

What Matters Most to Freshmen
wayne . smith@csun . edu
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“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

--*Thomas Edison (1847-1931)*

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to summarize “the most important thing that happened to them” during the first semester at CSU Northridge. At a minimum, this set of responses can help future students.

At the end of each of my freshmen classes, all my students write a four page essay reflecting on their first semester at CSU Northridge. Just before the students turn in the assignment, I ask the students to circle the most important sentence to them in the entire four-page report.

All of the excerpts below were written by students who have successfully completed my MKT 100 course in Fall, 2011.

“Most Important Thing to Me this First Semester”:

“[Obtaining the highest score on a math exam] was compelling to me because it was a distinct example involving me on how excellence is not an act, but a habit.”

“I will handle [each situation in my life] in a very different way and figure out how I can steer my life in a positive direction.”

“College has given me the insight to further understand myself in a way that only I could understand.”

“I will have to prepare my mind to have a mindset saying ‘I can pass the class’; to keep up the positive mindset is going help me do better in class.”

“[I went to school Monday through Friday.] Three day weekends to me meant no homework until Sunday [, but I got lazy a few weeks into the semester.]”

“Some of the habits I have in order to do well in class are trying to avoid procrastination.”

“Our responsibilities as students and members of society are to have respect for everyone around us and exercise our privilege of voting.”

“My weakness is [that] my time management skills have gone down since I have enter [sic] college and I am trying to fix it by studying at the library with a group of friends and forming study groups.”

“After every class I complete, I realize I am one step closer to completing my journey here at Cal State University Northridge and beginning my life out in the business world.”

“The ability of being able to be true to myself is what makes me an adult, what makes me a man.”

“Being on time is my priority and I learned that writing everything down in an agenda has made my first college semester a little bit easier.”

“We take small steps but just with taking step [sic] we can make a huge impact in our lives and those around us.”

“Dealing with changes in life is just part of growing up and should be a bonus on what is store for you out there.”

“The ‘rights and responsibilities’ [that we get upon graduation] are no joke—this is the real world and we have to be serious.”

“Thanks to this relaxed college atmosphere...I was able to break through and introduce myself to my peers in ways I wasn’t able to before [because I tend to be overly shy].”

“My goal is to reach a doctorate degree and to stay focused because it is the only way towards the greatest fortune, an education.”

“In my Marketing [100] class I learned the function of financial statements while in computer class [COMP 100] I learned how to use formulas and to be aware in making an accurate spreadsheet.”

“Before I was able to go to a family get together every Sunday at my aunt and uncle’s house, but now sometimes I have to miss out on that to finish an essay or complete a homework assignment that [is] due soon because of too much work or other various things.”

“[Upon graduation,] the student must know how to be ethical and to justly practice their degree.”

“I have to give up a lot of [things to attend] school, but the road to success is a hard one but when it is done with the reward will be a great one.”

“I learned that college can change ones [sic] perception on any subject depending on how it is being taught.”

“Responsibility, diligence, test strategy skills, time management, and preparation were the skills I learned that will one day put me in the position of crossing the stage to receive my diploma.”

“Commitment is extremely important for all factors in life, and being committed can bring a person far if they have the drive.”

“There are three maybe four long years ahead of me but it will all pay off [when I graduate and attend the commencement ceremony].”

“The lessons taught in class combined with in-class and out-of-class experiences impacted and shaped the person I am today.”

“My plan on graduating college is very simple: stay motivated and I will be successful.”

“I know that there will be hardships, but it will all be possible and worth it in the end.”

“I wasn’t aware that I could learn so much in just one semester, but I am most certain that I am going to learn a lot more in the next few years at CSUN.”

“Thinking is the hardest thing to do, which is why so many people avoid it.”

“...I pretty much never give up even if I have no options left, because in this world there is always a way.”

“I sat in front [of the classroom] and pretended the other students were not there; the teacher would just be talking to me.”

“Being a university student is not only about spending hours studying, but also it is about creating a foundation to have a successful life.”

“I plan on achieving success by being efficient, smart, and by showing a keen sense to adapt to any situation, at any moment.”

“...In college it is not always about [being self-sufficient and only asking for help when needed], it is to network and make yourself known to the faculty and differentiate yourself from the rest of the large student body.”

“[Upon graduation,] the words “rights and responsibilities” means that students are the ones who hold all the rights and responsibilities to her or her education and that their awards are what they have earned and achieved.”

“[Upon graduation]...and when the graduates have received their degrees, whatever he or she decides to do with it is in their hands.”

“[Learning time everything in my MKT 100 and COMP 100 classes, but time management, especially] means that I am just becoming more of an independent person and training for my life after college into the real world.”

“[I think that] the responsibility of a college graduate is to educate and become a role model to others.”

“The duty demanded of your degree is the responsibility to be righteous with your rights because it becomes a privilege that you represent all your life.”

“I have to keep myself motivated, and to keep myself motivated, I must ask and answer myself if what I’m doing is what I want to do, and if whatever I may be doing will get me to what I want.”

“I am always learning especially because I am human (just like everyone else is) and I make mistakes.”

“I am ending my first semester with more confidence and experience.”

“I have learned to take breaks in between [classes], so that I produce better quality work.”

“I also have realized that work can never be my top priority; it always has to be school, because my education is going to get me farther than my waitressing job.”

“College may be one of the stressful times in my life, but I know that each semester I will learn something new about myself.”

“I am hoping to finish my degree in 3 and half years and if I do I will be content with myself.”

“When majoring in any field, we are majoring in a subject that will help the world—that goes for all majors from accountants to social workers.”

“I need more experience in presentations, so I could make my team as successful as [one of the professional speakers studied in MKT 100 class].

“Life has its challenges and it’s up to the individual to face them.”

“I think that part of [an] education and part of being successful in the rest of my years as [sic] this institution is learning how to deal with obstacles that stand in my way, and to learn how to work on my weaknesses in order to make myself a stronger person as a whole.”

“My personal life might change in a way that makes it harder for me to maintain a social life with my friends, family, and fellow classmates.”

“The most difficult weakness I need to overcome is ‘time management’.”

“After reading the chapter [on Accounting] I was confident that this was what I wanted to do.”