

# Imagine Success: Checklist helps students take control of their education

January 30, 2015

Students don't always know the tools available to them – and the ways they can contribute to their own success.

To help set them on the right path, Professor I.J. Byrnes developed the following checklist – dubbed “Taking Control of Your Education” – last semester for her PHI 201: Ethics course

“The attached handout is meant to raise awareness of the importance of attendance, the relationship of financial aid to performance, the many clubs and activities available to students, the benefits of campus involvement to one's resume/scholarship/transfer applications and making the connection between the classroom and the professional work world,” Professor Byrnes said.

Byrnes wanted to make students aware of the many services the campus offers, as well as encourage them to look down the road to scholarship applications and transfer opportunities, she said. Students who receive the handout reacted positively.

Overall, she wanted the students to receive a clear message that her interest in their success goes beyond their performance in her class – and that the college is invested in their success, too.

“Sometimes they just need a few details and a little encouragement,” she said. “As a faculty adviser to Phi Theta Kappa, I also think it is important to encourage academic excellence and provide some insight into how to achieve that.”

Read the handout below.

## **PHI 201 Student Success Guide: Taking Control of Your Education**

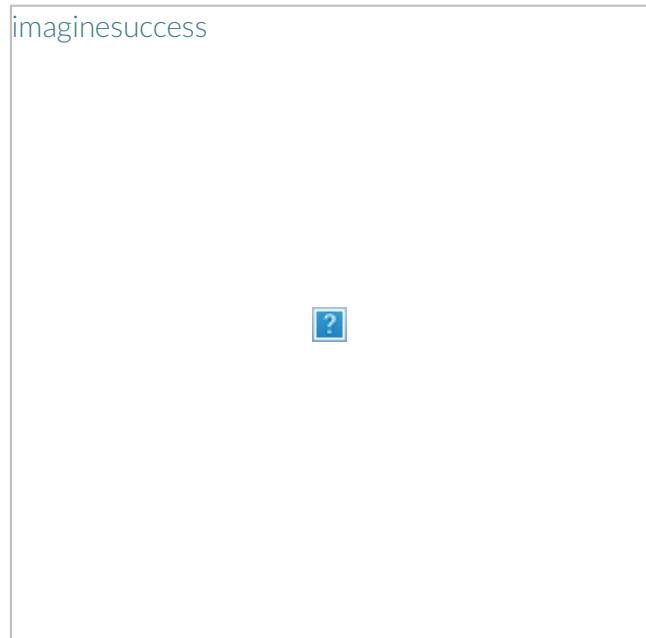
- Am I keeping **separate folders** for the following: financial aid material; letters of recommendation from faculty; one for each course I am taking; advisement materials so I know when to advance register for next semester and what courses to take; health services material such as proof of immunization
- Have I created a **resume** for myself noting my job history, education, internships, volunteer activities and honors to date?

- Am I aware of **honors to be earned at SUNY Broome** such as: transcript recognition for high GPA's such as the Dean's List and President's List; scholarships from my department/academic division; serving as a Graduation Marshal; membership in Phi Theta Kappa, SUNY Broome's Two-Year International Honor Society (Note that this list is not exhaustive)
- Am I investigating four year colleges/universities for **transfer** in the near future? Have I taken an in-person or on-line tour of any possible transfer institutions? Note that it is advisable to begin discussing transfer options with your adviser by the second semester you are a student at SUNY Broome
- Am I aware of the **minimum standards of academic success** I must achieve in order to continue to receive financial aid? Am I aware of **attendance requirements** to continue to receive financial aid?
- Am I aware that I may need to demonstrate **campus and community involvement** and **leadership** in order to succeed in scholarship and transfer applications?
- Am I aware that there are many **student clubs** on campus that may address my need to demonstrate campus involvement and leadership?
- Am I aware that there are **weekly/monthly/yearly enrichment activities on campus**, including academic Common Hour programs, Great Book Discussions, Convocation Day, the annual Ethics conference, field trips to museums and other cities that are often open to all members of the campus community, Student Assembly meetings, LingoNet, international student events, college committee meetings which seek student participation, student club meetings, scheduled sessions of Toastmasters International that may help me to enhance my resume/scholarship/transfer applications?
- Am I aware that employers not only want to see applicants with high GPA's but applicants with good **soft skills** such as: the ability to **communicate** with and work well with others; **cross-cultural experience** or awareness; a clear sense of appropriate and **ethical work behavior**; perseverance and a strong **work ethic**; **critical thinking skills** and the ability to think of one's feet. Have I determined how best to demonstrate and strengthen these skills in my classes and on campus? How can I prove I have them?
- Am I aware of how to **investigate career options** if I am undecided in my degree/career plans? Have I considered the following: internships; consulting with my adviser and offices on campus that offer relevant information; shadowing a professional in any fields of possible interest to me; arranging an appointment with one of my professors in order to discuss their perspective on a career of possible interest to me; joining a club relevant to my possible career/transfer interests?
- Am I **reading articles or watching TED talks or related videos** in my degree field or possible career field? Am I learning who the leaders in these areas are and what the important terms of art in my field are? Am I aware of expectations for those in my degree/career field? How am I developing/strengthening these skills?

- Am I aware that it would be helpful to practice my **communication and para-professional skills** with my professors? Am I aware of the expectations for professional communication and professional behavior? Have I researched these and how am I practicing/strengthening these?
- Am I reading/listening to/watching sources that will keep me apprised of **local, national and international news**? Am I aware that such familiarity is an expectation in many work places?
- If I needed to make **small talk/casual talk** with a would-be employer, what topic(s) would I be comfortable conversing about? Would it be appropriate in a professional work setting? How do I intend to strengthen my skills in this area so I can converse with a professional who will respect my extra-curricular knowledge?
- Do I know the name of my **professor, divisional Dean, college President, academic adviser, financial aid officer**, etc.? Am I aware that employers will require that I demonstrate knowledge of similar figures at work and that a prospective employer/officer at a transfer institution may be concerned if I am not familiar with facets of my own college?
- Am I requesting **letters of recommendation** from my professors in a timely way? Am I providing my professors with all the details they need to write such a letter (full name, GPA, degree program, campus activities, community activities, hobbies, honors, deadline for submission of letter, where the requested letter should be sent...and how)? Am I appropriately storing these valuable letters in a folder or on-line file? Have I sent my professor a professional and detailed **note of thanks** for an activity s/he is not required to do?

**Am I aware that I am in control of** my course success, my transfer success, my ability to secure detailed letters of recommendation from professors, the development of my soft skills, following through on scholarship searches and applications for both scholarship and transfer?

**IJB/ijb Distributed the Week of September 1, 2014**



Filed Under: [Focus on Accomplishments](#)

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The Focus: SUNY Broome's Faculty & Staff Newsletter