Feelin' the Grad School Blues

With the cold weather still lingering and being in the middle of the semester, many students are feeling the "grad school blues." Students can experience this along with depression and anxiety. Studies have shown that graduate school is not the healthiest place to be, and a study conducted at the University of California at Berkley indicated that a large percentage of graduate students (67%) felt hopeless at least one time in the past year. Many recent conversations with graduate students at Utica College included phrases such as I am over this, I just want to quit, and I feel like this will never end. It is important to know that you are not alone.

Graduate students sometimes have a difficult time balancing their school work and personal lives. It is very important to remember that your life is more than academics, and you have to take care of yourself and the relationships you have outside the physical or virtual classroom.

It is because of this knowledge that Utica College has tried to create paths that will help students fight feelings of anxiety, depression, and even "the blues." The college has tried to make taking a Leave of Absence (LOA) a painless process by allowing students to submit the request form online. It is also important to note that taking an LOA is not a sign of weakness or defeat. As humans we all have our limitations and sometimes just need a break.

While Utica College is understanding that "life can get in the way" of your academic studies, please note that there may be financial implications if you have federal student loans; you will need talk with Student Financial Services.

Utica College also has a counseling center for people who may need a little more than just a break. This is a free service to all Utica College students. The counseling services offered by the college provide assistance with depression, relaxation techniques, stress management, and anxiety among many others (to see a complete list, visit the Counseling Services web page).

Important Dates

Please note the upcoming deadlines:

March 25 - Summer and fall registration opens for online students

April 1 - Deadline to RSVP for commencement if you anticipate graduating in August

April 5 - Last day to withdraw from a 16 week course or change it to Pass/Fail

April 8 - Summer and Fall registration opens for campus-based students

April 8 - Last day to withdraw from a D2 class

April 15 - Deadline to RSVP for commencement if you anticipate graduating in May

April 15 - Deadline to order your regalia (cap, gown, and hood)

Need to Take a Break?

Life getting in the way? Need to take a semester off?
The staff and faculty understand that at times graduate students feel like they may fail, but studies and statistics show that most students do not. In fact the majority of students who enter graduate school do finish and get that diploma. It is important to remember that there is a support system to help you reach the end of the graduate journey, all you have to do is ask!!

The Write Idea: Chipping Away at Writer's Block

Whether you're writing a term paper, a capstone project, or a thesis, writer's block can hit, and when it does it will leave you feeling completely drained. It may not seem like it, but writer's block can be a blessing in disguise. It is your brain telling you that you need to step away from that computer screen. In an 8-week online class, it may not seem like you have enough time to take a break, but you have to make yourself step away. Forcing yourself to write for writing's sake will only make you write a subpar paper, and in the end you will not be satisfied with your grade.

If you find yourself in a bind where you need to get a paper done quickly but are just getting more irritated the longer you look at that blank screen, these tips may be your answer. Instead of trying to type out your paper, you should try reverting back to an actual pen and paper. This allows you to write down your ideas, cross them out, rearrange, and change them. This will allow you to create many different trains of thought which could spark inspiration. Before you start writing make a map of places where you find inspiration. For example, if you are a physical therapy student, maybe being in a hospital or talking to different patients can help you. If you are a Cybersecurity student, maybe go to Barnes and Noble, order a beverage, and skim through tech magazines.

Make a list of activities that you like to do. What is it that you do that allows your mind to “wander free”? Do you have your best thoughts in the shower, on the toilet, on a jog, driving, or watching a documentary (just make sure to write the idea down as soon as possible)? It is important to draw inspiration from where you can and use it! Also, talk it out. Find a friend who doesn't mind being a sounding board. Sometimes when you say things out loud or have others ask you questions allows you to really think about the topic. Then take those ideas and start writing one sentence and one paragraph at a time.

Did You Know?

The city of Utica boasts the fourth highest refugee population in the United States, and in 2009 USA Today claimed that Utica, NY was among the top ten places with international flair.

A population this diverse provides great opportunities for things to do and places to eat. If you are planning a trip to Utica for residencies or commencement, be sure to check out the City of Utica webpage for a list of attractions and restaurants.

Utica, NY has many hidden gems, so get out there, find them, and enjoy!

If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to be on
It is important to remember that as a graduate student you will be doing a lot of researching and writing. One of the worst things you can do to yourself is to not take care of yourself. Make sure that you eat right. Too often students sit in front of a computer and snack; if this is you make sure you have healthy snacks. Foods that are high in sugars and fats can actually drain your energy and make you lose focus on what you are trying to accomplish, such as that final paper.

So remember to take breaks, find inspiration, and take care of yourself. If you follow this advice you will find that writing is not so bad and that you can do it!

Don't let writer's block get the best of you - take steps to fight it!