

So you want to be a Science Student...

Whether it's pre-med, engineering, or simply a passion for chemistry—you have a long and exciting journey ahead of you at Baylor University. The journey is long because it takes perseverance. The journey is exciting because you will discover a world that you never knew existed, and as you move deeper into each of the sciences, you will find progressively more unanswered questions. Therefore, I found that the success of your journey as a science student will depend on these two principles: (1) How well you persevere and (2) What you do with the unanswered questions. To better explain what I mean, I have listed several sub-categories. This is simply a list of what worked for me. Please feel free to tailor it to your own needs as we are each unique individuals.

Perseverance:

- Take Classes Outside of the Sciences
 - You might be asking, “What do non-science courses have to do with perseverance?” Perseverance does not mean that you should make the journey harder for yourself by taking semester after semester of solid science courses. You will burn out early. Perseverance also includes being strategic and recognizing your own personal interests and abilities. Non-science classes expanded my mind differently than the sciences, and I often welcomed them as a touch of reality and humanity. Please commit to taking at least a few non-science courses that cover topics you can be passionate about. I can almost guarantee lower stress levels, higher mental capacity, and better equipment to persevere.
- Commit to Studying Daily, Not Just the Night Before the Test
 - You will quickly find that you simply cannot succeed in science courses if you try to cram everything in the night before. Make a plan to study a little everyday, perhaps something as simple as re-writing your class notes or working out practice problems in your text books. I promise you that you will thank yourself the night before each test and especially during finals.
- Yes, you will be studying twice as much as your roommates and friends (unless they are science people too)
 - Accept this fact early and you will be fine.
- Do not Become a Recluse
 - Unfortunately, it is easy to get so caught up in doing well in school that you forget to branch out. Many science students that I have known do much better if they still allow themselves to have some fun and social time as a change of pace from studying.

Dealing with Unanswered Questions:

- The way I see it, you can do one of two things: You can allow the unanswered questions to frustrate you (and you will find yourself just studying enough to get by, but you are not

allowing yourself the full benefit of your classes); or you can allow the unanswered questions to excite you and take you deeper into your field of study.

- Allowing them to Frustrate You:
 - If you choose this road, you will be doing yourself a disservice and perhaps science isn't your passion. While you may get by in basic freshman level courses, it will be nearly impossible to excel in upper-level courses where professors may expect you to have already mastered material from into-level courses.
- Getting Excited:
 - I hope you choose this route. You will find that your academic career is both challenging and rewarding. You will learn more than you ever thought was possible. You will be amazed at the complexity of the world around us and find yourself asking more questions as you fall in love with the learning process.
 - **Go to Your Professors!** They are there because they got excited about the unanswered questions and they want to share their knowledge and excitement with you. Baylor professors are unlike those anywhere else because they love their students often more than what they teach. This is one of the most rewarding things you can do while at Baylor, and I don't know a single student who doesn't look back wishing he or she had spent more time with professors.

You *still* want to be a science student? Congratulations! As I previously mentioned, your life is about to get exciting. The world around us is an amazing creation. Dig deep. You will hit some speed bumps and perhaps even sleepless nights, but persevere and get excited! Getting into Baylor is already an accomplishment. You have been given many gifts and I know you will succeed. Sic 'em!

Sincerely,

A University Scholar/Premed Graduate
Class of 2007