

Time Flies—But You Can Capture It!

As a student leader you more than likely have a daily schedule full of responsibilities related to academics, organizations, work, and personal relationships. Twenty-four hours can feel very constricting when your life is so full, but rather than feeling overwhelmed by the little time you have, celebrate the full life you are leading by reaping the benefits of managing your time to its fullest!

Consider some of the great benefits of managing your time wisely:

- You will be in control of your schedule, rather than the clock, calendar, or others.
- You will avoid scheduling conflicts and missed deadlines.
- You will experience more freedom and opportunities for surprises.
- You will not feel like your day is just about “catching up” or “getting something done.”
- You will be reliable, dependable, and trustworthy to others—and yourself.

Where is Your Time Going?

Most student leaders, at one point or another, have been challenged in the area of time management. For some, adjusting to a busy schedule meant just moving some priorities around. For others, it may have taken months, even years, to find the best formula for managing their schedules. You can always turn to some of the veteran student leaders on campus to inquire about how they got over their own time challenges, or you can investigate your own management skills a little further with this quick and simple exercise:

- **Create a Time Log**—Record (in 15 minute increments) how you spend your time every day for a week—include meals, sleeping, exercise, work, etc.
- **Identify the HOLES**—Where is your time wasted?

"The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot."

~ Michael Altshuler

Take a Tech-Break

Technology can be a friend when it comes to managing time and tasks; however it can also be a foe. Example: You plan on spending 10 minutes checking your email and an hour later you are still IM-ing your friends.

Reflection Questions:

- ▲ Do you know how much time you spend with technology each day?
- ▲ Do you schedule it into your daily calendar?
- ▲ How is it benefiting your life?
- ▲ How might it be stifling your life?
- ▲ How can you better manage your technology time?

- **Prioritize Your Time**—As a leader you have new priorities that need to fit into your current schedule—at least short-term. Review your log and determine where new priorities can fit or replace activities that are ranked lower on your priority list.
- **Get and USE a Planner**—Prepare a schedule that best reflects your priorities.

Say NO!

Sometimes one of the biggest challenges student leaders face is the ability to just say “NO”. You will be offered many opportunities, feel like others are relying on you and simply want to accept invitations to be further involved. However, in order to be the most effective leader you have the potential to be, sometimes you need to say “yes” to saying “no”!

When is it Okay to Say “No”?

- ...if you have already committed to doing something else in the timeframe required.
- ...if it doesn't fit into the priorities you have identified.
- ...if you can't give it the time and attention it deserves or needs to be done well.

Time Flies—But You Can Capture It! (continued)

Stay Loose!

Being a campus leader requires the ability to be flexible, adaptable, and spontaneous at times. Expect the unexpected! Keep your schedule loose so you can have a little breathing room should something unanticipated come up.

Stop Procrastinating!

Don't avoid tasks that you have committed to accomplishing. Not everything you'll be asked to do is fun and exciting. If you have committed to getting something done—do it now—others are depending on you!

Time and Task Management Resources

You may not like wearing a watch or carrying a planner, but for the duration of your time as a student leader you might want to consider changing that in an effort to best manage your time and



Time Log

Create a log and record (in 15 minute increments) how you spend your time every day for a week—include meals, sleeping, classes, events, exercise, work, etc.

Example:

8-8:15 am

Shower

8:15-8:30 am

Dress

8:30-8:45 am

Head to Cafeteria for breakfast

8:45-9:00 am

Breakfast

Continue on for the entire 24 hours.

Take some time
to keep in Mind ...

...your prime time! Consider the block of time each day when you tend to have the most energy and are typically the most focused. For some it is morning, others find late afternoon to be most productive and, of course, there are those night owls. This is the time to schedule tasks that require greater concentration and productivity.

tasks. Here are a few time management tools to consider carrying at all times:

- A watch/timepiece
- A calendar/planner
- A "to do" list

Timeliness Tricks to Try

- **Create a Personal Deadline**—you know what the final deadline is; now create a deadline for yourself that is a day, or even a week ahead of the actual deadline.
- **Arrive 15 Minutes Early**—when scheduling meetings in your planner, schedule them 15 minutes before the actual start time.
- **Color Coordinate Your Schedule**—identify different ink or highlight colors by priority (i.e. pink is high priority, blue is medium, yellow is low, and so forth).
- **Find a Buddy**—creating your own buddy system in an effort to manage your time can provide the accountability you may need in the early stages of revamping your time management approach.
- **Avoid Back to Back Commitments**—just allowing 10-15 minutes between events can help you stick to your planned schedule for a day.