

**Getting Back into the
Swing of Things**

— PAGE 3

FAFSA and Financial Aid

— PAGE 5

Coffee Pros & Cons

— PAGE 7

...and more!

The Handout

February 2022

The Handout

February [2022]

Our Staff



Editor In Chief

Maribeth Griffin

Contributors

Gracie Johnson

Centennial Hall ARM

Madison Adams

Centennial Hall ARM

Finan Deakin

Pinney Hall ARM

Lindsay Larisa

Pinney Hall ARM

Gabriella DeMaro

Grasso Hall ARM

Elizabeth Hinds

Litchfield & Newbury Halls ARM

Volume 10, #4

February, 2022

1

Let's Get Back Into the Swing of Things

Is your semester off to a good start?

2

Staying Safe During Covid-19

Omicron and regulations and positive tests – what does it mean?

3

FAFSA and Financial Aid

Deadlines approach for next year – do you know what to do?

4

Black History Month – Black Health & Wellness

What is this year's theme all about?

5

Coffee Pros and Cons

Is your morning coffee helping or hurting?

6

Bad Habits

Are you the victim of bad study habits?

1 Let's Get Back Into the Swing of Things

Madison Adams, Centennial ARM

Starting off the second semester of the year is always challenging for various reasons. After spending a month on break, it can be daunting to get back into a school schedule. Getting back into the swing of things includes waking up early, setting academic goals, balancing social life and academic life, and so much more. On top of these routine shifts, you may be juggling all of these stressors while working at a part-time job! If this sounds like you, do not worry. You are not alone.



Declutter

It is extremely common for college students to be balancing school, social, extracurricular, and part-time job-related responsibilities. Take a deep breath, and remind yourself that you are only one person and that there is only so much time in the day! The first step to relieving this stress is to organize your life. This may not only mean your academic life but your environmental life as well. Believe it or not, cleaning up your living space (such as your bedroom or the space you spend the most time in at the end of the day) has the potential to relieve a lot of the clutter in your brain. It is important to keep your space clean; that way, your brain can focus without the tangible clutter in the way.

Creating a Detailed Schedule

The second step may be to create a detailed weekly schedule. First, add your classes, then add work, study time, exercise/practice, or anything else that is part of your daily schedule. Doing so will help you visualize all the places you have to be throughout the day. Once you have a copy, you can then outline the blocks of time where you are free to take breaks, relax, have a meal, hang out with friends, etc. Keep your schedule handy so you are able to refer to it throughout the day until you have it memorized. This is the first step in the direction of creating long-lasting routines!

Healthy Routines

The third step to getting yourself back into the swing of things is to create healthy routines for yourself. This could be as simple as making yourself coffee and breakfast every morning, or as elaborate as a self-care nightly routine. The time you spend taking care of your mental and physical health should be prioritized just as much as your daily school and work schedule. It can be really difficult making the shift from winter break into the spring semester because of the routines and habits you developed while out of school. However, creating healthy routines takes time, just like learning a new instrument. Holding yourself accountable will without a doubt have a positive impact on your future.

College is not easy. In many ways, college is expected to challenge you. The way you handle and adjust to those challenges is what really matters. Remember the steps that are discussed within this article. Start by organizing clutter that may be contributing to your day-to-day stress, create a detailed class/work/extracurricular schedule, and take time for yourself by creating routines that work for YOU. These steps do not have to be followed in any particular order, and it may take time to incorporate all of them into your life right away. That is okay! Take it one step at a time, and remind yourself that you are only one being, and there is only so much time in one day.

Tomorrow is always around the corner!

2

Staying Safe During Covid-19

Lizzie Hinds, Litchfield & Newbury ARM

With the Omicron variant flooding the news, and positive tests flooding our labs and homes, it is understandable that students feel nervous about being on campus. WCSU is not exempt from this. While the university is taking every precaution to mitigate the spread of the virus among its students, the generalized anxiety surrounding a pandemic is still existing. So how do we feel safe on campus?

Know What's Going On

WCSU does a great job of communicating what efforts are being made to help keep students safe. This includes mask requirements, vaccine requirements, testing options, isolation policies, and more. What is important to know is that Western communicates with all appropriate departments to make the most informed decisions they can. Let's break these down some more:

- **Masks:** The university currently holds the policy that masks are required indoors regardless of vaccination status. This is to ensure that everybody is as safe as possible in the event that social distancing is not entirely possible.
- **Vaccination Requirements:** WCSU requires that all students, whether residential or commuter, be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Though it is not mandated yet, the university also highly encourages boosters for those eligible. Some exemptions are possible.
- **Testing Availability:** WCSU is providing on-campus testing in the form of both PCR and rapid antigen tests. PCR testing can be received on Westside, and rapid testing can be received on Midtown.
- **Isolation policies:** The university is implementing CDC compliant isolation requirements for students who test positive.

These policies are explained clearly, from how long the quarantine will be, to where it will be, to what meals will look like if a student quarantines on campus. Flyers and social media posts have been made public for more information on these policies.

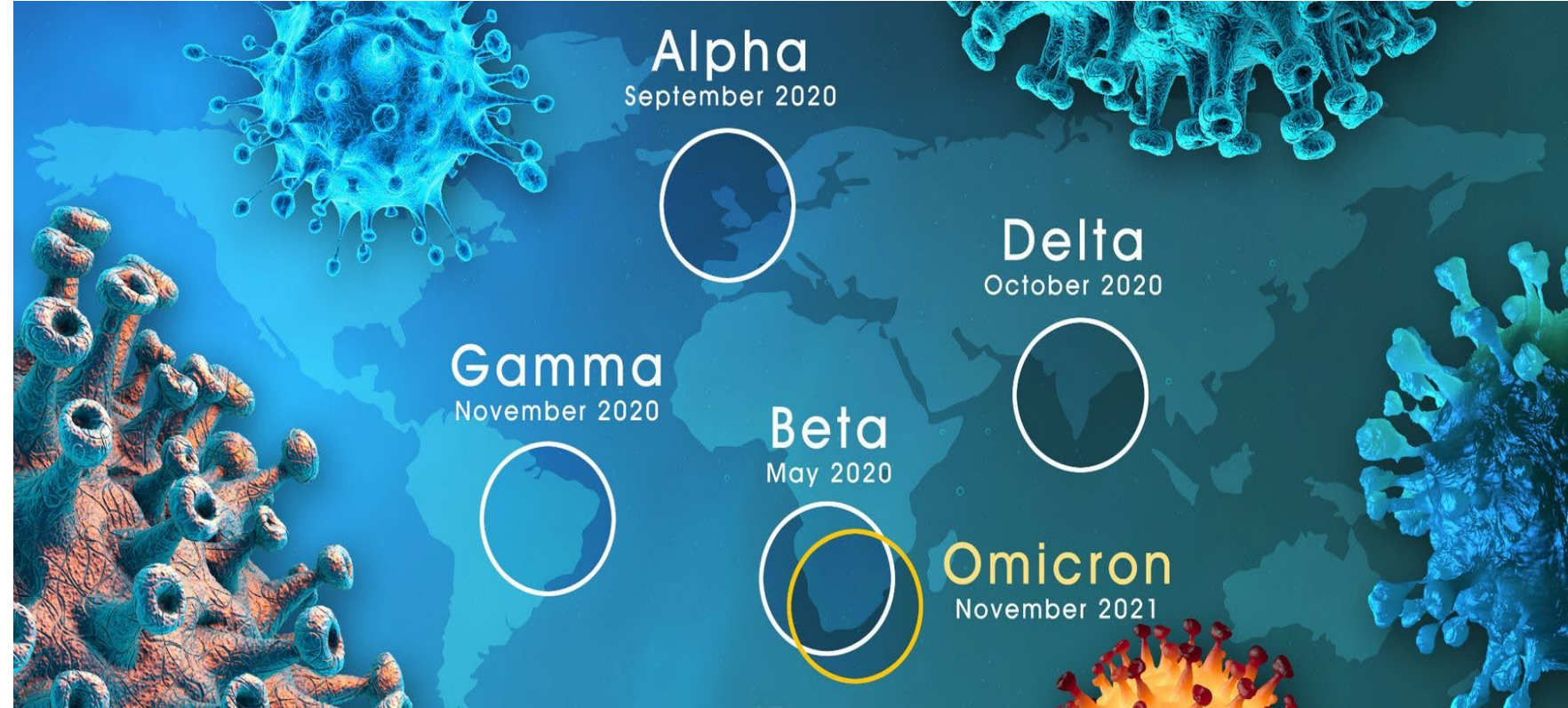
- For more information on WCSU's COVID-19 policies, students can refer to the university's website, social media, and communication from health services.

How Do I Stay Safe?

With an understanding of the precautions taken by the university, students can plan accordingly on how they personally will stay safe. Residential students will see sneeze guards up in each building, and all students will notice hand sanitizer dispensers throughout each campus building. With the recognition that 2022 will mark two full years of the pandemic, what is mainly required is continuing the safe practices that have been in place for almost 730 days. Keep washing your hands, keep using sanitizer, and practice appropriate mask wearing. By keeping your high contact points clean (hands, surfaces, etc.), and by keeping a mask over your nose and mouth, students will be doing their part to reduce the risk of getting sick for not only themselves, but for the students around them.

What About Classes?

Since the beginning of the pandemic, WCSU has adjusted its classes to maintain students' health and safety. This means that a portion of the university's classes have been made virtual or hybrid. Some classes meet "normally", twice a week. Some meet twice weekly on WebEx. Some don't meet at all. Here is how to identify what each class type is:



On BannerWeb, you can view your detailed schedule grid under the "Student" tab.

Each class will have one of the following listed in its description:

- **ONLINE ASYNCH**
 - This class does not meet in person or virtually. Work is submitted when it is due, but the professor doesn't hold scheduled classes.
- **ONLINE SYNCH**
 - These classes meet at a scheduled time, but over a virtual platform like BlackBoard Collaborate or WebEx.
- **HYBRID**
 - These classes have an online component (asynchronous or synchronous) as well as a scheduled in-person meeting time.
- **Building & Room Number**
 - These classes only meet in-person at their scheduled time and location.

How students complete each course is dependent

not only on the type of course it is, but the manner in which students learn best. Asynchronous classes may entail more personal study time than in-person classes. Hybrid classes may not require as many notes as synchronous or in-person classes. The variables that go into COVID-safe classes are higher in number, but conquerable with the right habits and connections to resources.

Above all else, it is important to know that each of these class types take into consideration the necessary safety habits. Many professors are understanding of students' desires to stay online in order to maintain good health, and the university joins in the prioritization of student safety first and foremost. For help in navigating campus operations or class types, students are encouraged to reach out to their building's respective staff, Academic Resource Mentors, or refer to the several available university webpages. With the continuance of university mandates and unanimous compliance, safety on campus will truly assist in mitigating the spread of a virus that all are waiting to see the end of.

3 FAFSA & Financial Aid

Gabriella DeMarco, Grasso ARM

By now you all know what FAFSA is and the painstaking process that goes into filling out the forms. I'll be sharing important information and tips to help you get the most money for the upcoming school year.

Important deadlines

In past years the application was usually due around March 1st for the upcoming academic year. There is an extended deadline due to COVID, but WCSU recommends submitting the application by the original **March 1st deadline**.

However, the quicker you submit these forms the more money you could potentially get. For priority consideration, forms should be submitted by **February 15th**.

Different types of Aid

Chances are you've seen the several types of loans offered by FAFSA but don't know which ones you should be accepting.

- **Grants** are given by the government or nonprofit organizations and generally do not have to be repaid. However, you must maintain your eligibility for the grant while in school. If you withdraw from a program that the grant was given to you for, you have to repay that grant.

- **Scholarships** also do not have to be repaid. There's two different types: Merit-based (academic) and financial-based. Most of the time you have to apply for these by writing an essay or sending in a resume with your grades.
- **Subsidized loans** are given to students who demonstrate financial need, and do not start to accumulate interest until you're done with school.
- **Unsubsidized loans** are offered to all students regardless of financial need, but accumulate interest as soon as the loan is disbursed.
- **Work study** is also a great option for those who want to work on campus to make the money they need to pay for school. Generally, students who have work study have an easier time finding employment on campus.



How to stay eligible

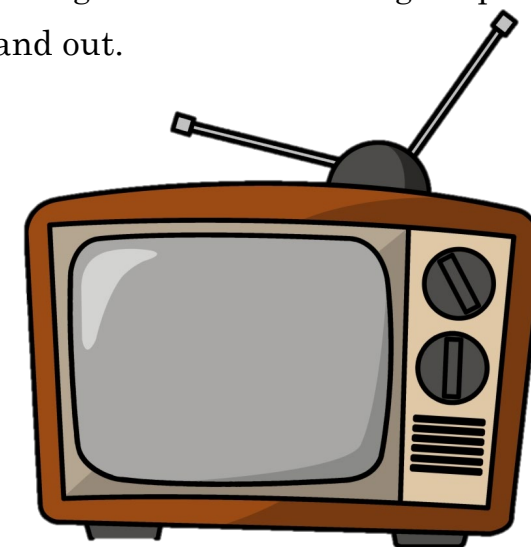
As ARMS we stress the need to maintain satisfactory academic progress. This isn't because we want you to just have better grades. Your ability to stay in housing and get the help you need to pay for school could be affected. Below are some of the requirements of satisfactory academic progress:

- >30 credits: 1.7 GPA
- <30 credits: 2.0 GPA
- All students must complete 67% of classes attempted
- Follow the maximum time frame standard

If you do not know if you're still eligible for financial aid you could visit the office on campus.

Scholarships

WestConn has a variety of scholarships to choose from on the website. Use your uniqueness as an advantage, because many scholarships are based on major or career goals and are looking for people to stand out.



Need to know more?

<https://www.wcsu.edu/finaid/videogallery/>

You don't have to limit yourself to the ones offered by WCSU, because there are thousands of scholarships offered online every year. The application process is very easy and most of the time you could reuse an essay as long as it matches the prompt.

WCSU Financial Aid office

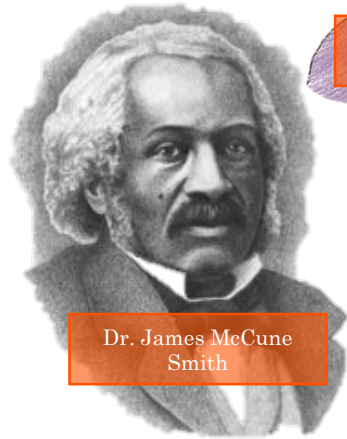
- Old Main 105
- 203-837-8580
- wcsufinancialaid@wcsu.edu

The financial aid office at WestConn could help with a variety of questions and concerns. They could help you apply for Aid, maintain it, look for on campus jobs to fulfill work study, and much more. They prefer if you make an appointment, but walk ins are welcome.



Black History Month: Black Health & Wellness

Feature Story



Black History Month, celebrated in the United States in February each year, is an opportunity to explore the history of people and events we don't generally learn about in standard texts – specifically the significant contributions of Black Americans. In 2022, the theme for the celebration is **Black Health and Wellness**. Both in traditional medical fields (doctors, researchers, scientists) and non-traditional fields (doulas, naturopaths, herbalists), their contributions to health and wellness, particularly in Black communities, has been profound.

Additionally, Black American organizations, such as the NAACP, the African Union Society, and the Black Panther Party established clinics and provided other care for those who could not find or easily get medical care.

In more recent years, efforts have expanded to include more preventative care, and for emotional and mental health issues.

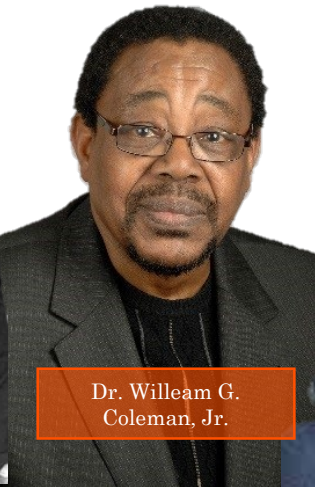
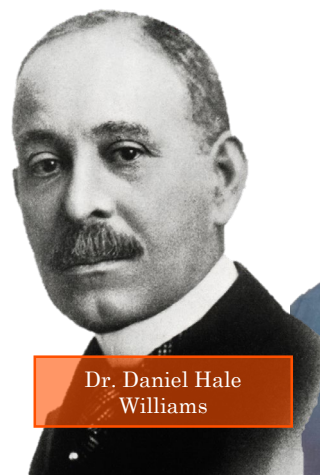
Here are a few names and faces in our Black History who have helped to expand the impact of Health and Wellness in Black American communities.

- **Dr. James McCune Smith** (1813 – 1865) was the first Black American to obtain a medical degree, although he had to travel to Scotland to do so, as he was not permitted to attend medical school in the US. He was also an ardent abolitionist and worked hard to overthrow slavery successfully.

- **Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler** (1831 – 1895) was the first Black American woman to receive a medical degree in the United States. She was the only Black woman physician in the US for years. She wrote a medical text, *A Book of Medical Discourses*, which was used by physicians of all races for years to come.
- **Dr. Daniel Hale Williams** (1856 – 1931) founded Provident Hospital, the first hospital to have an interracial staff. He was also among the first physicians in history to perform open-heart surgery. He later co-founded the National Medical Association, geared toward Black medical professionals.
- **Dr. Ruth Ella Moore** (1904 – 1994) was the first Black American to complete a PhD in Bacteriology from Ohio State University. Her doctoral research focused on tuberculosis, a significant health risk at the time, and was significant in helping to find a cure for the disease a short time later. She was hired to work as professor in Bacteriology at Howard University, and was the first woman to head any department at Howard.
- **Dr. Patricia E. Bath** (1942 – 2019) was an ophthalmologist and laser scientist who patented the Laserphaco, a new device and technique for cataract surgery. Her patent was the first awarded to a Black American woman.
- **Dr. William G. Coleman, Jr.** (1942 – 2014) was the first permanent Black scientific director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for Intramural Research, and later directed NIH's National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. This later position focused on biological and non-biological determinants of health disparities and their influences on the outcomes of cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, among others.
- **Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett** (b. 1986) is a scientist at the NIH who is at the forefront of the development and production of the Moderna Covid-19 vaccines. She earned her PhD in Microbiology and Immunology at UNC – Chapel Hill. She went to work at NIH upon graduation, and also developed a universal influenza vaccine that is currently in clinical trials.

Take some time to find out more about these and other Black Americans who have worked hard in the Health and Wellness area to improve the lives of Black Americans.

(AFPA Health, Nutrition & Fitness) <https://www.afpafitness.com/blog/12-black-american-health-and-wellness-pioneers>



Coffee Pros & Cons

Gracie Johnson, Centennial ARM



Do you love coffee? Some people absolutely love coffee and cannot go about their day without it. Whether it's espresso, cold brew, or a macchiato, there are no limits to the drinks you can make with coffee! On the other hand, some people despise coffee and cannot stand the taste, let alone the smell! Whatever your personal preferences are, here are some fascinating facts regarding the pros and cons of drinking coffee.

One of the most obvious positive effects of drinking coffee is the enhanced physical and mental activity. This is one of the primary reasons why coffee drinkers cannot leave the house without their “good ol’ cup of joe”. With the constant on-the-go lifestyle many people live, especially college students, it’s no wonder people need an energy boost for their day! Coffee contains the chemical caffeine that works to stimulate the central nervous system, which in return produces increased energy and focus. This enables people to focus on their tasks better without having the feeling of fatigue weigh them down.

Believe it or not, coffee also provides interesting medical benefits to the body! While caffeine increases your blood glucose levels at first, it can actually help stabilize your body’s glucose levels after drinking coffee on a regular basis. According to *Page One Coffee*, “Some studies show that the caffeine in beverages like coffee can even offset a not-so-healthy diet” (Deefaz) as the body’s balanced glucose level can decrease cravings for unhealthy, sugary foods. In addition, coffee has also been related to decreasing the risk of colon cancer. The caffeine has “the ability to lower estrogen levels” (Deefaz), as well as inflammation levels, which both contribute to cancer risk factors.

While coffee is a classic favorite that provides many benefits and perks of energy, there are downsides to the beverage. One of the most well-known cons of drinking coffee is the caffeine addiction that follows regular

consumption. The caffeine acts as a central nervous system stimulant in the brain and can cause mild physical dependence. If one regularly consumes coffee and abruptly stops, it may cause withdrawal side effects such as headaches or fatigue.

Another downfall to drinking coffee is the varying levels of energy you may experience throughout the day. People often experience a “caffeine crash” after a significant amount of time has passed since consuming coffee due to the stimulant effects wearing off. This can result in low levels of energy and feeling extremely tired. On the flip side, drinking too much caffeine can cause excess levels of energy which can result in jitters or unwanted muscle twitches. Having too much caffeine in the body system can also “exacerbate feelings of anxiousness” (Deefaz) and can lead to insomnia when trying to fall asleep at night.

Whether you wish to drink coffee or not is all a personal preference. For those of you who cannot live without your daily dose of caffeine, there are many great places on or around campus that serve great coffee! Local places located near the Westside campus include The Daily Grind, Rumors European Cafe, Grounds Donut House, and Starbucks. Coffee shops located closer to the Midtown campus include Dunkin Donuts, Einstein's Bros. Bagels (in the Ruth Hass library), and City Center Cafe. You are bound to find something you like!



12 Pros And Cons Of Drinking Coffee You Should Know - PageOneCoffee. (2021). Retrieved 7 February 2022, from <https://pageonecoffee.com/pros-and-cons-of-drinking-coffee/>



6

Bad [Study] Habits

Finan Deakin, Pinney ARM

As students go through the schooling system, each student picks up and develops study habits they use when it comes to essays, tests, or projects. Not all study habits are good, though, and if students do not correct them it could lead to poor academic success as the student reaches higher levels of education. I have created a list of bad study habits and tips on how you can improve them.

Cramming the Night Before a Test-

The first bad study habit that affects a student's academic successes is cramming the night before a test. In college, it is very common to see this study habit because students have a hard time managing their workload. This habit will create stress for the student. Under stress, many people have a hard time retaining information. Another reason why this is not an effective habit is because students will stay up late and therefore are not receiving the proper amount of sleep their brain needs. Getting a good night's sleep allows your brain to retain the information. Better sleep is associated with improved academic performance. Students are able to fix this habit by setting aside time each day to study for each class.



Another way it can be improved is if you make a planner and creates a study schedule for your classes once you receive your syllabus. By doing this, you can learn to manage your time better, and therefore don't have to stress as much the night before an important exam.

Not Limiting Distractions-

Another common bad study habit is having too many distractions in the background (for example, playing music, leaving the television on, or leaving your phone next to you). These examples of distractions can prevent you from retaining a lot of the information you are studying. When having these distractions next to you, your brain has to multitask, which interferes with its ability to memorize all the information you are studying. It also takes away your attention from the study materials, making it hard to focus.

Students can improve and fix this study habit by setting times as breaks. For example, for every hour you study, give yourself a 15-minute break. Not only will this improve the amount of information you are retaining but it will also keep you more focused.

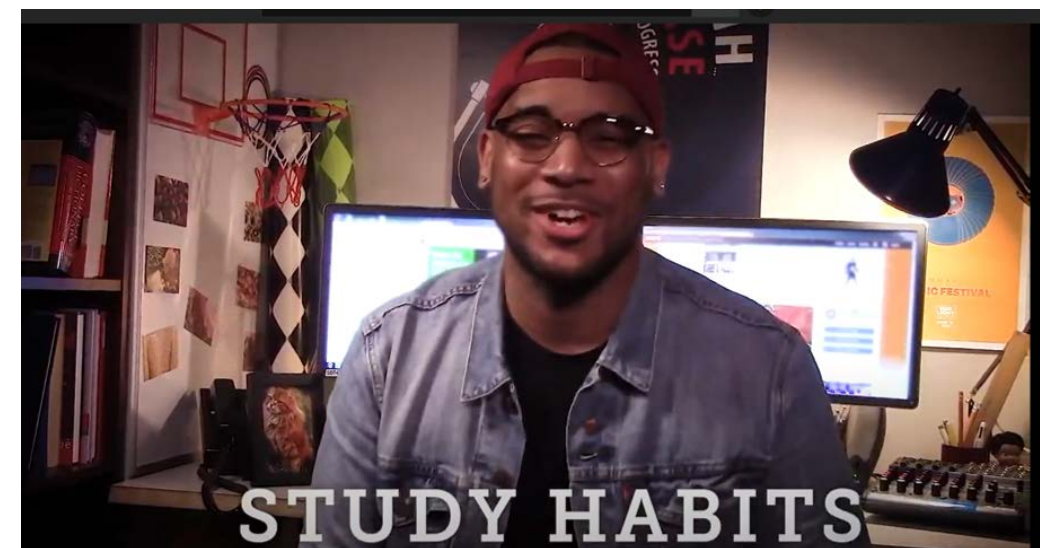
Being disorganized- The last bad study habit is being disorganized when you study. By not creating a plan or outline of information you need to review, when it comes time to study for the exam, material will be missed. This will leave you feeling unprepared and stressed when taking the test. A way to

fix this is before studying, to quickly look through your notes and create an outline. Once you feel comfortable with one topic on the outline, place a check mark next to it and move on to the next. By doing this you can make sure you are reviewing all the material needed and that you are fully covering each individual topic.

It is important to develop good study habits. Having a schedule and good way to study can help you later in life when it comes to work. It is never too late to develop good study habits!

And for more study tips, check out this video on Study Habits!

<https://youtu.be/tncuBgYMg4I>



It's already time to start planning for Room Selection for the fall. The first thing you'll need to do is to pay your non-refundable \$250.00 housing deposit (before March 15th).

Once 6 hours has passed after you've paid the deposit, you'll be able to log into the Housing Portal and complete your Housing Application. *(Even if you live here now, you must complete a new application for the fall!)*

Don't forget – if you wish to live with specific people, fill out your roommate requests and respond to the invites from your requested roommates, too!

More info will come via email to tell you when in April you can select your room!



Just a reminder that the

Housing & Residence Life Offices

are in Pinney Hall, suites C21 and C24.

Our phone numbers are the same, but you'll need to come to the Westside to see us!



Want to know more about campus resources and other advice to improve your academic life? You can check it all out on Gab & GROW, a podcast you can find here:

www.wcsu.edu/houaing/gab-grow/



About *The Handout*

The Handout is a product of the Department of Housing & Residence Life at Western Connecticut State University. There are 6 editions each year, 3 in the fall semester and 3 in the spring semester.

The ideas for and execution of the articles are the work of the Academic Resource Mentors, or ARMs, who provide academic coaching and resource referral to all members of the WCSU residence community.