**Setting SMART Goals**

Developing as a young professional is a noble goal, but it takes intention and proper planning to do it right. An important part of a mentorship pairing is thinking about how to set individual and shared goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely. Understanding how to define goals is a critical skill for students, and one that is necessary as a professional in any field.

In this process, it’s important to recognize the difference between goals and objectives, and how they work together. A SMART goal is actually one that includes SMART objectives. These objectives are meant to guide you in laying out the concrete steps that need to be carried out in order to achieve said goal(s). They should incorporate all of the criteria listed below to help focus your efforts.

**Specific:** *What exactly do you want to accomplish?* First, goals/objectives need to be specific. You must lay out in detail what you want to accomplish. The goal outlines the general guideline of what you want to achieve, but the objectives define the actual strategies you will utilize to get there. A broad goal, such as “I want to improve my GPA” can be followed up with more specific objectives such a 1) work with a math and science tutor in during the Fall semester; 2) set aside 3 study hours each night; and 3) coordinate a review session with 2-3 classmates prior to each exam.

**Measurable:** *How will you know when you have reached your goal?* Successful goals and objectives are ones that are measureable so you can determine when you have achieved them. Weight is an area that is common for goal setting. As an example, “I need to lose weight,” is different than, “I’m going to lose 10 pounds in two months.”

**Achievable:** *Is this goal realistic with effort and commitment? Do you have the resources to achieve this goal?* If not, how will you get them? Resist the impulse to set goals that are highly unlikely. You want to stretch yourself, but not to the extent that your goals are unattainable. For example, if you currently have a 2.5 GPA, achieving a 4.0 next semester will be highly unlikely unless something drastic shifts in your study skills, credit hours, and rigor of classes.

**Relevant:** *Why is this goal significant to your life?* Goals should be defined with the “big picture” in mind and should have a clear purpose. As an example, if you have a goal of obtaining a promotion in your current company within the next three months, remaining focused on developing an effective relationship with your supervisor deserves your attention over whether the new sales associate has been scheduled for more hours than you this week. It is important to remain focused.

**Timely:** *When will you achieve this goal/objective?* Finally, it is important to set goals that are time‐ bound. Losing 10 pounds is doable, but may not be sustainable if done within one week.

## Example

For the upcoming academic year, you want to set a few professional skill development goals. You have indicated leadership skills as an area of improvement. Your goal is to “improve my leadership skills”. What objectives can be put in place to make this goal meet the SMART requirements?

An example goal using the SMART goal framework:

Objective 1) Secure a membership chair position of my fraternity/sorority by October 2019

Objective 2) Organize two membership events by February 2020

Objective 3) Meet with executive board monthly to discuss feedback on committee activities

# Smart Goal Setting Worksheet

Use the table below to begin thinking about your SMART goals and objectives.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal** | **Specific** | **Measurable** | **Achievable** | **Relevant** | **Timely** |
| What is it that you want to achieve? | Who? What? When? Why?Where? | How much? How often? How many? | Attainable? Realistic? | Is it important to what you want to achieve ultimately? | When? |
| Improve my | Secure | Two | Yes, I have | Yes, taking | By the end of the |
| leadership skills | Membership | membership | participated in | initiative and | academic year. |
|  | Chair position | events | membership | working in teams |  |
|  | of my |  | events and | are important |  |
|  | fraternity by |  | feel confident | skills that |  |
|  | October 2017; |  | that I have the | companies desire. |  |
|  | Organize two |  | ideas and |  |  |
|  | membership |  | influence on |  |  |
|  | events by May |  | campus to |  |  |
|  | 2018 |  | make them a |  |  |
|  |  |  | success. |  |  |

## Creating your SMART goals/objectives

In the spaces below, develop a statement defining your specific goals and objectives, incorporating as many of the elements mentioned above as possible. This will include the actions you plan to take to meet this goal, your timeline, and how it will meet the personal/professional goal you are addressing.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Goals and Objectives** | **Timeframe** | **How will I measure success?** |
|  Goal 1: |  |
| Objective 1A: |  |  |
| Objective 1B: |  |  |
| Objective 1C: |  |  |
|  Goal 2: |  |
| Objective 2A: |  |  |
| Objective 2B: |  |  |
| Objective 2C: |  |  |
| Goal 3: |  |
| Objective 3A: |  |  |
| Objective 3B: |  |  |
| Objective 3C: |  |  |