

Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.

– Thomas Edison



# Auburn Student Experience

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## USING STUDY TOOLS TO SUCCEED

In high school, everything seemed easy: I went to my classes, listened to the lectures, learned the material, and aced my exams. When I came to Auburn, I saw a drastic change in my academics. I had never experienced a college course, and I began struggling in a few classes. At first, I couldn't figure out what the root of the problem was, but I finally realized I had to improve my study habits.

I tried several new study techniques and – in the process – learned the ones I liked and that worked for me. For example, I struggled in my philosophy class, where each concept built off of another. To help me retain and connect the concepts I learned in each class, I scheduled time in my calendar to review the material regularly. I realized that by using my calendar, I could avoid cramming, which used to cause me not to perform well on exams. When I studied, I found a quiet space in the library or went outside for some fresh air. By doing this, I could really focus on my material. After taking time to reflect on my study habits, I realized that I learn best by adding charts, graphs, and illustrations to my notes. I can then look back and see a visual representation of what my notes are communicating.

Once I explored and implemented specific study techniques that are beneficial to me, I saw an improvement in my grades. I was also proud of the change in my work ethic. Now that I am more experienced, I finally feel like I have the hang of it! I will continue to use the study techniques that work and look to keep implementing more. There is a huge variety of study techniques to explore, but don't be discouraged if some work and some don't. In the end, you will find what works best.

**YOUR TURN** Do you use charts, graphs, or illustrations in your notes? If so, how well did this study tool work for you? What were the advantages and challenges? Have you tried using your notes in other ways to study or build practice tests?

Photo provided courtesy of Auburn University

the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries. So for a well-rounded study strategy, use flash cards in addition to other techniques in this chapter.

As you use your flash cards, keep these tips in mind.

- Shuffle the cards regularly, and review them multiple times. Recognizing the content once won't help you master it.
- Go through the cards twice a day for the entire week before an exam.
- If you find yourself flipping through the cards mindlessly, set them aside for a few minutes, and come back to them when you can stay focused.