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Welcome back!
The sun rises. A new day. Happy New Year! It’s all about a fresh start. Now’s the time to plan a great semester. By actively identifying goals, making plans and taking control, you can keep stress at a manageable level and get the most out of the next 4 ½ months.

Don’t ease into the semester, take care of business now.
The workload may seem less the first couple of weeks of the semester, so NOW is the time to map out your academic, work and fun time for the entire semester. Planning ahead will pay major dividends later when due dates are flying at you left and right. Read through all your syllabi and write in your planner – please tell me you use a datebook or planner…you must! – the dates of quizzes, tests, and papers or projects.

Talk with the boss at your job about time you might need off prior to tests or paper due dates. Look at the reading assignments and realistically assess how much free time you’ll have for clubs or committees or your significant other. Let the other people know when you may not be as available to them because you’ll have a lot of studying to do. They’ll understand.

It’s all about carefully planning NOW in order to avoid being overwhelmed later.

Battle stress with strategy.
Writing down plans and important dates, and staying on top of your daily schedule helps you feel in control of your life, and that sense of control helps keep stress at manageable levels. A little stress keeps us alert; too much stress can affect us in many ways – feeling restless or irritable, having difficulty concentrating, depression, panic attacks, etc. Believing that you can control your life and following through on commitments are powerful stress reducers and self-confidence builders.

Think ahead; don’t look back.
Stay focused on the present with some thought toward the future. Dwelling on the past can often interfere with motivation. Maybe things didn’t go well for you in previous semesters, or maybe you’re on academic probation. Worrying about that or beating yourself up about how poorly you did last semester won’t help you now. You have the opportunity at the start of each semester to start fresh and to make things better. Seize that opportunity! A positive attitude, careful time management and taking control of your life can go a long way toward creating success now and in the future.

If you need help getting organized, or asserting yourself with family, friends and roommates, or establishing goals and finding motivation in your life, call Counseling Services at 630-844-5118. Using a resource like Counseling shows strength and a desire to gain control of your life. We’re here to help U have a great semester!
It is that time of year again when we look inward to find resolutions to our health issues and dream of what we can change in our life. Change begins with the desire to want to change a life problem. A shift in perspective of the current problem starts by considering a more fulfilling alternative to our current state of being. Sometimes this is facilitated by a traumatic event. A friend told me that she had been unhappy with her weight and had begun considering changes in her life. However, it was not until she was driving to work one day and the button on her pants popped off that she felt the push to change. She had to fix her pants and go on with her day. It was in that moment she decided to commit to changing herself. What is your current perspective on the thing you want to change? Did you have a “button-popping” moment? Write down these feelings and consider what the change means to you and the consequences of not changing. This can be a scary part of the process as deeply transformative change asks us to see ourselves in a completely different light by the end of the process. This is the essence of change.

What comes after the “button-popping moment”?

Overcoming fear: Desire and intent need direction and fear can stop that direction. To stop this from happening, a clear plan for change must be formulated. The first step is to develop a vision statement. Vision statements are what guide planning changes. It is ok to be somewhat generic at this point. My friend’s vision statement might have been, “I want to lose weight.” This vision statement crystallizes the “button-popping” moment into a solution pathway.

Setting goals: The next step is to take the vision statement and decide what success would be. This is where being specific is important. Look at the previous vision statement. Does it contain a measurable successful outcome? My friend might begin to think about exactly how much weight she would like to lose. A tool such as body mass index is a good measuring stick of success because it is well studied and fairly reliable. She would look at her body mass index (BMI) and see that she is 20 pounds from being in a normal BMI range.

Establishing a timeline: The next decision would be to determine how long it might take to lose the 20 pounds. She might decide that a pound a week weight loss is a reasonable expectation. It is ok at times to estimate what is reasonable for you with the understanding that you cannot see into the future and know precise timeframes. Using these decisions, she would be able to reformulate her vision statement into, “I want to lose 20 pounds in 20 weeks to bring my weight into the normal range of BMI.” This statement contains a successful, measurable goal.

Putting the plan into action: A set of actions needs to be created to help bring that goal to life. How would my friend lose 20 pounds in 20 weeks? She may lower her caloric intake and increase her exercise. After researching how to lose weight, she might come up with a strategy to start a 1500 calorie American Diabetes Association diet and walk three times a week for 30 minutes. Over time, her needs might change and so it is important that she keep an open mind and be prepared to evaluate her progress from time to time. It can be meaningful and helpful to find a friend who is going through the same process to talk about helpful tips for success. The point is that even though her goals and strategies are specific, they need not be concrete and unchanging.

Change is a very important and challenging facet of daily living. It is what takes us from a place we do not want to be, to one where we can achieve higher levels of health. Change does not need to be a scary, nebulous process. Goals and strategies can be extremely helpful in achieving optimum health as they provide clear direction that is measurable. Motivation is sustained when we can see where we started from and just how far we have come to achieving optimal health goals. Find your “button popping” moment and reach to achieve what you dare to dream.
Over winter break, an acquaintance emailed a link to a Facebook group to me that I had yet to discover on my own. A quick glance at the group description provided me with a new piece of “lingo” for texters. TFLN, I now know, is the acronym for Texts from Last Night.

Interesting, I thought. A quick “google” of TFLN brought me the following summary from Wikipedia: “Texts From Last Night (TFLN) is a regularly updated blog that re-posts short text messages submitted by its users. The site tends to post texts that are shocking or scandalous. The texts are sent in by people who wake in the morning ‘to find regrettable messages sent to or from their mobile phones.’ The receiver then sends the discovered text into the website. The copies of the messages do not show the phone numbers, but only area codes. Since the texts are often similar to late night drunk dials, they’re often graphic and sexual in nature, thus not safe for work.”

Of course, that was not the end of my education in this new cyber-concept. Since TFLN is an Open Group, I took the opportunity to check this group out for myself. A review of these posts was an abrupt awakening. I was surprised by the willingness of the posters, many of whom appear to be college students based on their comments, to depict their exploits and the exploits of their friends in this public venue.

This led to me another, bigger question: What need does this sort of communication satisfy? Is it intended to be a humorous diversion? Does reading about negative experiences of others create the impression that these represent a “typical” experience of college students and young adults? Many of the comments are sexual in nature; posters seem to report their sexual encounters with the same casualness they might employ to describe the restaurant they visited last night. Even more astonishing to me was the willingness of the posters to share information about themselves that many people would consider very private (at the minimum) and potentially quite damaging to one’s character. Yet tales (boasts?) of conquests (particularly those of a sexual nature) seem willingly shared.

After looking through a few days worth of posts, I stopped to consider the changing social norms that seem to be supported and promoted by the changing communication formats of our evolving technology. I wondered how this would impact the students at AU, both today and in their future relationships at work, home, and community.

I also considered our students’ naiveté regarding the accessibility of posts in this sort of environment. A colleague recounted to me an experience she had in the classroom. She was discussing the job search process with her class and stressed the importance of “cleaning up” Facebook pages, Twitter posts, etc., in order to present a positive image to potential employers. The students were shocked to hear that employers would use what they found on-line as a reason not to hire someone—some students erroneously believed that this would be against the law. I have similar experiences when addressing students regarding policy violations that are documented on various social networking sites.

Ultimately, my exposure to TFLN prompted a need to get a message out to the AU community: Students need to understand how damaging negative images on the Internet can be to current and future opportunities. Which leaves me with just one final question: How would you feel if your grandmother read your Facebook page?

Amy Andrzejewski, Dean of Students, Aurora University
Responses welcome to amya@aurora.edu
In 1995, facing a shortage of classrooms at Freeman Elementary School, then Superintendent Sherry Eagle approached Gary Jewel, Dean of the School of Education at Aurora University, to see if District 129 might rent three classrooms for a two-year period. As a result of the resulting partnership, Freeman fourth graders attended class in the brick building at 1330 Marseillaise, just east of Dunham Hall, now known as the Parolini Music Center, beginning with the 1996-97 school year. Partnerships between the District 129 staff and university professors of education began to grow. University students began observing in classrooms and working with the teachers. By the 1998-1999 school year, 1330 Marseillaise was too small to house all of the fourth graders, and a portable classroom was added.

In January of 2006, Aurora University opened its newest building on campus, the Institute for Collaboration. The design of the Institute for Collaboration included eight classrooms and office space for the Partnership School. Facing similar issues in shortage of classrooms at McCleery Elementary School, fifth grade students from McCleery joined the Partnership School. Currently, the Partnership School houses four sections of Freeman fourth grade students and four sections of McCleery fifth grade students.

The partnership between District 129 and Aurora University has continued, providing a unique learning environment and many opportunities for our students. University students continue to work with the Partnership School’s students and staff. As the youngest members of our campus community, please keep their presence in mind as you make your way around campus. These impressionable young students look with admiration at their college-aged counterparts. Please treat them with the respect and sensitivity they deserve.
# 4 U in January

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<td>Ski Trip Sign Up, Spartan Spot, Noon-1pm (must bring AU ID)</td>
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Student Organization Events are listed in BLUE
Activities Programming Board Events are listed in PURPLE
Arts & Ideas Series Events are listed in RED
Student Life Events are listed in GREEN
AUSA Events are listed in YELLOW
Academic Calendar Information is listed in BROWN

**WANT2KNOW MORE?**
To learn more about upcoming campus events, visit the Student Activities website (http://www.aurora.edu/activities). An exciting event is always right around the corner!