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FEBRUARY 9TH 2012

# Seton School Guidance newsletter

PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR  
A SECURE FUTURE.

## Activities and Academics— How to Cope with Conflicting Demands

High school students are expected to be involved in a variety of activities while keeping their main focus on academics—in other words their vocation as a student, God’s assignment. Some activities such as socializing electronically or in person, playing, even reading the non-assigned book can easily be limited or even curtailed for a time. Any student who wants to be successful has to be able to avoid these kinds of distractions by “saying no”—turn off the cell phone, shut down your social networking, go to a quiet place and ask for the isolation you need to accomplish your work.

However, there are some activities that demand time which cannot be curtailed. If a student has made a commitment to these kinds of activities, then he/she must allocate the necessary time to meet that commitment. Such activities include athletics, plays, clubs,

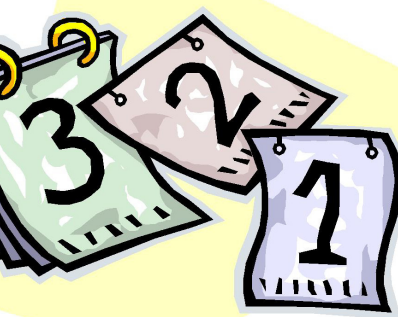
arts and music, and jobs. How to meet these secondary obligations—remember the first is to academics—can be a tough problem for students. While the student may have demands for practice time, play/performance time, travelling time, working out times, meeting times, etc., the requirements for learning, homework, test taking, papers, and projects must still be met.

So, what’s a student to do? First, start by setting priorities. Make a conscious, educated assessment of what these activities mean to you and how they will impact your academics and your future. Discuss this with your parents and guidance counselor. You get the same 24 hours in a day no matter how many activities you are involved in. You may have to make some hard choices.



## Redefine success and failure

This is especially important for student athletes. There are only so many hours in the day. Understand that you can’t possibly be the best at everything; being a successful athlete may mean playing a varsity sport, and not necessarily becoming team captain. Conversely, you aren’t a failure if you don’t become valedictorian. There are certainly achievable goals if you seriously set your mind to it and work hard. Decide what success and failure mean to you and think about whether that’s a reasonable benchmark. Set measurable goals. Give yourself a specific task and time frame in which to achieve those goals. If your goal is to make the honor roll, or even just bring up that “C” in math, know what grades you need to earn that grade to get to that point. Then make it happen to the best of your ability.



# Get Organized...

of a certain activity, make time for it that doesn't conflict with your research project or time in the computer lab.

**Maintain open lines of communication.** If your coaches and teachers aren't all kept apprised of your difficulties and challenges, you're skipping an essential part of the process. Keep everyone up to date and aware of schedules, expectations and areas in which you need extra help. Don't play one against the other and don't assume you deserve a pass on anything because you're a student athlete; that's rather like spending the night at a concert and expecting your boss to let you catch up on beauty sleep instead of getting your work done.

Give yourself every advantage and strengthen your performance as a student. You'll find that many of these same techniques work both on and off the field, making you truly competitive and well-rounded.

## Organization Skills are Critical

Use a day planner or notebook to schedule all of your activities. In this notebook you can write everything you are going to do at what times and on what days. Learning how to prioritize is critical for success. Focus time on the most immediate deadlines. Put dates of stages to complete projects and meet those deadlines. Learn how to avoid distractions by saying no. A major distraction for teenagers from completing deadlines is cell phones and texting. Schedule times when you will be available to accept calls or text messages, otherwise turn the phone off! If you have family members and friends that don't leave you alone you may need to arrange to go to the local library so you can study, it is peaceful and quiet there.

Success on the field and in the classroom requires the same amount of effort and determination. Although some

high school courses have a higher level of difficulty than others, if you want to achieve a GPA higher than 3.5, get into the mindset of working hard and persistently.

## SUGGESTIONS:

Use your weekends wisely, it is very tempting to want to sleep in but try sleeping in only an hour or two later than usual, then get your work done early so that you can do as you please later in the day.



Going to the library to perform research or study may be more effective than staying at home if you have a noisy household.

When you make a schedule it may make it seem like you have a lot to do but in the end you become stress free.

Be willing to say no to social opportunities (a date, movies with friends, etc.) that arise last minute unless a fixed time and place is part of the homework schedule. Treat this as a formal contract with yourself, parents, and your coach(es).

If you continue to make a schedule after your season is over you may find that you have more time to yourself because your not starting your schedule from what ever time you get home from practice but instead what time you get home from school. This means your weekends should be freer.

It sounds simple, but it isn't always easy to do. For some students, a student planner is their best friend. This isn't the case for others—you may need to hang a dry erase board in your room or simply draw out a chart. Know where your sports equipment is and keep your workspace clear. Give yourself the advantage of being organized and you'll be amazed at how much easier it is to get your work done.

**Manage time wisely.** This goes hand in hand with being organized. Whatever works for you, figure out where your time is being spent and how to make it more productive. Adjust your schedule accordingly. Be aware of how quickly small distractions can steal your time, becoming an hour or more of lost opportunity. If you need your fix

# Virginia State Parks Summer 2012 Youth Conservation Corps Program

If you're 14-17, join us for an awesome summer experience you'll never forget. Live and volunteer at a State Park for three weeks and earn \$500 stipend at the end of the program! Primary purpose is to combine work experience, education and life skills development within the framework of environmental and community service. This team of young people lives in the park in a structured program of work and learning closely supervised by professional park staff and committed adult volunteers. Crews carry out priority park development and maintenance projects, and after hours take part in planned environmental education, team-building, work life or job readiness training, and recreational activities.

Look forward to exciting weekends and evening activities like Adventure Training (Caving, horseback Riding, Canoeing, etc.) Museums, Nature Hikes, and Interpretive programs like Astronomy and Geocaching.

Applications online only and must be accompanied by two e-mail addresses for references. Apply online at [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state\\_parks/ycc.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/ycc.shtml)

## Upcoming Financial Aid Nights

**FAFSA Session for parents and students**  
Thursday, February 16th 6-8 PM  
at Woodbridge HS

**Financial Aid for Juniors and Parents**  
Thursday, April 12th 7 PM at  
Osborn HS

**SAT Dates for 2012**  
March 10, May 5, June 2  
Register online at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

**ACT Dates for 2012**  
April 14, June 9  
Register online at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

**Financial Aid Web Sites**  
[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)  
[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)  
[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)  
[www.freschinfo.com](http://www.freschinfo.com)  
[www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)  
[www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)