

***COMPENDIUM NEOPHYTORUM  
(THE NEOPHYTES' COMPENDIUM)***

**Excerpted from *CURSUS HONORUM (COURSE OF HONORS)*  
The Monthly Email Newsletter of the ACES James Scholar Honors Program  
Edited by Rob Chappell, M.A., E.F.M.**

***Editor's Corner (September 2002)***

**By Rob Chappell, Editor, *CURSUS HONORUM***

A couple of weekends ago, the Editor had an interesting dream that he would like to share. In this dream, he was a freshman in ACES on a futuristic version of the UIUC campus. His major was aquaculture (i.e., raising fish and cultivating plants underwater), and he was experiencing his first week of classes. He was taking such subjects as marine biology, biochemistry, calculus, and oceanography. The Editor must confess that he was feeling quite overwhelmed as he navigated from one class to the next and his homework assignments began to pile up like a tsunami on the desk in his dorm room.

Of course, the College of ACES does not offer a major in aquaculture at the present time, but that is beside the point. The message of the Editor's dream is quite easy to unpack. All of us, no matter how old we may be, can remember a time when we felt a bit overwhelmed by new surroundings. Perhaps it was moving into a new neighborhood, making the transition from middle school to high school, or attending a college or university for the first time. In such circumstances, we can sometimes feel lonely even if we are surrounded by teeming hordes of other people.

First-year students – whether freshmen or transfers – should remember that there are numerous resources available on this campus to help them adjust to their new surroundings. Deans, faculty advisors, instructors, and RAs can offer helpful advice, and keeping up contacts with family and friends who reside elsewhere can be beneficial as well. Those who have already been through such a transition can be of especial help to new students by sharing insights and strategies with them on how to thrive within the University community.

***What Is the Role of an Academic Advisor? (October 2003)***

**By Karen Plawecki, M.S., Dietetics Advising Coordinator,  
Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition**

Every student has an academic advisor -- a person who is there to help and work with you. Your academic advisor is one of the best people to know as you are progressing through your academic career. There are three different times to seek out your advisor.

**A good time to see your advisor is prior to course registration or when you need a petition completed.** As the time approaches to register for the next semester, check with your advisor to make sure that your academic plan is on track with curricular and graduation requirements. The advisor can serve as a backup to help catch the details in completing your program of study. Advisors are also needed in signing off on petitions. A petition will not be accepted without an advisor's signature.

**A better time to see your advisor is when an issue affecting academics first arises.** Do not wait to see your advisor until you need to drop a class or your grades are severely affected. The earlier you go to your advisor, the more options the advisor has to help you. Your academic advisor knows of

various resources to assist you, whether it would be for counseling, tutoring, financial aid, course concerns, etc. Your advisor can help.

**The best time to see your advisor is when there are no impending problems.** Meet with your advisor about your career goals. Advisors are contacted about different work experiences, courses, or scholarships. They have associates in your field of interest. When an opportunity comes along, your advisor could think of you and send the opportunity your way.

**Your academic advisor is your ally.** If you do not know who your advisor is, there is no better time than the present to find out. Bring your student ID card with you to ACES Academic Programs in 104 Mumford Hall, where the staff can look up your advisor's name for you.

***Studying at the University of Life (November 2003)***  
**By Meg Dill, ACES James Scholar (Class of 2007)**

Like most freshmen, I have been looking forward to attending college for quite a while. Since I would be living at the Europa House, a private certified apartment complex, I spent lots of my free time this summer scouring garage sales for cookware and other things I might need for living on my own, reading recipes so I would know how to cook without my mom nearby, and dreaming of all the things I would do once I was "at the U of I." By the time move-in weekend rolled around, I thought I had figured out everything there was to know about college life. As any upperclassman would have pointed out, I really didn't have a clue about college life; and in the past two plus months since I left home, I have learned so much about life that I have to look at my pre-college self and smile at how inexperienced I really was.

Some of the things I have learned are rather amusing. For example, when I lived at home with seven people in my family, food never sat around long enough to go bad, so I figured food stored in the refrigerator would keep for at least two months, maybe all semester. Now however, I feel like I could write a novel detailing the unique characteristics of different mold varieties and describing the feelings of disgust and dismay that come with seeing almost a week's worth of grocery money thrown away in the form of moldy food. I've also learned that contrary to my experience at home, 1:00 a.m. is a very popular time to do laundry, so it is best to do wash during the day to avoid falling asleep in class because I was up late waiting for the washing machine.

Although most of my "college career" (all two months of it) has been some of the best times of my life (even with the moldy food and midnight laundry), I've also faced some of the realities of life that had never been so real before. I grew up in a suburb of St. Paul, and I fancied myself a tough, experienced city girl. Despite my so-called city experience, I didn't really believe that there were mean people who would steal from or vandalize the property of people they didn't know. So one night I innocently left my bike unlocked for less than five minutes, and I returned to find that it had vanished.

Was I foolish, to dream about and plan for and anticipate life as a college student to the point that I had totally unrealistic expectations? Perhaps, but on the other hand, all of us have come here for an education, and what good is a degree if you don't have any life experience to go with it? Now I know I can never know what an experience (going to college, living away from home, or anything else) is like until I've actually experienced it. I also know that people who are older and more experienced than me (my parents, who must have been laughing inside as they watched my industrious preparations all summer) do have some insights that might save me time, money, and embarrassment if I listen to them. But most importantly, I've learned that, as old wise people tend to say, learning never ends, and that whether I have a high school diploma or two Ph.D.'s, I can still be a student at the big university called life.

***How Can I Get to Know My Instructors? (December 2003)***  
**By Meg Dill, ACES James Scholar (Class of 2007)**

Coming into the U of I as a freshman, I had heard stories about huge lecture halls, with thousands of freshmen taking the same class, so I figured that my personal interaction with my professors would be limited or nonexistent. I was pleasantly surprised when all of my professors and TAs made an effort to learn the names of all the students and to use their names in class. This experience showed me that just as I wanted to get to know my instructors, professors and TAs want to get to know their students. All it takes is a bit of effort to establish an effective teacher-student relationship. This relationship can help you relate better to the instructor and learn the material, and it can help the instructor relate better to the class and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of the class. Clearly, it benefits everyone when there is interaction between the students and professor or TA.

Although my experience in college is limited (since I'm only a freshman), it seems to me that the most important thing in getting to know professors and TAs is communication. This can start with simply saying "good morning" when you come into class and introducing yourself to the professor if s/he doesn't try to learn your name, but it also includes going to office hours, emailing the instructor, and even speaking up in class. Every effort you make to communicate with professors is another opportunity for them to get to know who you are.

There are many reasons to get to know your professors and TAs, and many benefits that can come from having a relationship with them. As was mentioned earlier, it will probably be easier for you to learn from a person whom you know and have interacted with than from a person whom you have no personal relationship with. In addition, if you struggle with understanding the material, it may be easier to ask help from an instructor whom you know. Beyond helping you learn, there are other benefits from knowing your instructors. If something comes up in your life like an illness, family emergency, or other situation that affects your performance in the class, it is helpful to already have a relationship with the instructor so you can work with them to get caught up. I had to miss several classes when I went to Minnesota for a funeral, and my professors were very understanding and helpful in making sure I got caught up. One professor even emailed me to be sure that I was caught up and understood the material. Professors can also be a great resource for finding research positions, internships, and getting letters of recommendation.

Beyond all the help they can give you, the professors at the U of I are incredible, intelligent people who are worth getting to know because of who they are and what they have accomplished – so let's get to know them!

***Stress Management 101 (March 2004)***  
**By Meg Dill, ACES James Scholar (Class of 2007)**

Lest any of you look at the title of this article and think that I have all the answers for a stress-free life, be advised. I am just a freshman, and like everyone else, I've had my fair share of late nights, the occasional all-nighter, and as my roommate can attest, there have been many times when I've been way too stressed out. However, I have learned some things from this year about how to handle stress, so here are a few pointers that may help you in your own quest for a stress-free life.

**1. Organize.** It may seem like you've heard it a thousand times, but buying a planner and using it to plan ahead can help you be more prepared so you don't end up staying up late, pulling all-nighters, and "stressing out."

**2. Learn to discipline yourself.** This lesson has been a hard one for me, especially since there are a lot more things on campus to distract me from my school work than there were back home. Learn to discipline yourself so you can get your work done, and then take time for other things.

**3. It's OK to say no.** This semester, I was overly ambitious and started out with 19 hours of class and 2 hours of research credit, for which I put in an average of at least 10 hours per week at the lab. Needless to say, my workload quickly became too much, and something had to give. Now I know that it's OK to just say no when my plate gets too full.

**4. Take time to be quiet.** College life is busy, at least mine is, and it's easy for life to take on a hurried, rat-race quality, where I constantly feel the need to stop and catch my breath. When life gets too busy and stressful, make a little bit of time during the day to stop and take a break. When I take time to be quiet, not only are my mind and spirit refreshed, but I tend to be more productive, and the work that I have to do seems easier after I've taken a break.

**5. Stay healthy.** Sometimes stress is unavoidable, but you can minimize its effects on your body by staying healthy during stressful times. Give your body something better than ramen and Twinkies to live off of, try to get a decent night's sleep, and get a bit of exercise. All of these will give you more energy and help your body deal with the stress more effectively.

One final thing that I've learned this year is to look at the big picture. In the grand scheme of things, this one test, paper, project, whatever, isn't that significant. **Five years from now, what will matter is what I learned and how I used it.**

***Advice to Freshmen: Important Survival Tips (August 2004)***  
**By Maria Boerngen, M.S., Freshman Advisor (2003-2005),**  
**Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics**

As a teaching assistant and academic advisor, I am supposed to teach my students. However, teaching is a two-way street, and I have learned a few things from my students as well. Based on what they have taught me -- and on my own experience when I was a college freshman -- I have learned that the following two pieces of advice are invaluable for new students here at UIUC.

**1. Go to your instructors' office hours!** When I was a TA for ACE 100, I realized that many new students did not know that office hours are set aside *specifically* for professors and TAs to meet with their students. Office hours are a great opportunity for you to clear up confusion from the class, get your class-related questions answered, and receive the one-on-one feedback that is often missing from the classroom. I got to know many of my students during office hours, and even though it has been two years since I taught, I still greet them by name and enjoy chatting with them when we run into each other on campus.

**If you start to have trouble in a class, don't fall into the trap of thinking, "I'll catch up later," or "I just don't want to bother my teacher." I have seen too many students wait until right before an exam or, even worse, the end of the semester to seek help – and by then it is often too late.**

**2. Get to know your advisor!** As you are learning your way around campus and adjusting to college life, you will probably have questions that you are hesitant to ask. My students come to me with questions ranging from what classes they should take next semester to how the student insurance program works to finding ways to pursue their hobbies on campus. **We advisors are here to help you, no matter how large or small your question seems.** The first year of college can be overwhelming, but remember that your advisor is looking out for you. When you are visiting your instructors during their office hours, don't forget to visit your advisor too!

**Welcome to the University – I hope that you have a wonderful year! ☺**

***There and Back Again: A New Zealand Retrospective (August 2004)***  
**By Eleanor Hodak, ACES James Scholar (Class of 2005)**

With this being the last installment of my study abroad experience, I'm probably expected to be able to sum it up quite nicely in a few paragraphs. I've been thinking a lot recently about how I'd do that, and there's just no way to communicate to others what my five months in New Zealand have meant to me. It sounds extremely stereotypical but, for me, studying abroad was a life-changing experience. I was without my usual support system for five months and survived. And I more than survived -- I thrived! I traveled to the COMPLETELY opposite side of the world, knowing only one person, and I met people who made me laugh the hardest that I've laughed in a long time. I've come back a lot more confident and sure of my abilities. And perhaps just as important, I learned that my friends and family whom I left at home are pretty incredible people. The ten-pound package filled with nothing but Easter candy from my mom, the cards and letters from friends, and the hot tamales and CDs from my sister -- I don't know if these people will ever realize what they meant to me.

They warn you that the culture shock coming home is worse than the culture shock that you experience upon arrival, and it's so true. Leaving Christchurch was probably one of the hardest things that I'll ever do. Four of my closest friends took me to the airport, and I easily could have gone through a box of Kleenex in about an hour. (But it was also hard not to laugh when one of my Kiwi buddies rode the luggage trolley like a jockey and accidentally rear-ended a security guard.) The transition home is always difficult. No one quite understands just how funny your friends were, just how beautiful that hike was, and they think that because it's all that you talk about that you didn't miss them or that you don't really want to be home. That couldn't be farther from the truth. You're just trying to include them in what's been your life for the past few months.

So don't get me wrong -- I'm happy to be home. I miss my life abroad, but I'm writing this two weeks before I return to Champaign, and I can't wait to play beach volleyball near the Six Pack, broomball in the ice arena, and soccer on the Quad. I'm excited for Canopy concerts, Halloween, and the last of my friends to turn 21. Sharing an apartment with my three best girlfriends is going to be a fabulous end to my college career!

To anyone considering studying abroad, I definitely encourage it. Wherever you go, you'll be without the comforts of the campus that we've grown so comfortable with, but it's so worth it. (It's hard, but as Tom Hanks says in *A League of Their Own*, "Of course it's hard. It's supposed to be hard. It's the hard that makes it great!") Yes, I missed March Madness, but I also saw the All Blacks cream England, spent days hiking and nights sitting around huts playing cards using headlamps and candles, and went to a costume ball with a bunch of friends dressed as 1980s prom queens. No, I didn't come back fluent in another language, and I don't have fifteen new European countries stamped in my passport, but I have stories that I will be telling for the rest of my life. Take a chance -- the College of ACES proved nothing but accommodating, and you'll do things in a semester that you never would have even thought possible surrounded by the cows and the corn. ☺

***Academic Integrity: Knowledge Is Power! (September 2004)***

**By Dr. Cleora D'Arcy, Professor of Crop Sciences**

**URL: <http://cropsci.uiuc.edu/faculty/d'arcy/index.cfm>**

In the past, I have asked students in both high school programs and college classes if they had ever cheated or known someone else who cheated on an exam or an assignment. Usually, every single student says yes. And every year, some students on our campus cheat or in some other way break the rules governing academic integrity. As a result, they may fail an exam, fail a course, or even be expelled from the University. Or, worse yet, they may cheat and not get caught, creating the impression that they

do not have to play by the rules. This behavior, when continued, will simply set the stage for a major ethical failure later in life. How can you keep this from happening to you? It's quite simple. **Know the rules and play by them.**

While the *Student Code* (<http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/>) may not be the most exciting reading, I urge you to take a few minutes to look over Article I, Part 4 -- the policy on academic integrity. Here you will find definitions of cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and other infractions of the *Code*. You will also find the penalties that an instructor can impose for these infractions. They range from mild (a warning in your file) to very severe (dismissal from the University). Finally, the *Code* spells out the procedures that the instructor and student must follow while any allegation of academic misconduct is investigated. **Students have the right of appeal and, should you be unjustly accused, it is important that you know your rights.**

Is this article meant to “scare you straight”? Maybe a little, but its main goal is to encourage you to become a better-informed participant in your educational system. The best advice is to know the rules and to play by them. At the end of their freshman year, students often tell me that the most important lesson that they have learned at the University is that they need to manage their time better. Give yourself plenty of time to do your assignments and to study for your exams so that you are not tempted to cheat, fabricate, or plagiarize. **If you make effective time management one of your goals this semester, then your academic integrity will never need to be tested.**

***The University's Hidden Gem* (November 2004)  
By Robert Merrin, B.S., Special Guest Columnist**

In our University, which we all love, information is sometimes difficult to come by. Its sheer size alone could primarily be to blame. Nonetheless, I would like to bring some attention to a little office in Mumford Hall that has proved that the size can be overcome. The ACES Academic Programs office is the most effective of all the places where I have gone for information, and I have been to just about everywhere on campus.

The College of ACES has the most competent, polite, and friendly office that I have ever encountered. While all other offices sent me running around campus playing Administrative Ping-Pong, the ACES Academic Programs office was impressively efficient; they are clearly the most helpful – THE BEST. I was first greeted there with a smile, which helps a lot after you have run from Beckman to the Vet School and have a class that you don't want to be late for. Every question that I asked was perfectly answered, and in articulate English. If they didn't have the answer to a question, then they would know where to find it, and how long it would take to get the answer to me. They are patient, polite, and friendly, and most of all efficient. Students may walk in stressed-out, worried, and tired, but they leave in a great mood with everything that they need to know.

The dilemma is that this is a huge school, where it is hard to find what you need to know. The solution is the ACES Academic Programs method: genuinely friendly people, dedication to serving the students, and unequalled communication skills (from phones to email and I'm sure Morse code, if ever it were necessary). I say that it is the Utopian example that all comparable offices should follow.

Editor's Note: Mr. Merrin transferred into the College of ACES from the College of LAS in spring 2003. He is currently pursuing an M.S. degree in Agricultural and Consumer Economics. His reflections are included here as a reminder to our readership that the door to 104 Mumford is always open – and a listening ear is never far away – for visitors with questions or concerns about their academic endeavors.

***Getting the Most Out of Your Illinois Experience (December 2004)***  
**By Anna Bishop, ACES James Scholar (Class of 2006)**

A little over a year ago, I was confused. I felt as though I was in a kayak navigating tumultuous rapids. I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life as far as academics were concerned. On one hand, my mother had always pushed me to become a doctor -- though I didn't like the idea of dealing with blood. On the other hand, I had advisors and professors who were pushing me to get a Ph.D. in the biomedical sciences. To make a long story short, I had become acquainted with research involving plants through an independent project. Shortly thereafter, I became interested in the crop sciences and fighting hunger in the world. This part of agriculture was interesting because of its scientific and humanitarian nature. In August of this year, I decided to pack up my bags and travel to the beautiful land of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

Coming from California, I had to adjust to the new definition of mountain: a pile of debris or a humbly sloping hill as opposed to a gigantic towering mass of rock. With the help of Dean Olson, Dr. Kolb, and Dr. Moose (long story), I was able to attend one of the greatest agricultural institutions in the nation, if not the world. After spending the night (9 hours) on a bench at Midway Airport due to a problem with a certain shuttle company, I finally made it here, and I am so glad that I did!

I wish to touch upon some of the important things that I wish that I had known when I started college years ago. I was asked to gear this article to freshmen and new transfer students, so I hope that this advice will be useful. Enjoy your time here!

**1. Don't listen to your teachers!** This is the most important rule of all. I'm not telling you that it is OK not to go to class, because it's not. But it is important to try to get information first-handedly as opposed to say third- or fourth-handedly. It's OK to read textbooks or even get involved in doing independent research. Solely relying on information given in lectures and then not looking into alternative sources is very limiting, especially if the information is incorrect. But remember -- go to class!

**2. Look at classroom time as an opportunity rather than an obligation.** I think of class time as puzzle pieces that compose about one-third of a puzzle. You have the opportunity to gain some valuable information in class that will ultimately help you in completing a puzzle. The more you think of class as an opportunity, the less you think of grades as a motivation for going.

**3. Go to school naked.** Just kidding! This is a really important rule, whether people believe it or not. Remember, I'm not here to tell you how to dress, but it is important to know that very often people behave how they dress. I'm not focusing on people who are into the latest fashions; I am gearing this toward people who go to class in pajamas every day. School is not only a place of learning; it is a job -- very often, a "nine to five" job. So it is important to remember that you are going to a job when you wake up in the morning.

**4. Dating is allowed at school.** Of course, everyone knows this. When I started my new job as a "career student" in college, I thought that I would keep my major the whole way through. That obviously didn't happen. It is important to take classes that are not related to your field of study. Just like you didn't marry the first person that you dated (or maybe you did, who knows?) -- you don't want to marry your major. Keep an open mind.

**5. Be a gold digger!** You want to milk the University of Illinois for all it has, resource wise. This is important if you are an out-of-state student and tuition equals a new SUV every year. The reason why we have advisors (like Dr. Kolb) and professors is to serve you. If you weren't here, they wouldn't be here, either. If you are not doing so hot in school, don't be afraid to ask for help or advice; I'm not. Even if you are a stellar student, you should still visit these people.

**6. Most importantly -- it's "pop," not "soda" or "cola."** I just thought that I would mention that. ☺

***Surprises in Disguises: A Retrospective (April 2005)***  
**By Krista Zinn, B.S., ACES James Scholar (Class of 2005)**

While some students may see the ACES James Scholar Honors Program as an excellent opportunity to ensure placement in necessary (and desired) courses, specifically during their freshman and sophomore years, for many of us the other opportunities help to enrich and shape our plans for the future. I was someone who, as an entering freshman, signed that first piece of paper saying, “Yes, I want to be a James Scholar!” I only asked later, “What exactly did I agree to?” I began my journey as an ACES James Scholar thinking that I would do a little extra work, maybe get some additional experience to prepare me for vet school, and register for classes before the rest of my less-fortunate peers. Luckily for me, recognizing that this was not just another form from another school turned into a four-year long experience that greatly impacted my current “post-undergrad” plans.

As a freshman and sophomore, I fulfilled my HCLAs and started making plans for my final two years as a James Scholar – the “challenging years” filled with extra work and harder courses. These very things helped to guide me on my career path (while my path was constantly being repaved and occasionally veering, I don't think I've made any wrong turns!). I began the search for a research opportunity by flipping through a list of professors and their fields of study in my department – an outline of options handed to me at the annual James Scholar Retreat – while I listened to advice from other students already involved in their research projects. My first order of business was to circle everything that looked interesting – there were too many! After narrowing my selections down to three or four professors, I began the “interviewing process,” during which I played interviewer and interviewee. Finally I was offered what became “my research” – working with a graduate student on her master's degree project from beginning to end.

It was time to get serious – I submitted my Honors Completion Plan, laying out upper-level coursework and the project that I would be working with. A year later, after the project was almost complete, I enrolled in a graduate-level course taught by the professor who had taken me on as a James Scholar. What better way to get more experience than to take a course designed to teach research techniques in the field that I had been working in? It was exciting stuff, *and* I needed to fulfill the requirement. Then, somewhere between the research project and my graduate-level course, I slightly veered on my path and decided to pursue a master's degree in the same field. My James Scholar research opportunity had given me the chance to explore other options in my department, and I had been lucky enough to find one that I really enjoyed.

A few early registrations, a little extra work, and some additional experience later, I'm preparing to start my master's degree in Companion Animal Nutrition. The opportunities given to me as an ACES James Scholar helped me to discover a new interest, and they are allowing me to cultivate it with enough knowledge and experience to make the journey that much easier.

***The Wit and Wisdom of Lynsee Melchi (November 2005)***  
**By Meg Dill, ACES James Scholar (Class of 2007)**

Last February, I had the privilege of spending two hours at Espresso Royale listening to Lynsee Melchi (ACES James Scholar, Class of 2003), one of the coolest people to graduate from the College of ACES, talk about everything from the sixteen official languages of South Africa to fish dissection. This was not a chance encounter – it was orchestrated by Rob Chappell, who suggested that I interview her since she is, after all, one of the coolest people to graduate from the College of ACES and a successful James Scholars Program grad to boot. As I sat and listened to Lynsee talk, I was amazed by her seemingly endless repertoire of almost unbelievable stories about her experiences: adventures on a bus in Zimbabwe,

missing a plane in South Africa, learning Portuguese while talking to people in Brazil, studying dragonflies in Door County, and the list goes on and on (and I'm sure it has grown since I talked to her).

Lynsee knew that I was interviewing her for a *CURSUS HONORUM* article, and in the course of our conversation, she would stop periodically and tell me to “make sure and tell them this.” So in no particular order, here are some lessons from Lynsee – a person who's been there, done that, and has the stories to prove it.

**1) Have faith in people that they won't do you wrong.** In 2002, Lynsee spent seven months studying abroad in South Africa and traveling in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe isn't the safest place in the world; in 1980, the white rulers were overthrown, their farmland was confiscated and redistributed to blacks, and in the process Zimbabwe went from being the breadbasket of Africa to a dictatorship crisscrossed with people waiting in lines for food and gas. While it may seem like visiting Africa is a really risky undertaking for a white American female, Lynsee says that in reality her race and citizenship were an asset to her because people there love American culture.

**2) Just listen to people, and try talking to them. Communication isn't just language.** When she was in Brazil on a study tour, Lynsee had the opportunity to meet some incredible people. Even though she barely knew Portuguese, she attempted to talk to them anyway using words she had picked up, and they were able to have a worthwhile conversation.

**3) Education has the power to help people because knowledge replaces fear.** In Lynsee's experience, some people, especially in less developed places like Africa, are afraid of things they don't understand, such as disease. Once they are educated about those things, they are no longer afraid of them.

**4) Rely on Secret Agent Brain.** Lynsee's theory on school and exams is that if you've done the work, you should know your stuff. Therefore, you can relax and let Secret Agent Brain take over.

**5) Don't be scared of the James Scholar project.** Lynsee did her project with Dr. Kessler, comparing two methods of cycle synchronization in beef cattle to see which is most effective. This research wasn't incredibly difficult, and it wasn't nanoscience, but it was practical, and farmers were able to apply it to their operations, and Lynsee ended up winning the Best Undergraduate Research Award for her work.

**6) Have ideas and pursue them. Do stuff.** You never know where ideas may lead, and if they're bad, you can always get rid of them. If you try something, and it's not what you want to do, why keep doing it? Do what keeps you busy and happy.