

THE COLLEGE STUDENT SUCCESS PLAYBOOK

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Plan Smart. Perform Strong.

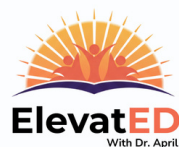
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Dr. April Ruiz

Helping College Students Succeed

<https://elevatedwithdrapril.com/>



A Clear Path to Thriving in College

College brings freedom, flexibility, and opportunity – but it also demands independence, discipline, and strategy. For students, the shift can feel overwhelming. For parents, support looks different than it did in high school.

This playbook provides a practical framework to help students take ownership and help families support with confidence – without hovering.

Inside, you'll learn:

- How college expectations differ from high school
- A simple system for mastering the syllabus
- How to avoid freshman GPA shock
- A weekly structure to stay organized and ahead

Success in college doesn't happen by accident. It happens with intention.

Let's approach this season with clarity, confidence, and a plan.



College Is Different (Here's Why)

The shift from high school to college isn't about intelligence; it's about independence.

In High School:

- Teachers remind you
Deadlines and expectations are repeated.
- Daily assignments
Frequent grades keep students on track.
- Structured time
Schedules are built in and closely supervised.

In College:

- The syllabus is a contract
Students are responsible for tracking all expectations.
- Fewer grades
A few major assignments determine the final grade.
- Independent learning
Time management and follow-through are expected.

College rewards students who can plan, prioritize, and take ownership of their learning.



The Syllabus Strategy

College success starts on Day 1.

- Put every deadline in your calendar
Don't rely on memory – schedule it immediately.
- Highlight exam dates
Know early which weeks require extra preparation.
- Identify heavy weeks
Notice when multiple assignments overlap.
- Plan for big assignments in advance
Break large projects into smaller steps with mini-deadlines.

One hour of planning at the start of the semester can prevent weeks of stress later.

✓ Try This Today

Open one syllabus and enter every deadline into your calendar right now. Then choose one major assignment and schedule its first small step.

How to Avoid the Freshman GPA Shock

College grades often surprise students who rely on last-minute studying. Consistency is the difference-maker.

- Study 2–3 hours per credit hour weekly
Treat study time like a scheduled class.
- Attend office hours early
Build relationships before you're struggling.
- Form study groups intentionally
Choose focused peers with shared goals.
- Use active recall
Test yourself instead of just rereading notes.

Small weekly habits prevent big end-of-semester surprises.

✓ Try This This Week

Calculate how many study hours your course load requires and block them into your calendar. Then attend one professor's office hour, even if you just introduce yourself.



Your Weekly CEO Meeting (With Yourself)

Successful students don't "wing it." They run their week with intention.

Every Sunday:

- Review all classes
Check syllabi, upcoming deadlines, and announcements.
- Plan assignments
Decide what will be worked on – and when.
- Schedule study blocks
Put focused study time directly into your calendar.
- Identify stress points
Notice busy days early and adjust before overwhelm hits.

A 20-minute weekly reset keeps you proactive instead of reactive.

✓ Try This This Week

Set a recurring 20-minute Sunday meeting on your calendar and treat it like an appointment you cannot miss. If you'd like, I can now help you craft a strong final page that wraps this whole guide together and leads into your call to action.



You Don't Have to Navigate College Alone

Don't Just Read This. Use It.

Information doesn't change outcomes.

Implementation does.

This week:

- ✓ Schedule your CEO meeting
- ✓ Calendar every deadline
- ✓ Attend one office hour
- ✓ Study with intention

If you want structured support, accountability, or guidance tailored to your student's goals:

Schedule a consultation at elevatedwithdrapril.com

For parents:

Support doesn't mean hovering – it means equipping.

For students:

Independence doesn't mean isolation – it means ownership.

Share this guide. Start the system. Elevate your college experience.

– Dr. April

