**COMMUNICATING ON CAMPUS**

Tom Thole Study Center

Alcuin 371 @ SJU



**Talking with professors**

* “Professor” + last name is the best way to address your instructors.
  + Some may invite you to use their first names and others will prefer doctor or professor.
  + Make a note of your professor’s preference so you’ll remember.
  + It will be an adjustment, but you will no longer use Mr./Ms. as you did in high school. If you accidentally use this, an “excuse me” and return to saying “professor” will be appreciated.
* Before class, after class, and when visiting their office, it is good form to start with “do you have a minute to talk?” If they don’t have time in the moment, follow up with a request to meet at another time.
* Ask your question then be prepared to learn how to reason through the issue. Bonus points for you if you start by explaining what you already understand so your professor can pinpoint where they can be most helpful.

**Email!**

* Review email messages as part of your daily routine.
* Respond promptly to let the sender know you received the message. A quick “thank you” or “I’ll work on that this evening” does a few good things:
  + The sender knows you received the message, so they won’t have to wonder or worry.
  + You practice the excellent communication skills all employers want to see.
  + Saying that you will follow up builds in accountability for doing so and helps keep procrastination at bay.
  + You’re becoming known as someone who is organized and dependable, which will put you top of mind when opportunities arise. It also puts your professor in a better position to write a recommendation letter for you for a job, study abroad, or scholarship.
* The best messages are tactful, to the point, and include the information needed for an efficient response.
  + Remind your professor which class you are in (e.g., “I am in your INTG100 class on TR mornings” or “I took your MATH 119 class in Fall 2020 and talked with you before deciding to minor in math”).
  + Clearly state what you need (e.g., “help understanding what we covered in the reading and in class today” or “study abroad recommendation for Japan, due January 24”).
  + Propose a next step (“I can meet at the following times,” or “if you can write a strong recommendation, I’ll forward my application essay and resumé”).
  + It is not necessary to pack your message with flattery; let your work stand for itself.

**Self-advocacy**

You are the first to know if you have a time conflict, have too many commitments, are experiencing points of stress, want to explore new academic interests, etc. Do not wait for someone else to figure it out; be a strong advocate for yourself by reaching out to connect with resources at CSB/SJU.

If you’re not sure where to start

* Ask a professor, an RA, or any staff member; they’ll get you pointed in the right direction.
* Reach out through the Hive by scheduling a meeting with a particular office (see My Success Network) or use the “Request Help” option.
* Search the CSB/SJU website for a specific resource or use the A-Z index to quickly scan all departments & offices.

In cases of overcommitment or time conflicts, take a moment to evaluate your priorities, consider viable solutions, and then communicate these to those who need to know. Start with “I have too many commitments and would like to talk about options.”