'The Gr8' Tips for Success in Online Classes

1. **Be sure you have access to a computer (see other side for technical compatibilities) and the internet outside of the normal school day.** Most online classes will require that you do work outside of the normal school day. Because of this, it is important that you have the tools and resources to be successful. **Do not rely on your cell phone.** It is acceptable to login and check announcements, but do not attempt to take tests or submit assignments via cell phone.

2. **Be self-disciplined and self-motivated.** When it comes to online classes, you need to have the discipline to sit down and say, "I am going to work on this," as well as the dedication to actually follow through. Though you can be flexible as to *when* you choose to complete your work during the week, you cannot put it off indefinitely, and **you must meet due dates**. You must 'show up' if you are going to get real value from the class.

3. **Hold yourself accountable.** Set goals at the beginning of the semester, and check with yourself often. Without a professor reminding you daily, it is up to you to make sure your assignments are completed on time. Do not start assignments the day before they are due. Technical problems is no excuse for missing due dates and most instructors will not make exceptions.

4. **Practice time management.** Flexibility is one of the biggest appeals to an online class but that freedom can be detrimental if you do not have solid time management skills. **Read and print out the syllabus** at the start of the semester, **make notes of major assignments** and when they are due. **USE A CALENDAR.** Remember to factor in other classes and prior commitments, (if you have major assignments due at same time in more than one class, prioritize the work in each class and give yourself time to complete them all, even if one is turned in early.)

5. **Eliminate distractions.** From Netflix to social media, you will be faced with many distractions that can easily derail your studies. The best online students learn how to eliminate these distractions and set aside time to focus on their class. Consider turning off your cell phone to avoid losing focus every time a notification pops up.

6. **Participate and communicate.** This will help you better understand the course and engage with classmates. You will need to comment on discussion boards/post questions. Make sure you are logging in to each Blackboard course and your WGTC student email at least 3 times a week. **Take Notes and Study.** Write down important notes just like in a traditional classroom setting, taking notes make it easier to remember the important pieces of information you need to retain.

7. **ASK QUESTIONS!!!** It is important if you are struggling be proactive and seek out help. Our online classes have great instructors who are ready to assist you, but **you must ask.** Ask these questions as soon as you have them. Do not be afraid to ask for help. If you do not understand something, a simple email to your instructor will ease your mind. Your instructor contact information is on the course syllabus. Not asking questions can lead to poor grades.

8. **Appreciate your accomplishments.** Online college classes may be more rigorous; however, these classes are preparing you for your future. Take pride in accepting this challenge and doing well. This hard work will be worth it in the end. ☺

Wiregrass 'Deets'

Login to Wiregrass Okta account to access Blackboard. Go to https://wiregrass.okta.com. If it is your first time logging in to Okta, you will need to use your Wiregrass student e-mail as your username and your date of birth in mmddyyyy format as your password. When setting up your Okta account/multifactor authentication, there are several options to choose; select the method that will BEST allow the application to contact you to authenticate. If you are a high school student and your school doesn't allow you to have access to your phone, use the Security Question method. You must remember your security answer; we do not know the answer and cannot provide. You will be challenged for authentication each time you login. Once logged in to Okta, click the Blackboard App to access Blackboard.

Know your Wiregrass Online Resources. From the Blackboard **Institution Page**, click the Online Resources link (under Help and Resources). Notice the links under each section (Blackboard, Computer Needs, Student Resources and Help); click the links for the information. All links are important, but be sure to access:

- **Blackboard Orientation** – this orientation will help answer many of your questions about Blackboard. Be sure to complete the entire orientation.
- **Respondus LockDown Browser** – some instructors may require you to use this special browser for testing. You must download the official WGTC Download Link that is found on this page. Watch the overview video and click the update the browser and run a system check. Check with your high school technology administrator or high school coordinator if you encounter any problems.

Get Technical. As with all technology, you may experience some technical issues. Be knowledgeable on the troubleshooting guidelines (more details are on the Get Started document in the Online Resources):

- **Use a compatible browser**: Use Chrome, Firefox, or Safari. Do not sue Internet Explorer or Edge.
- **Clear Computer Cache/Cookies:** Go to the Blackboard login page. Press Ctrl+Shift+Delete together. The Clear Browsing Data page will appear. Change the Time Range to All Time or Beginning of Time. Check the *Cookies and other site data* and *Cached images and files* boxes. Click Clear Data.
- **Unblock Pop-ups:** Go to your computer settings (top right of your screen), then choose Advance, select Site Settings or Content Settings. Make sure Popups are allowed, then close settings.
- **Retrieve "hidden" Course Menu:** If you cannot see the course menu (Start Here, Announcements, Lessons, etc.), hover over the far left side to reveal the dark grey arrow. Click this arrow to bring the course menu out. You may also need to adjust your zoon settings (press Ctrl and the plus or minus signs on your keyboard) to make the bar and arrow appear.

Complete the First of the Term tasks. You will not be able to access Blackboard courses until the first day of the term. On the first day (no later than the first three days):

- **Login to Blackboard** (via Okta). If you receive an error, clear your cache/cookies (see section above).
- **Click on *each* Blackboard course link** to access the course. Logging into Blackboard is like walking through the front door, you must 'go into' each course.
- **Click the Start Here link** and review all items. Recommended to print syllabus and course due dates.
- **Confirm Course Enrollment** found in the Start Here section within the first three days. If you do not see Confirm Course, **read the announcements** to see if your instructor has different instructions.
- **Click and explore the other course menu links** to see what information is available. Again, do not be afraid to click folders, links, etc.

Ask Questions . . . yes, it is important enough to repeat (see other side). Include your instructor in all correspondence, so he/she will know what is going. If you need help with

- Blackboard technical support, email online@wiregrass.edu
- Wiregrass Okta or email technical support, email ithelpdesk@wiregrass.edu
- BannerWeb technical support, email registrar@wiregrass.edu