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CHARTING YOUR PATH TOWARDS ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

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Introduction I

- **Excellence** is a term we use to describe the farthest end of the quality spectrum.
- When we think of excellence, we think of an aspect which is outstanding – **the very best there is**.
- The university environment in which academics are encouraged to think critically and creatively is a contributing factor in determining the academic excellence.
Excellence is a quality of being outstanding; it is not a trait, hence it cannot be inherited.

There is no one way of achieving excellence academically; it is how you apply the principles governing it that determines the outcomes.

Excellence comes with a price, only those who understand its worth can pay for it.
Charting a path toward Academic excellence

- It is a deliberate process for:
  - Becoming aware of self, opportunities, constraints, choices and consequences
  - Identifying your career-related goals, and Programming, your education, work and related developmental experiences to provide the direction, timing, and sequence of steps to achieve excellence
Charting a path to Academic excellence

- It is active, not passive
- It involves not just self-assessment, exploration and occupational choice but also goal setting and identification of developmental activities to reach the goal
- Aimed at, growth, although not necessarily in the upward mobility sense
- It is not age or stage bound. It is a relevant process at any time in one’s life.
Charting a path to Academic excellence

- It is a lifelong process; new needs occur at different stages in the life span
Charting a path to academic Excellence

- Life is about making a series of choices. Choices shape who we are and what we represent.
- It is a matter of assessing your situation, acknowledging the need for continued improvement, and committing to making the change.
- However, the most important tip involves you making a choice to BECOME YOUR VERY BEST. Are you going to challenge yourself to improve? And most importantly, are you going to commit to make the changes you need to improve, and then stick with it?
- It means you need to have a plan for excellence, the confidence, and the drive.
Why Academic Excellence?

- To be useful – ‘He who does not work, let him not eat’.
- To accomplish your part, take care of yourself, family or community.
- To keep active, happy and healthy.
- To be with others i.e. to meet people and make friends & make a difference.
Goals for Academic excellence

✓ SWOT Analysis:
  - Identify personal interest and aptitude.
  - Understand personal beliefs and attitudes that have a bearing on your academic growth.
  - Learn about the world of work.
  - Develop and implement your plan.
GIVEN SEVERAL CHOICES, WHICH WAY?

Ask these questions (SWOT Analysis)

- What things do you enjoy doing?
- What are your abilities?
- What is your personality like?
- How much do you know about yourself?
SOME CONSIDERATIONS

INTERESTS

✓ How do you spend your free time?
✓ Which of the following classes interest you most?
✓ **People** - enjoy solving peoples problems?
✓ **Facts** - Interested in facts e.g. collecting information on anything?
✓ **Things** - You like to work with your hands?
Other Considerations Cont.

- **Hobbies** - an activity done regularly for pleasure.

**Books and Magazines**

- What kind of things do you read?
- When you read a magazine or newspaper, what do you turn to first?
PREPARING FOR EXCELLENCE

- You need to have a:-
  - **Vision** – Indicates the **direction** you want to take and the **position** you intend to stake out.
  - **Mission** – How you intend to achieve your vision i.e. **what** do you need in order to achieve your vision? **How** will you go about it? And from **where**?
  - **Motto** – What is your **philosophy** in life?
Your Career Development I

Values:

- A person’s values are the ideas, beliefs, or Qualities that a person holds dear.
- Examples of values are health, freedom, honesty, friendship, courage, creativity, integrity, religion, education, adventure, success.
- Your values are what you consider important, desirable or satisfying
- Values determine what goals you will set, how you will manage resources and what decisions you will make.
Career Development II Cont.

Goals:

- Goals are what people set to accomplish or get their specific wants.
- **For example**; if your want is to know how to operate a camera, learning to operate a camera will be your goal.
- Types of goals; short term, medium term, and long term
- The goal should be clearly stated (well defined) and it should be realistic (be reachable).
Meeting Your Goals:

- A goal is nothing without a plan to meet it. Planning requires you to consider some factors: how soon do you want to meet your goals, in what order, the resources you will need and what might stop you or get in your way before you can meet the goal.

- Prioritization is important.
Recognizing Your Priorities:

- People set priorities everyday.
- Priorities are the relative weights a person gives to needs, values, or goals.
- You set priorities among your needs, values, or goals based on the importance you assign to each at any given moment.
Note...

- When considering your skills and aptitudes, remember that:
  - Everyone is different/unique.
  - Not everyone has the same skills.
  - Even those with the same skills use them differently e.g. as in football.
Note...

● Academic skills are useful in life.
● Do well in university - you need knowledge.
● Just because you are strong in a skill, **do not** sit back and relax.
● Be like an athlete. Keep working to improve in areas where you do not do as well.
● “Never say die”.
Note...

- The youth tend to be too critical of themselves.
- They concentrate on their weaknesses and forget about their strengths.
- Should be honest with themselves and THINK POSITIVELY.
Positive Self-Concept I

- Self-Concept is a set of ideas about one’s own unique being.
- It includes beliefs, values, and feelings about strengths and weaknesses of one’s worth as a person. Helps to understand why we feel and behave as we do.
- Our experiences shape our self-concept; experiences that provide the awareness that you can achieve, you have worth, improves our definition of self.
Self-Concept Cont.

- Experiences that encourage feelings that you can’t achieve, you’re worthless, and you’re the only one with such difficulties, foster low concepts of self.
- Your self-concept, personality, and interaction with others are closely related.
The Path to Academic Excellence Begins with a Positive Self-image & Self Respect

What matters most is how you see yourself.
Self Concept Fosters Pleasing Personality

Strengthenes Positive Interaction with others Allows
Personality

- **Personality** is the pattern of an individual’s characteristics of behavior.
- It is the outward sign of your inner self – reflects your true feelings of self.
- It is the total result of your attitudes, environment and way of looking at life.
- How to you appear before the eyes of others? Friendly?, critical?, outgoing?.
- It is the expression of one’s self-concept
Note...

- Your personality has a lot to do with the type of work you choose, the type of people you work with, your happiness and academic excellence.
Some Steps Toward Academic Excellence

STEP 1: Define your need or want.
STEP 2: Analyze your resources, aptitudes, abilities, values, etc.
STEP 3: Identify your choices.
STEP 4: Compare the choices. Look at the pros and cons of each choice (However, be flexible).
Cont.

**STEP 5:** Choose the best alternative, one that meets your needs.

**STEP 6:** Make a plan to get started.

**STEP 7:** Evaluate your decisions, judge its worth, quality or goodness.
10 Ways to Ensure Academic Excellence

1. Adapt to change.
   - The first step is awareness. It's time to "recognize that the world is changing and that what you did before may not work now".
   - Get ahead of the ball game and be proactive: don't remain passive.
2. Keep your balance.

The most satisfied professionals **balance their career, their personal lives and their financial side.**

- It's important to understand the purpose behind what you are doing and clearly define where you want to go. Once you establish your “Academic action plan,” you can gain the confidence to move on up.
3. Get visible.

- Build personal networks
- Put yourself out there and be clear about your qualifications. "Gain visibility within the eyes of the decision makers and deliver results," says McKee.
- Communicate your successes and make sure "people who are in a position to influence your promotional path know that you are delivering those results," McKee.
4. Show don't tell.

"The ability to communicate in a very direct way is vital. Now is the time to show, not tell! "Actions and symbols are important, …words get shredded." Apply the actions speak louder than words maxim.

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act but a habit.”

Aristotle
5. Don't be one-dimensional.

- Always continue expanding your knowledge base and deepening your portfolio.
- Take networking to a new level. "Learn more about higher education."
6. Be willing to make mistakes.

Learn from both your successes and your failures. "Don’t try to prevent making mistakes; instead, change your mindset.

Have the mentality to recover from mistakes, and don't hesitate to "experiment with new things and test your skills,"

Don't be afraid to take risks.
7. Think like an entrepreneur.

- "Make a concentrated effort to come up with creative ways that go above and beyond the call of duty," says Goldstein.
- Seek opportunities to add unique value to your education.
8. Pace yourself.

- Things may feel chaotic with everything coming at you all at once... the faster you go, the more exhausted you will be. Otherwise, you’re not able to think clearly and respond. Example of people waiting to revise the last minute for examinations.
9. Show optimism.

Times are tough, but have the ability to show optimism and resilience. "The more anxious you are the less intelligent you're going to be, including the less reflecting.

Waiting out the economic storm and wallowing in self-pity will only be your boost out the door. "Like it or not, you are going to have to sell the value of what you are doing in a very tough market," says Goldsmith.

Think like a Broadway star, he says, "every performance is 'show time!'"
Optimistic
10. Academic Development Plan

- Academic Development Plan (ADP) is a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational, professional and career development.
- It is a way of reflecting on your existing skills and achievements, and using this as a basis to plan for your academic development in the future.
- Objectives are to improve the capacity to understand what and how you are learning, and to review, plan and take responsibility for your own learning.
Academic development Plan II

- **Academic development** includes activities that improve awareness and identity, develop talents and potential, build human capital and facilitate employability, enhance quality of life and contribute to the realization of dreams and aspirations.

- The concept is not limited to academic activities but includes formal and informal activities for developing others in roles such as teacher, guide, counselor, manager, life coach or mentor.
ADP Aims

The primary objective for ADP is to improve the capacity of individuals to understand what and how they are learning and to:

a. Become more effective, independent and confident self-directed learner;
b. Understand what you are learning and relate your learning to a wider context;
c. Improve your general skills for study and career management;
d. Articulate your personal goals and evaluate progress towards their achievement;
e. Encourage a positive attitude to learning through life.
Self-development is personal development, with the person taking primary responsibility to her/his own learning and for choosing the means to achieve this. Other views on the meaning and purpose of self-development are:

- Learning to understand yourself and others and learning to like and respect yourself.
- Developing certain specific qualities and skills;
- achieving total potential - self actualization.
Roadblocks –

“People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are.

Use your imagination.

Look for alternatives.
Using imagination in difficult situations

Full of initiative

Capable

Ingenious

Resourceful
Your Challenge

1. Who are you?
2. What is important to you?
3. Are you ready to change?
4. Are you committed?
5. Are you ready to develop the right skills?
7 Reasons Why People Fail

1. They don’t have a plan
2. Low/No productivity
3. Being indecisive
4. Lack of Energy
5. Lack of Motivation and Follow Through
6. Not setting Priorities (Or Not Sticking To Them)
7. Trying To Do Too Much (or Everything) By Yourself.
Reason No. 8:

- They Never Change.
- No one is perfect. We all make mistakes in life.
- But when we get an opportunity to change our life, we take the chance to change it.
Hot Tip

“It’s not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent; but the one most responsive to change.”

—Charles Darwin
Go for the best
Characteristics for Excellence

- **Respect**: Treating others with respect will ultimately earn respect.

- **Quiet Confidence**: Be sure of yourself with humble intentions.

- **Enthusiastic**: Excitement is contagious. When you are motivated and excited about the cause you are likely to excel.

- **Open-Minded**: Work to consider all options when making decisions. Evaluate the input from all interested parties and work for the betterment of the whole.
Other Characteristics II

- **Well Educated**
  Knowledge is power. Work to be well educated on community policies, procedures, organizational norms, etc. Further, your knowledge of issues and information to increase your success.

- **Open to Change**

- **Interested in Feedback**
  How can you improve? View feedback as a gift to improve.

- **Evaluative/Reflective**
  Evaluation of events and programs is essential to improve and progress. Constantly evaluate and change what is not working.
Some Principles of Excellence I

- **Discipline**: a very essential principle of excellence. Self-discipline is a conscious control over lifestyle.

- **Determination**: know what you want and go for it with all the determination, enthusiasm and optimism.

- **Time Management**: the act of controlling and organizing events as they are being influenced by time.
Some Principles of Excellence II

- **Keep the right company**: You are who you move with. There are different companies you can keep in an academic environment, but the choice is yours. The more you share knowledge, the more you know.

- **Develop your style**: don’t compare yourself with others.

- **Stay healthy**: Take a balanced diet. Avoid junk food.
Walk gently leaving tracks only where they can make a difference. Where no difference can be made, walk without leaving tracks. This is how the sage passes through life; unseen and invisible, yet effecting change everywhere” (Jeffrey L. Buller)
Endurance is not just the ability to bear a hard thing, but to turn it into glory.

William Barclay
Concluding Remarks I

- Most people spend an average of 35 years in the work force. You must find work you are happy with.
- Some people are so lucky and stumble on wonderful jobs.
- Not many of us are so **lucky**. We do work we **hate**, for employers we don’t like.
Concluding Remarks II

- We love you and we celebrate you for choosing The University of Choice.
- Welcome, be happy and enjoy your learning; designing, and mapping your pathway toward academic excellence.
Thank You For Listening

God Bless You!