Creating A Path Toward Success in College
By Stephanie S. Marshall

For some, this may be your first semester in college. You may be a continuing student who is returning after summer or winter break or perhaps you have transferred from another institution. Others of you may be returning to school after a period of time. Whether you are a freshman, continuing or returning student, the key to becoming a successful student lies in your hands. In order to achieve this success, there are important steps to follow that will help you discover new ways to reach your academic goals.

Three to four weeks into each semester, you should review how things are going so far. Here is a list of twenty one questions for you to consider. Think of this exercise as an opportunity for self-examination–ungraded! Be honest and open and you will probably teach yourself something. The sooner you are able to assess where you are and where you are going, the sooner you can resolve any concerns that may cause problems later on.

1. Have I missed any classes? If so, why?
2. If I missed a class, did I get the notes and make up the work?
3. How similar is Bronx Community College to wherever I was before (high school, another college)? How is it different?
4. How have I responded to those similarities and differences?
5. Have I introduced myself to an instructor?
6. Have I gone to an instructor during office hours?
7. How much of my reading/assignments have I completed?
8. Do I try to read assigned material before the lectures?
9. Do I feel comfortable talking in class? Do I know why or why not?
10. Am I comfortable with the material being covered in classes? If not, have I considered what to do to feel more comfortable?
11. Do I have enough time to proofread my completed assignments before handing them in?
12. How do I feel about the work I'm doing?
13. Have I felt overwhelmed during the past few weeks? If so, how often? Have I thought about how to address it or whom to talk to?
14. Have I begun trying to find a balance between social life and academic life?
15. Am I sleeping enough? If not, why not?
16. Where do I study? Does this location allow me to concentrate as much as I'd like?
17. If I want to improve my academic performance, do I know where to start and where I'd like to end up?
18. What is the best experience I've had at Bronx Community College so far?
19. What is one experience I've had that I would go back and change if I could?
20. Am I concerned about any behavioral patterns I'm developing?
21. What is one thing I'd like to accomplish this term? This can be almost anything–academic, athletic, social, personal– but it should be specific.

Have you enjoyed this exercise? Did you learn anything about yourself that you may not have known? You should return to this exercise periodically to assess how you are doing. These questions can help determine the classes you enjoy, what activities outside the classroom are exciting, and what you haven't tried but want to. I encourage you to challenge yourself and explore the many options the campus has to offer. If you have questions, don't hesitate to meet with your instructor and contact an academic advisor. You may also visit us in the Evening and Weekend Office. We are all here for you.

Have a wonderful semester!

“No two persons ever read the same book.”
-Edmund Wilson, critic (1895-1972)