

SCIENCE—TECHNOLOGY—ENGINEERING—MATHEMATICS

STEM



EIGHT TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1

Ask questions. Ask thousands of questions! It can be intimidating to ask questions of your professors, teaching assistants, advisors and fellow-students. You may think that asking questions reflects poorly on you, since it demonstrates a lack of knowledge. But the reality is that you are not expected to know everything! Others students likely have the same questions, even if they are not asking them. And when you ask questions, you demonstrate a strong desire to learn. Instructors love that! Students who ask questions are the students that professors connect to.

2

Meet people in your major as soon as possible. If you are an engineering student, meet other engineering students. Stick around after class to talk to them, and to your instructor. Develop study groups with other students. Join a student organization within your major. Walk through the buildings on campus that are used by your major and try to meet at least one new person each time you do.

3

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields are highly connected. To be an engineer, you need to understand a little about Chemistry and a lot about Math. To be chemist, you need to learn about Physics and Biology. When you take your core science courses, pay close attention. You will build upon what you learn here for the rest of your career. Visit with juniors or seniors in your major to see how they are making use of the courses you are taking as a freshman.

4

Keep your goals in sight. If you want to make your community a better place through your STEM career, you may feel that future is far away, especially when you are taking your entry-level STEM courses. So stay connected to your goals early. Visit with professionals who already doing the job you want to do in the future. Find out how they persevered and what strategies were most effective for them. Build strong supportive relationships with family, friends, and others who believe in you and your goals. Rely on them often for encouragement.

5

Our friends profoundly influence our values and expectations. As you start your college experience, you will undoubtedly make many new friends. Choose those friends carefully. Meet and befriend those who share your goals, who believe in the value of education and who will stick by you in tough times. STEM is hard... good friends can make it easier.

6

Don't miss class. This seems logical, but as a college student you will find that you have far more freedom than in high school. It will be easy to skip classes. But STEM classes are sequential. One class builds upon the next. If you miss a class, you will have a difficult time catching up later. If a crisis pops up and you *must* miss a class session, then be sure to talk to your teaching assistant or instructor to catch up. Don't rely solely on the notes of your fellow students. Go straight to the source.

7

College policies and procedures are complicated and are not always explained in terms that make sense to new students. Likewise, there are many student support services available to you, but you may not know where to find them. So go out of your way to befriend a faculty or staff member at UNM. When you encounter obstacles, don't walk away defeated. Go to that person and ask for help. They will help you find your way through. Remember, no one succeeds in college alone. Lean on people who can help.

8

Enroll in a STEM Academy course at UNM. These courses will help you implement each of the tips above. You will meet people within your chosen major. You will connect your goals to your courses, and develop strong learning skills specific to STEM. You will learn how your STEM courses are interconnected. For more information on STEM Academy courses, go to: <http://unmstemgateway.blogspot.com> and click on the "COURSES" tab. Visit with your academic advisor, and enroll today!