

# The Roads Scholar

fall 2008

The Office of Commuter Student Services (CSS) is a University administrative office whose mission is to contribute directly and indirectly to the enhancement of the educational experience of all undergraduate commuter students at Stony Brook University. We accomplish this by providing services, programs, advocacy, research, and outreach.

*The Roads Scholar* is the official newsletter of Stony Brook University commuter students.

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# Graduate School 101

By Sunia Choudhury

Congratulations on your motivation to continue your academic career! While the application process is often fairly similar to that which you experienced applying for your undergraduate college, there are certainly some different expectations set by admission offices of graduate schools, as you will see as you read below. The difficulty of getting into graduate school varies, depending on your program of interest. For details on a specific program including pre-requisites, it is best to contact your major advisor as well as the admission office of the program to which you are looking to apply. The following is a rudimentary guide to help you get started with your journey towards graduate school.

1. **Grades:** Grades are very important in graduate school admissions. Some programs are extremely selective and will not even look at your application if it is below a certain grade point average (GPA). Look through some graduate school websites in your area of interest and research the average GPA required. Try to keep your GPA at this level or above. If you're doing poorly in classes, try to get tutoring or visit professors during office hours.
2. **Standardized Tests:** Learn more about the type of program you are looking at by finding out if a standardized test is required for admission. For example, if you're applying for law school, you have to take the LSAT. Medical school students must take the MCAT. Most other graduate programs require the GRE exam. Some programs require a GRE subject test in addition to the general GRE exam. The GRE exam has a format similar to that of the SAT. It has a verbal, quantitative (math) and analytical (writing) section. Prepare for the GRE well in advance of taking the actual exam! Consider prep courses and/or purchase study books. You can register for the exam at [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org).
3. **Research:** Psychology, biology and chemistry programs require research experience. For all other programs, speak to your major advisor regarding requirements. Research experience can be gained by working in labs on campus. Research opportunities are listed on your major's website. Take advantage of the fact that Stony Brook is a research institution! Not all universities provide undergraduate research opportunities like they do at SBU!
4. **Extracurricular Activities:** Just like undergraduate college admissions, graduate school admissions want well-rounded students. Being involved in charity work, volunteer work, clubs, organizations and maintaining good grades shows that you can manage your time efficiently. It also demonstrates that you did more during your college years than just go to class. Go to the following website to find a list of ways you can get involved on campus: <http://ws.cc.stonybrook.edu/sb/newstudents/nsinvolved.shtml>.
5. **Personal Statements:** Personal statements are basically a 1-2 page statement on your intents and goals. Personal statements give graduate school admissions the chance to get to know the real you. Watch for personal statement building workshops on campus! When you have a rough draft of your statement, take it to the Writing Center in Humanities so they can look it over ((631) 632-7405). Most importantly: have many, many people read your statement. The more people who read it, the more constructive feedback you'll get.
6. **Letters of Recommendation:** It's hard to get to know teachers when you are part of a large class. Get to know at least 2 professors by taking part in extracurricular activities or research they are involved with or attending office hours regularly! Start building a rapport with professors to ensure you have recommenders when it is time to submit applications.
7. **Resume/Curriculum Vitae (CV):** Some schools ask a CV or resume. Microsoft Word has resume templates. However, it is best to meet with a Career Counselor in the Career Center as templates often limit your format and are not specific to the type of program or work you are ultimately hoping to get into. You can also watch for resume building workshops on campus.
8. **Finances:** The admissions process is quite expensive. Application fees, transcript fees, GRE score sending fees, etc. add up. Start saving up!

Good luck with your admission process!!

### References:

-Mayne, Tracy; Norcross, John; Sayette, Michael. The Insider's Guide to Graduate Programs in Clinical and Counseling Psychology. New York: The Guilford Press, 2008.

-[www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org)

-[www.stonybrook.edu](http://www.stonybrook.edu)

# Time Flies– Can You Manage That?

By Kelli Cullen

As a college student, do you feel you have so many things to do and there are just not enough hours in the day? Between work, college, family, friends and time for yourself, the day just flies. That is why it is imperative to develop good time management. This allows you to plan your day and avoid procrastination. Committing to good time management is easier than you think and once you get used to it, you will see how much less stressful your life will be! Just follow a few simple steps and you will be on your way to having an organized routine.

## Tactics on organizing and managing time

### 1. Set reasonable goals and work towards accomplishing them.

Construct a list of things you want to complete, whether its graduating college, doing better in school, starting a family, or devoting more alone time to yourself. This allows you to plan out your daily life, and see what classes/groups you want to be involved in and for which of these you have the time. By setting and fulfilling your goals, you will feel better about your level of productivity and you will be an inspiration to others!

Setting goals will allow you to move along more smoothly into your future, keeping your mind and body focused. Goals help you to keep track of yourself and accomplish those things that make you feel successful, whether they are short or long term goals. Setting a time to complete goals is one of the most important elements, as it gives you structure and provides additional motivation.



### 2. Make a schedule.

First develop a to-do list using a planner or calendar. This will allow you to map out your daily activities. You will be able to see your available time written down, and you can plan your day accordingly. Then, step back and view your schedule, giving you the ability to see the big picture and decide if you are setting yourself up for a schedule of failure or success!

### 3. Set aside time.

#### ***For college assignments/studying and test preparation:***

Turn off any unnecessary electronic devices including phone, computer, and television to allot yourself time without noise or interruptions. This will let you devote your mind to your work completely. Going to a quiet place is a key factor for accomplishing tasks; this allows your concentration to be at its strongest. Some examples of places to go are your house when there are no possible disturbances, a quiet library, or lounges on campus which are great for studying (try the Commuter Lounge in the Library!). This will help you get your work done efficiently and will allow you more time for test and lecture preparation.

#### ***Friend/Family interaction:***

In addition to your school work and various other responsibilities, make sure to set aside time for the things that are important to you, such as family, friends and/or home duties. This will enable your schedule to work best for you. Quality time with family or friends is important for your sense of balance. This allows you to be yourself away from your books, assignments and work. Make sure you set aside personal time a least a few times a week, such as scheduled dinner plans at home, or reservations to go out to dinner. Stepping away from your books for a few hours is something everyone needs.



**So start integrating your new time management techniques today, and you will have a better tomorrow and future in the long run!**

## Great Places to Eat and Study on Stony Brook's Campus

By Rachelle Johnson

As the Stony Brook student population increases, we sometimes have to set aside more time to buy food, find a computer to log into and a desk to rest your books. So where are some of the best places to go? I hope my following tips will make your Stony Brook experience as a commuter student that much easier.



Want to grab your food and go? Try the Union Deli in the Student Union building. Getting there by 9:30am is the best time to avoid the lines and to get a nice cup of hot coffee. If you are on campus a bit later in the day, consider grabbing a quick bite at the food cart in the Administration building as it offers a lot of the same food as the SAC dining facility without the lines. At this location, you will find options such as *Wolfgang Puck* gourmet salads and *Au Bon Pain* soup, with the added opportunity to pick up a newspaper and coffee. Get there by early afternoon because it shuts down at 2:30 p.m.

Looking to save some money next semester? If you don't already have a meal plan, try it! You won't pay sales tax and you won't have to have money on you all the time. To get a meal plan, visit the Faculty Student Association in room 250 in the Union or go to <http://www.campusdining.org/index2.php>.



As far as studying is concerned, the 5<sup>th</sup> floor SINC Site in the Language Learning Center is a great place to get some homework done, use the printer, etc. There are many computers available, as well. Another gem is the Student Lounge in the Humanities building, but be prepared to be quiet. You will attract many stares if you disrupt the peace. At this location, make sure to set aside some extra time to allow personal computers to connect to Air Net. Also, the Atrium in the Humanities building is great for plugging into the internet with personal computers. One final suggestion is to study in the stacks at the Melville Library on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors. There is plenty of silence, and the Air Net connection is great.

I hope you will find my suggestions useful! For more ideas of places to eat at Stony Brook, go to the following website: <http://www.campusdining.org/index2.php>. For more ideas of places to study on campus—DO SOME EXPLORING!! You'll be sure to find some of your own favorite spots based on your personal studying style!

# Psy.D vs. Ph.D

By Sunia Choudhury

If you're a psychology major, you've probably already had to choose between a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BS) in psychology. The difference between the two bachelor degrees is subtle and most graduate schools are not particular about one over the other. The BS focuses more on natural sciences and should be considered if you want to go into fields like neuropsychology or biopsychology. The BA focuses on social sciences and is best if you want to go into fields such as clinical psychology or social psychology.

If you want to go into graduate school for psychology, you have to make the choice between Psy.D (Doctor of Psychology), also known as the Vail model, and Ph.D (Doctor of Philosophy), also known as the Boulder model. When considering one or the other, it is important to think about what you want to do after completing your advanced degree. Do you want to do research or practice? Typically, Ph.D students go into research and Psy.D students go into practice. However, a Ph.D can practice and a Psy.D can do research, if desired.

Consider the following when comparing your options between PhD and PsyD:

1. There are many more Ph.D schools than Psy.D schools, but Psy.D schools accept three times as many students as Ph.D schools.
2. Ph.D programs are more rigorous and focus primarily on research.
3. Psy.D programs offer less financial assistance than Ph.D programs. On average, Psy.D programs provide assistance to about 14% of students, compared with Ph.D programs that provide full assistance to 70-80% of students.
4. Studies show that both Ph.D and Psy.D students graduate with a substantial amount of debt. However, Ph.D students on average owe about \$22,000 and Psy.D students have debts around \$54,000.
5. Ph.D programs are on average 1 to 1.5 years longer than Psy.D programs.
6. Studies show that Ph.D students do significantly better on the psychologist licensure exam than Psy.D students.
7. Psy.D is still stigmatized as being a "lesser" degree by some scholars and programs. However, this is a trend that is starting to change.

If you're still unsure of what route you should take, it is highly recommended that you set up a meeting to discuss your options with the psychology major advisor here at Stony Brook University. Her name is Carol Carlson and she can be contacted by calling 631.632.7812 or emailing her at [carol.carlson@stonybrook.edu](mailto:carol.carlson@stonybrook.edu). Her office is located in Psychology B, room 116.

## References:

- [www.psichi.org/pubs/articles/article\\_171.asp](http://www.psichi.org/pubs/articles/article_171.asp)
- [www.stonybrook.edu](http://www.stonybrook.edu)



# Homecoming Court's Adult Learner

**By Mark Dizon**

Being eight years older than most of your undergraduate student peers can be challenging at times. Although eight years may not seem like a big difference, in some ways it is. More life experience often shapes the way people act, the way people think, and priorities in general. As you get older, often your obligations increase including school, work, family, friends- and, of course, taking care of your body so that you can keep up with all of these young folks. As an adult learner or non-traditional student (defined as any undergraduate student who is 24+ years of age), it can sometimes be intimidating to participate in a classroom or at campus events where the majority of students are traditional-aged. Many of them know each other already and share common interests and experiences. But, as an adult learner myself, I say the heck with it and get active here at Stony Brook's campus!

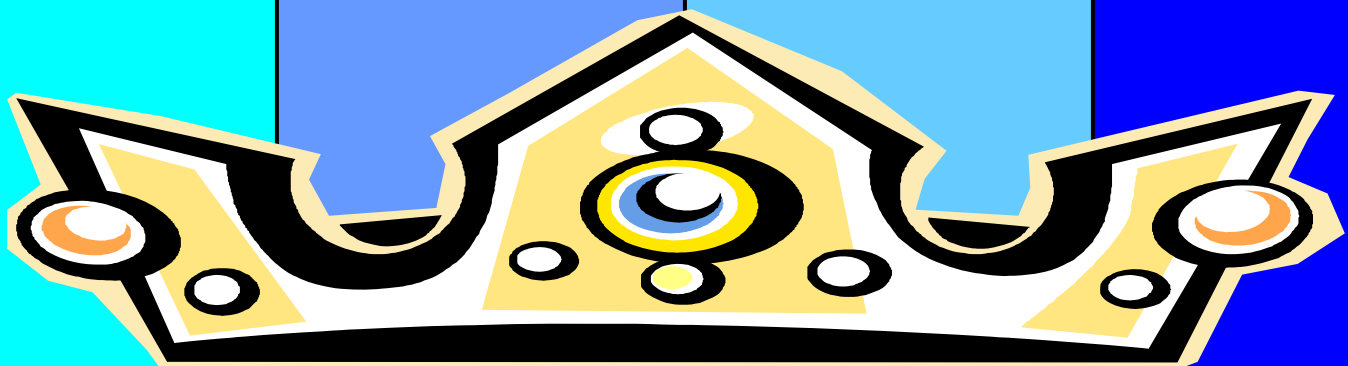
When I attended college the first time, I was a traditional-aged undergraduate. I did not participate much, I hardly took any classes, and I didn't enjoy student life. I eventually dropped out to pursue a career. After years of working in corporate America and realizing that a bachelor's degree would be beneficial to my career, I returned to school. I did not think I would get involved very much in student life. I thought I would just go to class, do my homework and earn my degree. Boy, was I wrong!

I got a part time job on campus in the SAC Facilities and Reservations Office and between the students I worked with and the nature of my position, I suddenly knew about all of the student activities on campus! I try to attend as many events as I can and try to get involved with student life and school pride as much as possible. I even ran for Homecoming King! What adult learner runs for Homecoming King? Me! I recommend it to other Adult Learners in the future- what an experience! Of course, some of my friends from outside of school who are my age poked fun at my "Never Been Kissed" moment, as they liked to refer to it- but it didn't matter.

I never participated in student life before Stony Brook and as an adult learner, it can be difficult depending on your availability to stay on campus outside of your class schedule. But, you only live once and college is the place to have fun and gain experiences, no matter what the age of the student. So, to all of you adult learners and commuter students out there, make sure to get involved! It will be a satisfying experience that you will always look back upon and never regret.

Reference:

-Gosnell, Raja, dir. Never Been Kissed. Perf. Drew Barrymore and David Arquette. 1999. DVD. Twentieth Century Fox.



**Additional ways to get involved as an Adult Learner at Stony Brook University brought to you by  
the Office of Commuter Student Services:**

There are approximately 1,950 undergraduate adult learners at Stony Brook.  
That is approximately 12.7% of the undergraduate student body!!

**ADULT LEARNER LISTSERV MAILING:**

Want to be in the know about events on campus? *SBU ADULT LEARNERS* listserv mailing is a “mass mailing” sent to all registered adult learners on campus. We typically list programs and resources that may pique the interest of adult learners. We have chosen the genre of the events we list based on feedback we have received from adult learners in the past regarding the types of programs they would like to hear more about. If you are an Adult Learner and have not received this mailing and you wish to be a part of it, you can register for it on our website! Go to Commuter Student Services website (<http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/css/index.shtml>) click on the *Advocacy* tab towards the top of the page and click on *Adult Learner/Non-Traditional students*. Then click on the link that says “Please click here” and provide us with the requested information. Traditional-aged students are welcome to join too if interested to see the programs we list on that mailing.

**ADULT LEARNER FOCUS GROUP:**

Are you an Adult Learner and would like your voice to be heard? To let us know changes you'd like to see? To let us know how much you love our events? Have suggestions about what types of programs and services you'd like to see as an adult learner or nontraditional student? Join the Adult Learner Focus Group. This group typically meets 1-2 times per semester to provide our office with feedback regarding your experience here at Stony Brook as a commuter and as an Adult Learner/Non-Traditional student. If you'd like to be a part of this group please go to Commuter Student Services website (<http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/css/index.shtml>) click on the *Advocacy* tab towards the top of the page and click on *Adult Learner/Non-Traditional students*. Then click on the link that says “Join our focus group” and provide us with the requested information. We hope to see you there!

**NATIONAL NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT WEEK:**

The first week each November is Non-Traditional Students Week. We recognize this week each year. Please check this Adult Learner/Non-Traditional students section of our website (see above instructions) for updates on what we plan for this week in 2009.

**ADULT LEARNER LUNCH BREAKS:**

In spring 2008, focus group members decided to begin organizing informal lunch breaks with one another to create an additional opportunity to meet and socialize with fellow adult learners/non-traditional students at Stony Brook University. If you would like to be kept in the loop about the following gatherings, please go to Commuter Student Services website (<http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/css/index.shtml>) click on the *Advocacy* tab towards the top of the page and click on *Adult Learner/Non-Traditional students*. Then click on the link that says “Click here to send an email letting us know” and send us a quick email!

**DRIVING FORCE**

We know that as a commuter student you have a number of responsibilities and obligations both on and off campus. Throughout the year we offer something called Driving Force. We like to help you recognize the person (s) - (limit of 2) - that is the greatest supporting force behind your scholastic and personal successes! You can request for us to send a Driving Force “Certificate of Appreciation” by going to the Adult Learner/Non-Traditional students section on our website (see above) and clicking on the “CLICK HERE for our Driving Force “Certificate of Appreciation” request form” link.

**PROGRAMMING**

Keep your eye out for promotion of Adult Learner programs brought to you by our office. These events will be posted on *SBU ADULT LEARNERS* as well as on our Blackboard page (of which you should all have access— if not, see directions on who to join by clicking on the Blackboard tab on our website.) Make sure to stop by to meet other Adult Learners and the Commuter Student Services staff!

# Take Note of This!

By Zuby Habibi

Being a student myself, I know how overwhelming it can be when it comes to studying for upcoming exams. However there are ways to minimize these feelings by enhancing your note-taking skills in the class room! Note-taking is an important skill to have and can easily be strengthened.

The first step to note-taking in the classroom is to be prepared before class. Make sure that you have read the assigned readings prior to lecture. This will help you familiarize yourself with the topics that will be discussed in lecture. By doing this, you can also determine what you need to take more notes about in lecture and the degree to which you understand the concepts. If you still do not understand parts of the topic after lecture, you should also prepare questions to ask your professor or teaching assistant during their office hours.

While in lecture, it is important to listen intently and be aware of any signals that may indicate important information that you need to be acquainted with for the exam. Record any information on anything written on the board, projector, or any printed information, which is fair game for an exam. It is essential to write much about keywords, phrases, and examples that professors write down or mention during class. This way, it will be easy for you to remember various references and how concepts connect to each other. If certain information is repeated, it is most likely because it is important to know for the exam. Make sure to take note of this by using a symbol, such as a star.

When the professor uses terms such as “steps”, “characteristics”, “methods”, “techniques”, “another reason why” etc., it is sure to be something significant to take down. Often professors will even stress something by saying “Focus on this more” or “Pay attention to this” Abbreviating is also an important skill to have when note-taking. Professors often talk faster than you can write, so abbreviating and knowing your abbreviations is essential.

You should review your notes soon after each class to write down any last thoughts, correct misspelled words, and clarify anything you might misinterpret later. You should continue to keep up with the reading material each week to make sure you are connecting the concepts learned in class and taken in your notes to the ones in the assigned readings. It is also important to connect the concepts of lectures to each other because often a topic may run for more than one lecture. Creating questions from the information you have will help you prepare for the upcoming exam. A vital task to take advantage of is reviewing after the exam. By looking at your exam, you can analyze how detailed your notes should be, and the number of questions that came from your notes as each class will vary in this area. This will help you to do better on the following exam.



# Sakina's Travels

## A Look at Canada

By Sakina Nayaz

It was far too high for me and looking down the transparent floor gave me goose bumps. But there I was, feeling as though I was on top of the world! A feeling I wanted to hold on to for the rest of my life. I was in the famous CN Tower, the world's tallest tower and free standing structure, standing over 1,815 feet in Toronto, Canada.

Many say that you haven't truly seen India unless you have been to the Taj Mahal or that you haven't experienced Egypt unless you see the pyramids. I think the same goes for the Niagara Falls and Canada. My family and I went to view the majestic Niagara Falls from the Canadian side. People from all over the



world and different walks of life come there for one main purpose- to appreciate nature. It was amazing to witness how the waterfalls come roaring down powerfully, not caring about anything that may come in their way. We also went aboard the Maid of the Mist, a ship that takes visitors close to the base of the falls.



While I was living in the United Arab Emirates, I attended a British school which required us to learn a foreign language. I was glad I chose to learn French which proved to be very helpful when I went to Canada where French is one of its official languages. Ordering food in the restaurants of Quebec and asking for directions was exciting as the knowledge of French was finally useful since I don't get the chance to converse in it in New York. It is here that I learned the importance of knowing more than one language! I look forward to future trips to Canada and elsewhere.

Happy travels, everyone!

### Want to learn a new Language?

If you are interested in learning French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, or Chinese for free, visit the following BBC website: [bbc.co.uk/languages](http://bbc.co.uk/languages) or go to [freelanguage.org](http://freelanguage.org) if you want to learn a language other than the ones mentioned above (*Reader's Digest Magazine*).

