724) or Student Counseling Service (845-4427).

Midterm grades are not your final grade! If you have been doing well, keep it up. If you are not performing up to your standards, get help. It is not too late to end the semester strong. Good luck and Gig ‘em!