Goal Setting
A new semester is like the beginning of a new calendar year. Everything is fresh, exciting and even a little scary. How are you going to approach this new academic year so you are on the right track from the get-go? This question is for everyone at New Mexico Tech: students, faculty and staff members. Beginning a new academic year is like beginning a new year. Setting a few goals for ourselves is a wise idea to help keep us on track for the academic year. Goal setting is both an art and a science. Most people think that setting goals just means picking something you don’t have right now and going for it, but there is more to it than that.

When setting goals, they should be challenging but realistic - Goals must be big enough to inspire you to take action, but not so big that you get frustrated with the impossibility of accomplishing them.

Goals should have long-term and short-term components - When setting your goals, make sure you have small goals that are applicable to today, bigger goals that are applicable to next week, bigger goals yet applicable to next month, and the biggest goals applicable to next year.

Frame your goals around behaviors not just outcomes. A behavior goal is based on something you can directly control and do yourself; an outcome goal is based on the end product of a series of behaviors.

The world is pretty uncontrollable. Life happens.

- If you want to sell your house for a good price, you can renovate it and give it a fresh coat of paint. But you cannot control the real estate market.
- If you want to have a nice picnic, you can pack a basket and blanket and plan your route to the park. But you cannot control the weather.
- If you want to lose weight, you can eat well and stay active. But you cannot control your fat cells.
Instead of setting “outcome goals”, focus on setting “behavior goals”. Here are a few examples showing the difference, just so you get the picture:

**Outcome Goals**
- Run a 5K race in 23 minutes.
- Get a 3.5 GPA.
- Travel to a different location two times this year.

**Behavior Goals**
- Run for 20 minutes three times per week for the next month, gradually increasing the duration and speed.
- Attend class daily, spend 45 minutes a day reading textbooks, and attend a bi-weekly study session for each subject.
- Start a travel savings account and deposit at least $150.00 every pay period.

Notice how all of the behavior goals are a commitment to do a specific set of actions or tasks that lead to the outcome you want. Also, notice that:
- behavior goals are things you do consistently and regularly;
- behavior goals are small, manageable tasks that are within your control; and
- behavior goals are often things that you can do right now, today or in the near future.

Don’t eat junk food. Stop binge watching Netflix. Stop smoking.

“Avoid” goals like these are nice and straightforward. What is simpler or easier to understand than “don’t”? This seems logical. “Don’t” or “stop” will push you away from something “bad”, or something that threatens what you want to achieve. Yet “avoid” goals are psychologically counterproductive because telling yourself to stop doing something almost guarantees you will keep doing it. As you know, nobody likes being told what to do. This is called resistance, and it is completely normal. The moment someone (even yourself) argues strongly for change, your natural reaction is to argue equally strongly against change. If the goal is to stop doing something, even the smallest slip can feel like a failure. One miss means you are “off the wagon” and all hell breaks loose. “Avoid” goals are a lot of psychological work. They take up a lot of mental and emotional real estate and energy. All you can think about is what you are not doing... or shouldn’t do... but really want to do... but you are not allowed to do it... augh! “Approach” goals pull you toward something desirable (and quietly pull you away from something you are trying to avoid). “Approach” goals also focus on feeling good and about doing something good for ourselves.
The 4 Circles

Let me share an exercise that will help you see how outcomes are connected to behaviors. Take out a piece of paper and draw four circles. Label them:

1. Outcome: end of 1 year
2. This month
3. This week
4. Today

In the first circle, identify what you want the outcome of your 1 year journey to be. In “this month”, “this week”, and “today”, write what you will do to get to the “End of the 1 year” outcome. Notice how what you do right now — and in the near future — contribute to the outcome you seek. A few sentences put on paper can mean the difference between success and failure. So get your pen and pad, and write out a few goals right now.

Set Yourself Up For Success

Be realistic with what you can do. For now, underestimate your capacity. Better to start small and succeed than go big and feel like a schmuck for "failing". Focus on doing one small, achievable behavior at a time. Then tell someone about your goals right away and ask that person to hold you accountable. If a goal is a secret, it is easy to blow it off. If you have someone holding you accountable to a higher standard, you are more likely to get it done. Then high-five yourself when it happens.

Health Goals

Is a goal of yours to “get into shape” and/or reduce stress? I am teaching two Physical Recreation classes this fall semester: **Boot-camp** and **Intermediate Yoga**. I can help you attain those health goals. If my classes do not fit into your schedule, there are many, many other Physical Recreation classes you can register for. Take a step towards wellness and make the health commitment TODAY!
RECIPE

Oh how I love this season of fresh veggies and fruit. I have several generous friends with peach trees that are producing exceptionally well this year. This dish can be an appetizer or dessert.

**Grilled Peaches with Maple Honey Mascarpone**

**Ingredients:**
- 6 ripe peaches, halved and pitted
- ½ cup almond slices (as garnish)
- 8 oz. mascarpone cheese
- 1 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

**Directions:**
1. In a small bowl, mix together mascarpone, maple syrup, honey and vanilla extract until combined. Set aside.
2. Fire up the grill to a medium-high heat or 400 degrees. Brush the flesh side of the peach with.
3. Place flesh side of peaches on grill and cook for 2 to 3 minutes (until golden brown) then remove.

Here is another **grilled peach recipe** to try that is sweet and savory.