

The LAUNCH Podcast - Strategies for Academic Success

[00:00:00] **Emma Bjorngard:** [00:00:00] Welcome to another episode of the School of Business Office of Undergraduate Advising podcast. I'm Emma Bjorngard-Basayne, an Academic Advisor at the UConn Stamford campus.

[00:00:17] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:00:17] and I'm Kayla Hogrefe, Academic Advisor on the Hartford campus. Today, we're talking to Ada Rivera, who is the Assistant Director of the Academic Achievement Center here at UConn.

[00:00:26] **Emma Bjorngard:** [00:00:26] The Academic Achievement Center assists students in attaining their academic and personal goals. So you can attend different workshops. You can schedule a one on one meeting where you talk about time management or your learning style. All those different good things.

[00:00:41] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:00:41] All those good things. Learning how to, how to be a good student, essentially. So without further ado, let's listen to Ada. She gives some really important information on the services that the AAC provides and then answers some interesting questions about how to be most successful academically as a student here at [00:01:00] UConn.

[00:01:08] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:01:08] Can you tell us a little bit about yourself, your position, and what the Academic Achievement Center does?

[00:01:14] **Ada Rivera:** [00:01:14] My name is Ada Rivera. I'm the Assistant Director for the Academic Achievement Center. And what do we do? Well, we provide academic support for our students who we can help them transition not only academically, but personally, and help them with those very difficult decisions that they're going to encounter while they're in college. And we do that by providing lots of resources. And also helping them with those academic goals.

[00:01:44] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:01:44] Okay and why do you think students should use the AAC and, or the resources on the website that you provide.

[00:01:52] **Ada Rivera:** [00:01:52] That's a great question. I think one of the things that we want to do is we want students to understand that we're here to provide a culture of support. [00:02:00] So we understand that college is super stressful and there's a fun part of college too. So we want to be able to create resources and give you the resources that you need. So that you will be able to manage not only the academic piece of it, but the very personal piece. we understand that we come with lots of different competing factors, and so we want the students to see themselves very holistically. So we have a family life that we have to kind of balance out the academic part. But also we want to be a student, right? When we talk about college, right? We're not always talking about the math class or the English class. We're talking about the fun activities that we have to participate in. So how do we manage all of that into one big schedule?

[00:02:46] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:02:46] And balancing all those things.

[00:02:47] **Ada Rivera:** [00:02:47] Absolutely.

[00:02:48] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:02:48] I think the AAC is so important. Like I just remember when I was coming into college, way back. A long, long time ago, and I never had to learn how to study in high school [00:03:00] and, and I didn't understand how studying is a skill that you have to build and develop. It's not just you read the book and you retain everything that you're reading. So I just think it's awesome that the AAC, not only has these coaches. Who helped you, you know, identify your learning style and learn the best strategies for deeper learning and how to study. But your, your website's awesome too. You have these great documents like that outline different strategies.

[00:03:28] **Ada Rivera:** [00:03:28] absolutely. I love the time management one. the worksheet that we have there, and you should definitely go online to achieve.uconn.edu and check it out. And the reason for that is because a lot of times we don't think about those time management skills and we don't think about what does our day really look like and that that day should also include sleeping, eating, right. Because in high school, we're always told like. When do we get up and when do we go to class and when do we eat in [00:04:00] college? No one's really telling you all of that. And many times a lot of students, I see them and I'm like, well, what have you, would it be done today for yourself? And they're like, Oh gosh, I haven't even eaten yet. And I was just like, Oh, yeah.

[00:04:14] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:04:14] Yeah. And I think some, sometimes all of that independence and the ability to set your own schedule can be so overwhelming sometimes, like it's paralyzing almost. So along those lines, what are some common obstacles that you see getting in the way of students' academic success?

[00:04:32] **Ada Rivera:** [00:04:32] Well, the first thing is making the assumption that what worked in high school is going to work in college.

[00:04:38] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:04:38] That's a big one.

[00:04:39] **Ada Rivera:** [00:04:39] and the reason why that's a big one is because the academic standards are so high at UConn, so students really need to understand that 80% of what they're going to be learning is going to be done outside of the classroom.

[00:04:53] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:04:53] That's a huge proportion.

[00:04:54] **Ada Rivera:** [00:04:54] It is. And I think a lot is a lot of times students don't realize that because [00:05:00] 80% of it in high school comes from the classroom. So they have to realize that you cannot expect that you're going to sit in class, you're going to get this information, and you're going to do well. and the other assumption is that. You know, in high school, no. In high school, we only ask for help when we're in academic jeopardy or in, we're in trouble in college. That's not the case in college. That is the go-to. You should be asking questions being proactive rather than reactive. So that's why coming to the AAC is so helpful. Right? Because we want to make sure that we give you the skills that you're going to need so that you can be the best student for that semester, for that year, and really give you the skills to work around some of the obstacles that you could be encountering for that class or for the semester.

[00:05:50] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:05:50] Yeah. in your opinion, what are the best strategies for students to manage their time? Like what re, what resources can they use or how [00:06:00] can they approach their day and their week to make sure that they're managing their time properly?

[00:06:04] **Ada Rivera:** [00:06:04] Definitely use an agenda. Whether it's, you know, Google, whether it's the big old fashioned calendar that you get at staples use the agenda to keep you organized. because there's a lot of deadlines that come up. And there's, again, looking at the competing priorities. If you're, if you work 20 hours a week, plus you're active in school life, plus you're taking 15 credits, well, what is that life going to look like? And you have to really, sometimes back into things, right? So if you have a weekend where you're going to be working all weekend, but you have an Accounting exam right on Monday. Well then what does that going to look like? When does your studying technically going to start? It's not going to start [00:07:00] on Sunday at eight o'clock after work because you're not going to do well. You're not going to sleep then.

[00:07:04] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:07:04] Exactly, and so it's not just you know, putting in reminders for when assignments are due, right? It's learning how to schedule, study time, and like even what you said at the beginning of our conversation, like scheduling when to eat and like how much sleep are you going to get the night before an exam?

[00:07:21] **Ada Rivera:** [00:07:21] Absolutely. And sometimes you have to kind of chunk it, you know? So it's just like, I know that I have to. You know, I have a lot of vocabulary in a certain test. Well, do I need to study vocabulary a few days in advance or do I do it right away? You know, it really depends on you. and that's really important, really evaluating who you are as a student so that you can make the best decisions for yourself.

[00:07:47] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:07:47] And so that leads to my next question, which I know is a, it's a big, we could probably have an entire podcast just on this question, but what are the different ways in which students learn and what strategies do you recommend for [00:08:00] each type of learner?

[00:08:01] **Ada Rivera:** [00:08:01] Well, definitely, you're right. This is a huge loaded question. So we're just going to keep a very real for the podcast and for the students. and then they can come and see us at the AAC for all the techniques. So I think some of the techniques that we use that are really helpful is. Mapping. Right? So that way you can make a connection between what you're learning and the different types of vocabulary or math equation. So on and so forth. The good old fashioned flashcards, I know that sometimes try, you know, sometimes students don't want eww flash cards. Okay? So you don't want you to do flashcards. Fine Quizlet whatever. Quizlet is very, it's a, it's an app that you go on and you, it's this, they do the same function functions of the flashcard. So you put the name. Or a vocabulary where you ...Yeah, [00:09:00] e-flashcards, but they're wonderful because then it looks like they're playing a game on their phone, but they're really studying. So it works. but when it comes to, and I always say this to all my students that are doing STEM, right? So whether it's Math or whether it's science, you know, they're like, Oh yes, I studied for chem or for math or for accounting. And I was just like, okay, so tell me, how do you know you did this equation? They're like, Oh yeah, just read it. Well that alone lets me know that you

really didn't study for it. Right? So you have to, when it comes to math, you really have to study and do it. You have to practice. You have to do it constantly. And if for some reason, as you're going through the steps, you're getting stuck, highlight that and then use that opportunity to go to the professor and whether they're office hours or whether it's during class, and then use that time to ask questions about that particular area that you are [00:10:00] kind of stumped in and really get more information about how to go about studying for those equations so that it helps you be prepared for that exam. But definitely there are tons of strategies. I really would prefer for you to come and see us at the AAC, whether it's at Hartford or at Storrs so that you can really understand how you study. And that's the other thing. Don't compare yourself to your friends.

[00:10:28] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:10:28] Oh, that's a big one.

[00:10:29] **Ada Rivera:** [00:10:29] Why? Because this used to happen to me while I was in college. Right. My friend can literally take a piece of paper and just read it 15 minutes before the exam, and they're like a sponge. Yeah. And it just like, they would get an A and then I would be studying like for weeks on it, and then I would get the beat and I was just like, how did that happen? But again, it's just how different people study and how people. Retain information. So if you come to the AAC, we'll teach you about that retention and recalling piece.

[00:10:58] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:10:58] Nice. And I [00:11:00] know that it probably changes semester to semester and year to year, but how does students access the AAC in Storrs and in Hartford and online? Like if there are certain open hours or should they email somebody or,

[00:11:12] **Ada Rivera:** [00:11:12] Yes, they can definitely go to our website achieve.uconn.edu in there every semester. If there's changes to our schedule, you'll see. See what the hours of operation are going to be, but you'll also have the opportunity to look at our workshops because our workshops do change semester to semester in order to meet our needs.

[00:11:34] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:11:34] Okay, great. Ada thank you so much. Anything else that you want to add?

[00:11:40] **Ada Rivera:** [00:11:40] No. I think that we answered a lot of questions and you know, definitely if you want to come and see us. Come and see us. I'm in room 202 in the Hartford campus.

[00:11:52] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:11:52] Awesome. Thank you so much for sharing such important information and thank you also just to the AAC and you know, there's a lot of staff [00:12:00] around that contribute to this awesome culture on campus of like, it's not uncool to ask for help. And like, it's, it's just a great way to be, you know, we're all collaborative. We're all in this together, so thank you so much. And we're out.

[00:12:24] **Emma Bjorngard:** [00:12:24] So that was Ada Rivera. one thing that I found particularly interesting in the conversation was how she talked about how you can use different apps. To study. So I'm particularly, she talked about Quizlet, something that I've

heard from my students because they also teach a philosophy course that UConn is that if you create flashcards for a particular class, students that take that class later on can actually find them and they can use them. So that's, that's a, that's a good resource and something to keep in mind. What did you find interesting in the conversation?

[00:12:55] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:12:55] Yeah. Well, I mean, I agree. Like the leveraging technology [00:13:00] is huge and there's all sorts of apps like Quizlet. I was actually thinking about another app called Duolingo, which is for our students who have to take a language class. It's an awesome app for, to augment like what you're learning in your language class and it's, it turns it learning a language into a game. Which is a great way to retain different information. But another thing that I took away from speaking with Ada about is the importance of scheduling your time and blocking time off. Not only to make sure that you get your assignments in on time, but like to make sure that you start studying early enough and that, you know, you're making time to eat a meal and get enough sleep. One of the things I think is really important is scheduling time to relax and to like reset and recharge, which I think we just don't, we just don't think about that. We don't prioritize that as much. So just some good things to take away from our conversation with Ada.

[00:13:55] **Emma Bjorngard:** [00:13:55] Yeah, and also the fact that she mentioned that you can either use like Google [00:14:00] for your calendar. Oh yeah. Or you can have a physical planner, like whatever you prefer. I like that.

[00:14:05] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:14:05] Yeah. I'm a big user of the iPhone calendar.

[00:14:09] **Emma Bjorngard:** [00:14:09] Yes. Okay. So just some closing thoughts. Please make sure that you use the Academic Achievement Center. You can use it in person or you can use the resources online. So until next time,

[00:14:22] **Kayla Hogrefe:** [00:14:22] until next time! Thanks Emma. Bye everyone.