

Dear Intro to Cell and Molecular Biology Students,  
**HERE ARE A FEW TIPS FOR HOW TO SUCCEED  
IN BIOL0101 AT UPB.**

From a Biology minor and ACTC Peer Tutor

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**THE SYLLABUS IS YOUR MAP TO SUCCESS.**

Professors will tell you to read the syllabus from the day you start college to the day you graduate. This is for good reason, because reading the syllabus regularly makes it easier to know when exams and assignments are. This helps you avoid forgetting to do assignments or study for exams until the last minute and allows you to plan ahead. You will have an easier time managing the semester this way.

**READ THE TEXTBOOK AND ANY OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS.**

Please read the textbook and anything else the professor assigns for you to read. There is a reason why the professor requires it. Not only does reading help reinforce what is taught in class, but it can also help you understand concepts that did not make sense in class. Integrating the notes you take while reading and class notes can help fill in gaps that might exist in both notes sets alone. Reading might seem time-consuming, but if you adopt an effective reading strategy, you will end up studying along the way. This will actually save you time!

**FOCUS ON DIAGRAMS AND PICTURES.**

Pay attention to any diagrams and pictures that appear either in lecture PowerPoints or assigned readings, and draw in your notes any diagrams the professor draws on the board. If there are no diagrams or pictures in the book, create your own or find some on the Internet. Visuals are a great way to help organize information about a particular concept and have it all in front of you at a glance. This will also prepare you for any diagrams that appear on an exam, such as in questions that ask you to label diagrams.

**DO NOT STUDY AT THE LAST MINUTE.**

Build quiet study time into your schedule and start studying as soon as the material has been presented, not the week or day before the exam. Review lecture or textbook notes within twenty-four hours of taking them, and hold regular review sessions. This will help you feel much less overwhelmed and help the information stick in your head. This also gives you more time for building connections between concepts and understanding the bigger picture, not just the facts.

**USE WORDS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE.**

One of the hardest parts of biology is getting used to all the new vocabulary you will be exposed to. This does not have to be something you dread, however. Learning to write down new words you encounter and learn not only the word, but also the roots and affixes that make it up, can become a lifesaver. Words in biology make much more sense when you learn each part of the word, and it can make it easier to understand new words you encounter without having to look them up. This can also make exams easier, as it can help you figure out which answers do and do not make sense. Be sure to also take advantage of mnemonics when learning the stages and steps of difference processes or other similar lists of information!

**TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.**

Your coffee cup is not the only cup you need to fill to be a successful student. Getting enough sleep, exercising, and eating well are important to your ability to perform well in your classes. Make sure to take breaks from school and work to recharge and connect with friends. Self-care should not be overlooked, but self-care should not be an excuse to indulge in habits that are bad for you. For example, while ordering pizza can be a fun reward, it should not be your only go-to reward! Developing habits that are both healthy and rewarding will benefit you in the long-run.