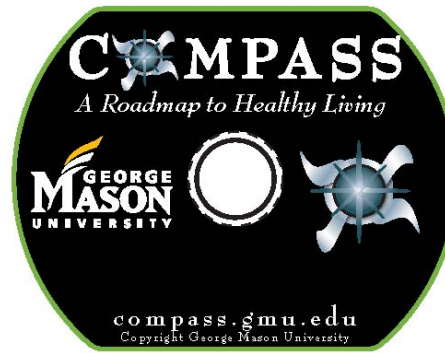


Dear First-Year Student:

It's hard to believe that you've been back on campus for over a month – and it's already time for papers and mid-terms. Since coming back from the Fall Semester, you've enrolled in some new classes, met new faculty members, and gotten involved with different classmates. Hopefully, you built upon the study habits you learned during the Fall semester – you have learned more about ways of studying, writing papers, organizing your time, and getting the most out of your classes.

There have also been some external challenges, such as the constantly changing weather (from snow and ice to tempting hints of Springtime), to frustrations with how things overall may be going for you, to the very disconcerting campus tragedy in Illinois. In particular, the recent shooting at Northern Illinois University can be quite unnerving for anyone, and we hope that you are sharing your reactions and feelings by talking with friends, family, and campus and community leaders. You may have seen a recent email from Vice President Hubler and Dr. Pollard; they offer Mason's Counseling and Psychological Services with professional counselors who provide assistance with this situation, and with any other situations that you may face. They are located in SUB I, and are ready to assist; just ask!

What is foremost in the minds of many students at this point of the semester is concern about papers that are due and mid-terms that are scheduled. Much of this occurs before Spring Break, so that you can truly have a break from classes and from campus life. Looking at how you did last Fall, and what you learned about *how to study* and *ways of writing well*, consider looking at the **COMPASS** resource to guide you. Now is a good time to review the brief essay on writing and study skills, called "Making the Grade"; it can be found [here](#). In particular, take a look at the "Tips for Academic Success"; the author identifies 10 tips, included here as a box.



COMING SOON! The brand new and improved COMPASS CD-ROM!

TIPS FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

- Be realistic.
- Develop a study plan.
- Include breaks during your study time.
- Be Assertive.
- Stay Organized.
- Prioritize your activities.
- Reward Yourself.
- Be good to your body.
- Don't be a Perfectionist.
- Seek support when you need it.

*From "Making the Grade"; Christina Benedi, M.A.,
Mason's Counseling and Psychological Services*

In addition, if you need assistance with writing skills, check out Mason's Writing Center. They have offices in Robinson Hall and Enterprise Hall on the Fairfax campus, as well as Occoquan Building on the Prince William campus. Did you know that they also have an On-Line Writing Lab? For more about their services, see writingcenter.gmu.edu.

Finally, you'll also find some suggestions prepared by a Mason senior; he highlights practical approaches for you to consider as you enter this week – and next week! We hope you'll find these comments valuable as you go through the next two weeks – and that you find them helpful in maximizing YOUR academic success!

SUGGESTIONS FROM A MASON SENIOR

Everyone knows the struggle that one faces when the deadline for papers is near; or when there is a lot of reading that needs to be done in a limited amount of time. The answer in most cases is good time management but sometimes you may just 'feel' like you just cannot seem to concentrate. Here are some quick tips to deal with that situation

- a) Find a study partner who will be able to help you concentrate.
- b) Find a physical activity that will help you relieve your stress; either at the Aquatic Center or Field House. Choose an activity that will not leave you exhausted but energized and focused.
- c) Look up numerous study tips, skills and strategies that best fit your needs, all available through the [COMPASS website](#).
- d) Make note of things you can do in the future to avoid these roadblocks. Write down reminders to yourself and post them on your wall, this will not only reduce your workload stress but will enable you to free up time to enjoy other activities and projects.

Prepared by a major in Health Promotion