1. You need an academic planner/calendar. THIS IS A MUST! Whether you use a scheduling notebook, a tablet/computer, or a smartphone, you must keep a weekly planner. You should start your weekly calendar before the first week of school and keep it up to date all year long. An academic planner or calendar is a planner that works around the academic year, so it starts in August and runs until the following summer, rather than the classic January to January approach. It offers you a daily/weekly/monthly space to write down everything that demands your time. It allows you to see what you need to do and when you need to do it.

*HINT: you should always be at least one week ahead in your schedule. And always be specific don’t write “homework” write/ type the exact homework assignment.

Everything goes into your planner, so you can see your schedule and responsibilities: classes, study time, work, family time, volunteer/community work, social life, etc. EVERYTHING.

- TCC’s Microsoft 365, where we receive TCC email, has an excellent calendar that will keep you updated and alert you when something is due or an appointment is coming. Go to the TCC homepage, click on MyTCC and log-in. Then click on Email. Once inside your email you’ll find the calendar at the top of the page. Click on it to get started. This will be your Academic Calendar for each semester. If your professor wants you to share your calendar (usually due to an assignment) click “Share.” Where it says "Share with" put your professor’s email address in the line provided. The photo below shows what the calendar looks like when you access Microsoft 365.
2. Read each and every syllabus for each and every class. Professors work hard on preparing syllabi, and they work hard on the tentative schedule that comes along with it. They use it too, and they normally don’t vary from the schedule unless it’s necessary for the class’s progress. Take the information, such as homework, readings, and other such assignments, and write them into your academic planner.

3. Keep a single notebook for each class to help keep a clear, organized way to keep notes and find information.

4. Use pockets of time. Have a doctor’s appointment? Bring that chapter you need to read. Doctors always make you wait, so why not use that hour getting your work done instead of playing on your cell phone? Be aware of pockets of time because if used wisely, they can save you time and stress.

5. Create baby steps. Have a midterm in two weeks? Break the material down into smaller time slots/sections to study for the midterm. Do not wait until the last minute: that is bad time management. If you use good time management, your study time will not only be more efficient, but you will actually recall and learn the material better.

6. Single-tasking vs. Multi-tasking: We all know that our modern world expects us to be brilliant at multi-tasking, and in fact, modern technology has helped to create that environment, in which we do several things at one time. We are often rewarded for being able to accomplish several things at one time: for instance, being efficient by picking up a package for our boss while taking a client to the airport. Multi-tasking can save time, and therefore, can be good time management. However, it can also serve as a hindrance to getting an important task done and done well. Sometimes, we need to single-task, keep our focus on one subject, one job, and give that our full attention. Students often suffer long stretches of time trying to complete homework, but with a closer inspection we find that, yes, they were working on their essay, but Facebook was open and waiting to be engaged by the slightest hesitation. The student then gets involved with Facebook and forgets the essay for an hour. Then they get back to their essay, but an hour has slipped away, and oftentimes the student thinks it’s the assignment causing their torture. When in reality, it is bad time management. If the student would have simply worked on their essay without disturbance, they would have finished much sooner. Therefore, if they had used a single-task approach they would have used good time management. Know the difference between single-tasking and multi-tasking.

7. Categorize before you prioritize, and then prioritize. You must categorize your priorities before you can prioritize. Determine where certain events, responsibilities, and assignments fall. For instance, create sections for those things that must be done ASAP. Then make a list for those things that CANNOT be missed; these should be your most important elements. Follow this with a list of minor responsibilities. This way you categorize your responsibilities, and now you can prioritize. What needs to be done first should come first, but do not forget the most important. So, if you have a quiz the next day it should get attention, but if you have a five page paper due at the end of the week, that too needs attention. This allows you to break down responsibility into parts, those baby steps, and helps to create a map to follow.

8. Use the carrot and stick approach. When writing out your weekly schedule, let your social life be a “carrot” for you. So, tell yourself if you get all your work done by Friday, you can see that movie on Saturday. It goes without saying that if you do not get your work done, you can’t see the movie, therefore applying the “stick.” This works if you stick to your guns and don’t cheat.

9. No excuses. Everyone is busy; you are not exceptional in this regard. Complaining about how busy you are will not help you manage your time, but managing your time will help you from complaining. And we all know where complaining and whining gets us, especially if it’s our fault for not planning correctly.