Preparing for Finals

December is a busy month for students. Many students are finishing up assignments, essays, and projects for their fall classes. In addition, December 12 marks the first day of final exams. Final exams (also called finals) typically consist of a comprehensive exam of the material covered throughout the entire semester. The grade a student receives on a final exam can greatly affect the overall grade the student receives for the class.

Preparing for finals requires preparation, discipline and organization. Here are a few things that students can do to prepare for finals.

• Make a study schedule. Set aside blocks of time, every day to study. Select times when you are at your best.
• Determine your most effective study space. For some students the best place to study is at home, for others it is the library, in an empty classroom, or a friend’s house.
• Fight tiredness & boredom by taking a nap, drinking something with caffeine, turning down the heat, exercising, and/or changing your study schedule.
• Prepare for your study sessions. Gather all the materials you have for the course. Select what you need to study for this test. Spend extra time reviewing difficult material.
• Don’t re-read all of the material. Skim the material for a fast overview and scan the material for the important details. Review what you have highlighted in the text and make notes from your notes.
• Make flashcards of important bits of information.
• Form a study group. Study with those at or slightly above your level. Organize the group so that everyone has a section/chapter/lecture to master. Make meeting times and assignments formal and rigorous so that no one takes advantage of your hard work.
• Study your past tests.
• Get to know your professors lecture and testing style. Ask your professors when the test will be, what the test will cover, what format the test will be in, and what percentage of the test will be in which type of format.
• Some professors give study guides with useful information on what may be covered on the test. Beware, material not listed on study guide may still be on the test. Review everything!

Tips courtesy of Counseling Services. More tips and resources can be found on www.csustan.edu/counseling/resources.
**Parents Program**  
California State University, Stanislaus

**PARENT’S HOTLINE:**  
209-664-6632  
OR  
PARENTS @CSUSTAN.EDU

**We’re on the Web!**  
See us at:  
www.csustan.edu/parents

---

**Coming Home For The Holidays, For The First Time**

With year-end holiday celebrations come thoughts of home, and for college students and their parents, those thoughts are often accompanied by feelings of stress. Holiday breaks are usually the first extended periods of time that families spend together since saying goodbye at the dorm in the early fall. St. Lawrence University (Canton, New York) director of counseling services William B. Burns has advice and tips for making the holidays happier for the whole family.

Burns states, "Stress can be brought on by a variety of things. Students' visions of what will take place over the holiday break can be much different than that of parents. Parents often assume their student will spend significant amounts of time with the family, while the student has plans to spend every night visiting old friends."

"Another common area of conflict is parents' reluctance to see the student as an adult and to adjust house rules to the new adult status felt by the student, and to the freedom the student has been enjoying since school began."

"Students also find changes in family patterns to be stressful. Parents who 'stayed together for the sake of the kids' may have decided that it is time to separate or divorce. Single parents may have developed new friends or interests while their student has been away. Students coming from blended families often face the stress of dividing time equally between parents."

Burns offers the following tips to help make the break as stress-free and as enjoyable as possible:

- Plan ahead. Parents, think about the needs of your student as they seek a break from a stressful semester of academic work. Students, have some empathy for the needs of your parents - especially their need to spend time with you. Make sure your plans include your family in some way. This will help them feel included in your life and will make it less likely that they will try to plan extra activities just to get a chance to see you.

- Students, let your parents know what your holiday plans are before you arrive at home. Give fair warning to your parents about how often you plan to be away from home. Expect to make compromises in order to help your parents enjoy your visit, and as the need arises to make changes in family plans. If you will be splitting time between various family members, establish your plans ahead of time and inform everyone of when you will be spending time at the various family locations. State decisively what you are doing and that you are doing your best to accommodate everyone's needs.

- Parents and students, discuss what the house rules have been in the past and how they could be changed now that the student has been living away from home for a number of months. This new set of rules should be the result of a mutual negotiation between students and parents - remembering that you will both have to give a little to make sure you enjoy a smooth and happy holiday break.

The complete article can be found on [www.collegenews.org/x1151.xml](http://www.collegenews.org/x1151.xml).

---

**Pre-FAFSA Checklist**

The priority filing period for financial aid for the 2006-2007 academic year is from January 1 to March 2. Here are a few things you can do this month to help you prepare for your FAFSA application.

- **Gather your financial information**, including your December payroll stubs, bank statements, business/investment records, and last year’s tax return. It is easier to fill out the FAFSA once you have completed your federal tax return. However, you can estimate on the FAFSA and update the information later in order to meet the deadline. A FAFSA pre-application worksheet can be found on [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

- **Get a pin** (personal identification number), if you don’t already have one. Both the parent and student need a pin in order to apply for financial aid online. To apply for a pin or request a new pin go to [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).

- **The 2006-2007 Scholarship application is now available at** [www.csustan.edu/financialaid](http://www.csustan.edu/financialaid).