

AN E-BOOK TO

THRIVE
~~SURVIVE~~ at
a PWI



8 KEY FACTORS

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Summary

This e-book is about not just "surviving" but rather thriving at a predominately white institution (PWI) as a black, indigenous, person of color (BIPOC) identifying individual. In addition to being a woman of color, coming from a low-income background, who's among one of the first to go to college in her family; Dr. Maritsa Barros offers a lived experience from a student perspective as well as a professional lens on PWIs throughout her career focused on administrative equity and inclusion at public and private universities over time. Dr. Maritsa Barros brings a unique and fresh perspective on making the most of one's educational experience in higher education with the understanding that PWIs were not built with "us" in mind. Eight key factors are highlighted as best practices for current and prospective college students of all identities and backgrounds but especially for students who have been minoritized by societal major statuses.

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Dear black students/students of color from low-income and immigrant parent households,

You have already overcome so many challenges and barriers to get to where you are today, and you have the resilience, determination, and drive to succeed at any predominately white institution (PWI). Remember that you are not alone, and that you have a strong support network of peers, mentors, and allies who are there to help you navigate your college journey.

As a woman of color, born into a low-income family, and first-generation college student who was a student activist on a predominately white institution (PWI) that I attended, it can be both rewarding and frustrating to see students of color protesting on PWIs, making many of the same demands my peers and I made about 16 years ago.

It is a historical fact that many predominately white institutions (PWIs) were not established with people of color or women in mind. In fact, many PWIs were founded in the 19th and early 20th centuries, during a time when segregation and discrimination were prevalent in society. As a result, these institutions were often designed to serve the needs of white men, with little consideration for the needs or perspectives of people of color or women.

For example, many PWIs did not admit students of color or women until the mid-20th century, and even when they did, these students often faced significant barriers and discrimination. Women and people of color were often excluded from certain programs or activities, and they often had limited access to resources and support.

Despite these challenges, students of color and women have long advocated for change on PWIs and worked to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment. Through protests, sit-ins, and other forms of activism, such as writing petitions and working with faculty and administrators, these students have pushed for greater representation and equality on campus. As a result, many PWIs have made significant progress in increasing diversity and inclusion, but there is still much work to be done to fully address the historical and ongoing issues of inequality and discrimination on these campuses.

One of the earliest examples of student activism on PWIs was the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, when students of color organized protests and sit-ins to challenge segregation and discrimination. In the decades that followed, students of color continued to organize and advocate for change, often focused on issues such as diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.

One notable example of student activism on PWIs was the student strikes of the late 1960s and early 70s, when students across the country organized protests and sit-ins to demand an end to the Vietnam War and greater rights and opportunities for students of color. These protests often resulted in significant changes on campus, including the creation of ethnic studies programs and the appointment of more diverse faculty and administrators.

Today, students of color continue to organize and advocate for change on PWIs, often focused on issues such as racial justice, LGBTQ+ rights, and climate justice. By using their voices and working to create a more inclusive and welcoming campus, students of color can play a vital role in promoting positive change. Today the results of some of these protests include the establishment of multicultural and

gender identity centers, the hiring of Chief Diversity Officers, the establishment of Offices of DEI, and establishment of DEI trainings.

On one hand, it is encouraging to see that students of color are still fighting for change and advocating for their rights and needs on campus. It is a testament to the resilience and determination of these students, and it shows that the work of previous generations of activists has not been in vain.

On the other hand, it can be frustrating to see that many of the same issues of inequality and discrimination that were present on campus when I was a student are still present today. It can be disappointing to see that progress has been slow, and that many of the same barriers and challenges that my peers and I faced are still being experienced by students of color today.

Despite these challenges, it is important for those who identify with being of color, low-income, and first-generation college students to continue to support and uplift the voices of these students, and to use our experiences and insights as an activist to help them achieve the changes they are seeking. By working together and advocating for positive change, they can help create a more inclusive and welcoming environment on campus for all students.

This E-book is a guide that speaks to others who identify like me who may not have been given the permission to be audacious and unapologetic about taking your place as the driver of your life and your future. Taking on this pursuit as the first in your family with uncertainty of your ability to be successful in getting a return on your investment is a scary thing. Attending a PWI can sometimes feel isolating, come with self-doubt from not knowing what you don't know, and may be overwhelming especially, if you must manage familial responsibilities and expectations while studying. Despite it all center yourself in the fact that your success will be the success of your family, your communities here in the U.S. and abroad.

This guide hopes to provide you knowledge, tips, and strategies to navigate your college career by being intentional about your investment and expectations in your experiences. This guide is good for any student at any level of higher education, and it is especially useful for students typically "othered" or "minoritized" by societal standards.

Before we get to the eight key factors to not just survive, but thrive at a PWI I want to share some **priority areas** that sit at the core of your success:

1. **Believe in yourself:** You can achieve great things, and you have the skills and strengths to succeed at college. Believe in yourself and your abilities, and don't let anyone tell you that you can't succeed.
2. **Seek out resources:** There are many resources available on campus to help you succeed, including academic advising, tutoring, and financial aid. Don't be afraid to seek out these resources and take advantage of them to help you succeed.
3. **Find your community:** Surround yourself with supportive peers and mentors who can help you navigate college and offer guidance and encouragement. Your community can be a source of strength and support as you work to achieve your goals.
4. **Stay true to yourself:** Don't be afraid to be yourself and bring your unique perspective and experiences to your studies and experiences on campus. Your background and identity are

valuable assets that can help you stand out and make a positive impact. This is your time to also dig deeper into who you are and work to discover what your life calling is.

5. Be proactive: Take charge of your college experience and be proactive in seeking out opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed. Don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone and try new things and remember that failure is often a necessary step on the path to success.

Remember, you are unstoppable and capable, and you have what it takes to not just survive but thrive at a PWI. Believe in yourself and your abilities, and again, don't let anyone tell you that you can't succeed. You have the power to shape your own future and make a positive impact on the world.

One of the first and more important things you must learn about yourself if you do not know already is how you learn best and best strategies to effective studying to maximize your academic success and make the most of your college experience. Every person is different, and what works for one student may not work for another. By learning how you best learn, you can tailor your study habits and strategies to your own needs and preferences, which can help you better understand and retain information, perform better on exams, and achieve your academic goals.

Here are some tips for learning **how you best learn as a college student**:

1. Experiment with different learning styles: There are many different learning styles, and it's important to find out which one works best for you. Some people are visual learners and do best with visual aids like diagrams or charts, while others are auditory learners and benefit from hearing information or discussing it with others. Still others are kinesthetic learners and learn best by doing or hands-on activities. Experiment with different learning styles to find out which one works best for you.
2. Test out different study environments: Different study environments can have a big impact on how well you learn. Some people do best in a quiet and solitary environment, while others prefer a more social setting. Experiment with different study environments to find out what works best for you.
3. Find a study routine that works for you: Developing a consistent study routine can help you stay focused and on track with your studies. Experiment with different study habits and routines to find out what works best for you. For example, some people do best by studying in short bursts, while others prefer to study for longer periods of time.
4. Get feedback: Don't be afraid to ask for feedback

The degree is what you walk away with in hand when you graduate, however, the knowledge you have retained is what lives within you that no one can ever take away.

However, you show up, you are right where you need to be. While some of us are introverts and some of us are extroverts, both have their benefits, and it's important to recognize and embrace your own personality and preferences. Here are some benefits of being an introvert and an extrovert in college:

Benefits of being an introvert in college:

1. You may be more focused and detail-oriented: Introverts are often more focused and detail-oriented, which can be beneficial when it comes to academics. This can help you excel in your studies and perform well on exams.
2. You may be more reflective: Introverts tend to be more reflective and introspective, which can be helpful in college. By taking the time to think things through and consider your options, you can make more informed decisions and avoid rash choices.
3. You may be more comfortable in smaller groups: Introverts may feel more comfortable in smaller groups and may prefer more intimate and focused discussions. This can be beneficial in college, where small group work and discussions are common.

Benefits of being an extrovert in college:

1. You may be more outgoing and social: Extroverts tend to be more outgoing and social, which can be an advantage in college. By building relationships and networking with your peers and professors, you can expand your network and open new opportunities.
2. You may be more comfortable in larger groups: Extroverts may be more comfortable in larger groups and may prefer more social and interactive settings. This can be beneficial in college, where group projects and activities are common.
3. You may be more confident: Extroverts tend to be more confident and assertive, which can be an advantage in college. By being confident in your abilities and speaking up in class or group settings, you can make your voice heard and contribute to discussions.

Remember, being an introvert or an extrovert is just one aspect of your personality, and it's important to recognize and embrace your own strengths and preferences. Whether you are an introvert, an extrovert, or both, there are many ways to thrive in college and make the most of your college experience.

There is nothing more empowering than showing up authentic and unapologetic on a predominately white institution (PWI). As a student of color, doing so can be challenging, but it is an important aspect of advocating for yourself and building a strong sense of identity and belonging. Here are some tips for showing up authentic and unapologetic on a PWI as a student of color:

1. Embrace your identity: It's important to embrace your identity and be proud of who you are. Don't be afraid to speak up about your experiences, perspectives, and values, and don't feel like you must downplay or hide your identity to fit in.
2. Know your worth: Remember that you belong at a PWI, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Know your worth and don't be afraid to stand up for yourself and advocate for what you need.
3. Build a supportive community: Surround yourself with supportive peers, mentors, and allies who can help you navigate the challenges of being a student of color on a PWI. Your community can be a source of strength and support as you work to achieve your goals.
4. Seek out resources: Take advantage of the resources and support services available on campus, such as cultural centers, affinity groups, and academic advising. These resources can help you connect with others and find support as you navigate college.

5. Don't be afraid to speak up: If you encounter microaggressions or discrimination, don't be afraid to speak up and advocate for yourself. It can be difficult to confront these challenges, but it is important to speak up and make your voice heard.

By embracing your identity, knowing your worth, building a supportive community, and speaking up for yourself, you can show up authentic and unapologetic on a PWI as a student of color. Remember, you have the right to be respected and valued! Your attitude, self-awareness, and ability to speak up will equip you with the language and emotional strength to manage the inevitable attack of microaggressions experienced by BIPOC students on PWIs.

Microaggressions are subtle, often unconscious acts of discrimination or prejudice that can have a significant impact on those who experience them. Here are some tips for dealing with microaggressions on a predominately white institution (PWI):

1. Recognize microaggressions: It's important to be aware of the different forms that microaggressions can take, such as racial slurs, stereotypes, or assumptions about your abilities or cultural background. By recognizing microaggressions, you can better understand and address them.
2. Know your rights: It's important to know what is and is not acceptable behavior on campus, and to understand your rights as a student. Many PWIs have policies in place to address discrimination and harassment, and it's important to know how to report incidents and seek support.
3. Seek support: If you experience microaggressions, it's important to have a support system in place to help you cope and heal. This might include talking to a trusted friend, seeking therapy or counseling, or joining a student group or club.
4. Stand up for yourself: If you feel safe and comfortable doing so, you can stand up for yourself and challenge microaggressions when they occur. This might include speaking up and explaining how the behavior or comments are hurtful or harmful, or simply walking away from the situation.
5. Take care of yourself: Microaggressions can be emotionally and mentally draining, so it's important to prioritize your well-being. Make sure to take breaks, set boundaries, and find ways to relax and recharge.

By following these tips and seeking out support when you need it, you can effectively deal with microaggressions on a PWI. Again, you have the right to be treated with respect and dignity, and don't be afraid to advocate for yourself and your needs.

Finally, do not forget what you came to college for in the first place. Your education, knowledge, and an experiential learning experience; not just a diploma/degree and surely not debt! Choosing a major as early as possible is a strategic way to maximize your college career.

While there is no surefire way to guarantee yourself a job after college, there are steps you can take to **increase your chances of finding employment after graduation:**

1. Choose a major that aligns with your career goals: Choosing a major that is in demand in the job market and aligns with your career goals can increase your chances of finding a job after college. Research the job market and industry trends to help guide your decision.
2. Get experience: Employers often value real-world experience, so it's important to get as much as you can while you're in college. This might include internships, co-op programs, or part-time jobs in your field of interest.
3. Network: Building relationships and connections with others in your field can be a valuable way to find job opportunities and get your foot in the door. Attend career fairs, join professional organizations, and make an effort to get to know your professors and classmates.
4. Develop skills: In addition to your major, it's important to develop a range of skills that are valued by employers. This might include inclusive leadership, effective communication, strategic problem-solving, and cross-cultural teamwork. Participating in extracurricular activities, internships, and part-time jobs can help you build these skills.
5. Be proactive: Don't wait until your final semester to start looking for a job. Begin networking and exploring job opportunities early on in your college career. Keep an updated resume and cover letter and be prepared to apply for jobs and internships as they become available.

By following these tips and being proactive, you can increase your chances of finding a job after college. Remember that it may take time and effort to find the right job, but with persistence and a positive attitude, you can achieve your career goals.

If you are undecided on a major, it's important to approach college with an open mind and be willing to explore different options. Here are some tips for approaching college when you are undecided on a major:

1. Keep an open mind: It's natural to have some idea of what you might want to study, but it's important to keep an open mind and be willing to explore different options. Don't feel like you have to commit to a major right away and be open to changing your mind as you learn more about different fields.
2. Explore your interests: Take some time to think about what you enjoy doing and what you are passionate about. Consider what you like to read, watch, or talk about, and try to identify any common themes or interests. These can be good starting points for exploring different majors.
3. Talk to people: Talk to your friends, family, and advisors about your interests and goals. They may have suggestions or recommendations for majors or career paths that align with your strengths and goals.
4. Take a variety of courses: Consider taking a mix of courses in different subjects to help you get a sense of what you enjoy and what you are good at. This will give you a better idea of what majors might be a good fit for you.
5. Seek out resources: Most colleges and universities have resources and support services to help students who are undecided on a major. These might include career counseling, workshops, or

job shadowing opportunities. Take advantage of these resources to help you explore your options and make an informed decision.

By keeping an open mind, exploring your interests, and seeking out resources, you can approach college with confidence and find a major that is right for you. Remember that it's okay to be unsure, and that it's normal to change your mind as you learn more about different fields and career paths.

If you know what you want to study in college, it's important to approach your studies with focus and determination. Here are some tips for approaching college when you know what you want to study:

1. **Make a plan:** Develop a plan for your studies that includes your academic goals and milestones. This might include setting specific grades or GPA targets, completing prerequisites for your major, or participating in research or internships.
2. **Seek out resources:** Take advantage of the resources and support services available to you on campus. These might include tutoring, study groups, career counseling, or academic advising. These resources can help you stay on track and achieve your goals.
3. **Get involved:** Getting involved in extracurricular activities or clubs related to your field of study can be a great way to build skills, make connections, and enhance your resume. It can also be a fun and rewarding way to learn more about your field and meet others who share your interests.
4. **Network:** Building relationships with your professors, classmates, and others in your field can be a valuable way to learn about job opportunities and gain insights into your chosen field. Attend career fairs, join professional organizations, and try to get to know others in your field.
5. **Stay focused:** It can be easy to get sidetracked in college, but it's important to stay focused on your goals and stay on track with your studies. Make time for coursework, study regularly, and seek out opportunities to learn more about your field and build your skills.

By following these tips and staying focused on your goals, you can approach college with confidence and make the most of your studies.

Understanding Your “Why”

Surviving college and thriving in college are two very different experiences. When you are simply surviving college, you may feel overwhelmed and stressed, and you may struggle to keep up with your coursework and other responsibilities. You may feel like you are just barely getting by, and you may not be enjoying the college experience as much as you had hoped. As a first-generation college student, you may also feel lost and anxious about things you do not know and the things you do not know that you do not know!

On the other hand, when you are thriving in college, you are likely to feel more confident and in control of your academic and personal life. You may be able to balance your coursework and extracurricular activities effectively, and you may feel more connected to your peers and professors. You are likely to feel more fulfilled and satisfied with your college experience, and you may have a clearer sense of your goals and direction. You also know how to navigate the college resources and maximize your experience by personalizing it across the many opportunities available.

Understanding your "why" is essential for thriving in college because it helps to provide purpose and direction for your efforts. When you understand your motivations for pursuing higher education and what you hope to achieve, it can help to give you the focus and determination needed to overcome challenges and stay motivated throughout the college experience.

Having a clear sense of your "why" can also help you to make better decisions about your studies and career path. For example, if you know that you want to become a doctor, you will likely be more motivated to work hard in your science and math classes and to seek out relevant internships and extracurricular opportunities. On the other hand, if you are unsure of your goals or are pursuing a degree simply because it seems like the expected thing to do, it can be harder to find the motivation and drive needed to succeed.

In addition, understanding your "why" can help you to connect with others who share similar goals and interests. Building a strong support network of peers, professors, and mentors who can offer guidance and encouragement can be crucial for thriving in college. By connecting with others who share your passions and goals, you can find the support and motivation needed to stay on track and achieve your dreams.

Eight Key Factors

These eight key factors shared can contribute to your thriving vs. surviving through college. The first is to **Set Clear Goals**. Before you even start college, it's important to have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish. This could be getting good grades, finding a job after graduation, or making new friends. Having clear goals will help you stay focused and motivated throughout your college journey. Here are some steps you can follow to set clear goals:

1. **Identify your values and priorities:** Understanding your values and priorities can help you to focus your goals on what is most important to you. Consider what matters most to you in your personal and professional life and use this to guide your goal setting.
2. **Set specific and measurable goals:** Instead of setting vague or general goals, aim for specific and measurable ones. For example, instead of saying "I want to get better grades," try saying "I want to earn an A in my statistics class." This makes it easier to track your progress and know when you have achieved your goal.
3. **Make your goals achievable and realistic:** It is important to set goals that are challenging but also achievable and realistic. If you set goals that are too difficult or unrealistic, you may become discouraged and give up. On the other hand, if your goals are too easy, you may not feel motivated to work towards them.
4. **Set a timeline for achieving your goals:** Giving yourself a timeline can help you to stay focused and motivated. It can also help you to break your goals down into smaller, more manageable steps.
5. **Review and revise your goals regularly:** As you progress in your studies and your circumstances change, it may be necessary to review and revise your goals. This can help you to stay on track and ensure that your goals remain relevant and meaningful.

By following these steps, you can set clear goals that are specific, achievable, and aligned with your values and priorities. This can help you to stay focused and motivated as you work towards your goals and achieve success in college.

Time Management

The second key factor that can contribute to you thriving vs. surviving through college is **Develop a Schedule**. College can be overwhelming, especially if you have a lot of classes, extracurricular activities, and a job. To stay on top of everything, it's crucial to develop a schedule that allows you to prioritize your responsibilities and manage your time effectively.

Time management is one of the top skills to thriving as a college student because it is essential for balancing your academic and personal commitments and staying on track with your studies, while exploring who you are and who you are looking to become. College can be a challenging and demanding time, and effective time management can help you make the most of your time and achieve your goals.

Here are some reasons why time management is so important for college students:

1. **You have a lot on your plate:** College students often have a lot going on, including classes, homework, extracurricular activities, and personal commitments. Effective time management can help you prioritize your tasks and make sure you are making the most of your time.
2. **You need to balance your responsibilities:** College is a time to learn and grow, but it is also a time to have fun and explore your interests. Effective time management can help you balance your responsibilities and make time for the things that are important to you.
3. **You need to be organized:** Being organized is key to effective time management. By keeping track of your schedule, assignments, and deadlines, you can stay on top of your responsibilities and make the most of your time.
4. **You need to be efficient:** Effective time management is about more than just staying organized; it's also about being efficient and getting things done. By streamlining your workflow and finding ways to work smarter, you can make the most of your time and achieve your goals more quickly.

By mastering time management, you can thrive as a college student and set yourself up for success after graduation. Remember to be proactive, stay organized, and be efficient in your approach to your studies, and you'll be well on your way to achieving your goals. Here are some best practices for managing your time effectively:

1. **Create a schedule and stick to it:** Develop a schedule that includes time for classes, studying, extracurricular activities, and relaxation. Make sure to block off enough time for each task and try to be as consistent as possible with your schedule.
2. **Set priorities:** Determine which tasks and responsibilities are most important and focus on those first. This can help you to avoid feeling overwhelmed and to make the most of your time.
3. **Break tasks down into smaller steps:** large tasks can be overwhelming, so try to break them down into smaller, more manageable steps. This can help you to make progress without feeling overwhelmed.
4. **Use a planner or calendar:** A planner or calendar can help you to keep track of your schedule and deadlines. Consider using a physical planner or a digital tool like Google Calendar to stay organized. Review your schedule regularly. There are many apps that can help you plan and organize your time.

5. Be the master of your time: As the saying goes, you either plan to fail or fail to plan. Remaining flexible is necessary to thrive however, activating flexibility only follows the act of planning. Understanding that time is our most valuable commodity in life will help you take better care of your use of time. In turn you will experience more enjoyment in your overall college experience.
6. Set aside time for relaxation and self-care: It is important to make time for activities that help you to relax and recharge. This can include things like exercise, hobbies, and spending time with friends and family.

By following these best practices, you can better manage your time and stay on top of your responsibilities, which can help you to thrive in college.

Student Engagement

The third key factor that can contribute to you thriving vs. surviving through college is **Get involved**. One of the best ways to thrive in college is to get involved on campus. This could be through joining a club or organization, volunteering, or participating in sports or other extracurricular activities. Getting involved can help you meet new people, gain valuable experience, and have fun. Here are some ways to maximize your college experience:

1. **Get involved:** One of the best ways to make the most of your college experience is to get involved on campus. This could be through joining a club or organization, volunteering, or participating in sports or other extracurricular activities. Getting involved can help you meet new people, gain valuable experience, and have fun.
2. **Take advantage of resources:** Most colleges and universities offer a wide range of resources and support services to help students succeed. This might include tutoring, career counseling, health and wellness services, and financial aid. Take advantage of these resources to help you reach your goals and make the most of your college experience.
3. **Explore new interests:** College is a great time to explore new interests and try new things. Whether it's joining a club, taking an elective course, or participating in a study abroad program, there are many opportunities to step outside your comfort zone and discover something new. If you do not see something you like, you can start it!
4. **Network:** Building relationships and connections with others can be a valuable part of your college experience. Attend networking events, join professional organizations, and make an effort to get to know your professors and classmates. These connections can help you find internships, job opportunities, and other valuable resources.
5. **Take care of yourself:** College can be stressful, so it's important to take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally. This might include getting at minimum 7hrs of sleep, eating well, exercising, and finding time to relax and recharge.
6. **Study abroad:** Studying abroad is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to immerse yourself in a new culture, learn a new language, and make lasting memories. Even if you can't study abroad for a full semester, there are many options for shorter programs or summer sessions. Some institutions offer exchange programs with other colleges and universities in the United States.

By following these tips and making the most of the resources and opportunities available to you, you can maximize your college experience and make it a meaningful and rewarding part of your life.

Self-Care

College can be stressful, so it's important to take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally. This might include getting enough sleep, eating well, exercising, and finding time to relax and recharge. The fourth key factor to the thriving and not just surviving college is to **Take Care of Yourself**. Self-care is the practice of taking care of your own physical, emotional, and mental well-being. It involves engaging in activities that nourish your body, mind, and spirit and help you to feel balanced and fulfilled. Self-care is a topic we hear people talking about more and more. Often what is not stated explicitly is that self-care requires extra homework to get to transformative self-actualization. What I mean is you must do your homework/research first-hand to understand the origins, art, and science of things such as, self-actualization, mindfulness, benefits of sleep (what is “enough” for you), emotional intelligence, cycle of socialization, etc. Some examples of self-care activities include:

- Getting enough sleep
- Eating a healthy diet
- Exercise and physical activity
- Engaging in hobbies or creative pursuits
- Spending time with loved ones
- Practicing mindfulness or meditation
- Seeking support from friends, family, or a mental health professional

It is important to note that self-care is not about indulging in unhealthy or harmful behaviors. Self-care does not include activities that are harmful to your physical or mental health, such as substance abuse, overspending, or engaging in unhealthy relationships. Instead, self-care is about finding healthy and nourishing ways to take care of yourself and your well-being.

Strengthening your emotional intelligence is a critical form of self-care we rarely talk about. It is the ability to recognize and understand your own emotions and the emotions of others, and to use this awareness to manage your behavior and relationships effectively. Developing emotional intelligence can be a key part of self-care and can be particularly important for thriving in college.

Here are some ways that **emotional intelligence** can support self-care and help you to thrive in college:

- **Managing stress:** By being aware of your own emotions and understanding how they impact your behavior; you can better manage stress and avoid becoming overwhelmed. For example, if you recognize that you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed, you can take steps to manage those emotions in a healthy way, such as through relaxation techniques or seeking support from friends or a mental health professional.
- **Building healthy relationships:** Emotional intelligence can also help you to build healthy and fulfilling relationships with others. By being aware of your own emotions and those of others, you can communicate more effectively and build stronger, more meaningful connections.

- Improving communication skills: Emotional intelligence can also help you to improve your communication skills. By being aware of your own emotions and those of others, you can better understand how your words and actions may be received and adjust your communication accordingly.

Overall, developing emotional intelligence can be an important aspect of self-care and will help you to thrive in college by supporting your ability to manage stress, build healthy relationships, and communicate effectively. Take advantage of this time, especially if you live on campus to dive deeper into taking care of you.

Asking for Help

College can be challenging, and it's okay to ask for help when you need it. Whether it's with coursework, finding a job, or dealing with personal issues, there are many resources available on campus to support you. Don't be afraid to reach out for help when you need it. **Seek Help When You Need it** is the fifth key factor to the thriving and not just surviving college.

As a first-generation college student, it can be especially challenging to navigate the college experience, as you may not have the same level of support and guidance from family members or mentors who have gone through the process before. In these situations, it is important to remember that it is okay to ask for help and to not be too proud to do so.

Asking for help can be a powerful way to get the support and guidance you need to succeed in college. There are many resources available to college students, such as academic advisors, tutors, and writing centers, that can help you to get the assistance you need. Additionally, you can reach out to professors, mentors, and peers for support and guidance.

It can be difficult to ask for help, especially if you are used to being independent or if you worry about appearing weak or unprepared. However, it is important to remember that asking for help is a sign of strength and resilience. It shows that you are willing to take the steps needed to succeed, and it can help you to get the support and guidance you need to thrive in college.

In short, don't be too proud to ask for help while in college. There are many resources and people available to support you and help you to succeed. By being open to seeking assistance and guidance, you can set yourself up for success and build the foundation for a fulfilling and rewarding college experience.

Self-Awareness:

Self-awareness, the sixth key factor to the thriving and not just surviving college; is the ability to recognize and understand your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It involves being aware of your strengths and weaknesses, as well as your values, beliefs, and attitudes. Learning about who you are and what your life calling is can be just as important as learning your selected area of study. In fact, understanding your values, goals, and passions can be a crucial part of finding meaning and fulfillment in your life and career beyond college.

Here are some ways that learning about yourself, and your life purpose can benefit you in college and beyond:

1. **Clarify your goals:** By learning about who you are and what matters most to you, you can better clarify your goals and what you want to achieve in your personal and professional life. This can help you make more informed decisions about your studies, career, and life path.
2. **Enhance your well-being:** Understanding your values and purpose can help you live a more fulfilling and meaningful life, which can lead to greater well-being and happiness. By aligning your actions and choices with your values and purpose, you can find greater satisfaction and contentment in your daily life.
3. **Improve your relationships:** Knowing who you are and what you stand for can also help you build stronger and more authentic relationships with others. By being true to yourself and communicating your values and goals, you can build deeper connections and foster more meaningful relationships.
4. **Find your passion:** Learning about yourself and your life purpose can help you discover your passions and what brings you joy and fulfillment. By exploring your interests and values, you can find your true calling and pursue a career that aligns with your passions and goals.

By learning about who you are and what your life purpose is, you can better understand yourself and your place in the world. This self-awareness can be a powerful tool in helping you find meaning and fulfillment in your personal and professional life. Self-awareness is an important part of personal growth and development, as it allows you to better understand yourself and make informed decisions about your life. It can also help you to develop empathy and build stronger relationships with others, as you are better able to understand and relate to their thoughts and feelings.

There are several ways that you can **develop self-awareness**, including:

1. **Reflecting on your thoughts and feelings:** Take time to regularly reflect on your thoughts and feelings and try to understand where they are coming from. This can help you to better understand your motivations and behaviors.
2. **Seeking feedback:** Seek feedback from others, such as friends, family, or mentors, as they may have a different perspective on your strengths and areas for improvement.
3. **Paying attention to your body:** Pay attention to physical cues, such as changes in your body language or facial expressions, as these can be indicators of your emotional state.

4. Practicing mindfulness: Engaging in mindfulness activities, such as meditation or journaling, can help you to be more present and aware in the moment, which can improve self-awareness.

Activating your DEI lens throughout your pathway of self-awareness creates the opportunity to also develop your ability to become an inclusive leader. Being an inclusive student leader involves actively working to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all members of your group or organization. This means recognizing and valuing the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of all individuals, and actively seeking out ways to support and empower those who may have historically been marginalized or underrepresented.

There are several ways that student leaders in general can **work towards inclusivity**:

1. Educate yourself: It is important for student leaders to have a basic understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) concepts, as well as the specific issues and challenges faced by different marginalized communities. Reading books, articles, and attending workshops and training sessions can help you gain a deeper understanding of DEI issues and how to be an effective ally.
2. Create a safe and welcoming environment: Student leaders can create a positive and welcoming environment by setting clear guidelines and expectations for respectful behavior and communication, and by actively promoting diversity and inclusivity within their group or organization. This may involve creating a welcoming and inclusive code of conduct, hosting events and activities that are inclusive and welcoming to all members and making sure that all members feel comfortable and safe participating in group activities.
3. Foster a culture of respect and understanding: Student leaders can create a culture of respect and understanding by actively listening to and valuing the perspectives and experiences of all members, and by being open and willing to learn from others. This may involve facilitating open and respectful dialogue, encouraging members to share their thoughts and ideas, and actively seeking out diverse perspectives and experiences.
4. Take action to address issues of inequity: As a student leader, it is important to actively work to address and dismantle systems of oppression and inequity within your group or organization. This may involve challenging and addressing biased or discriminatory behavior, advocating for policies and practices that promote equity and inclusion, and working to create a more inclusive and diverse leadership team.

Showing up as an inclusive leader can look slightly different depending on your racial identity. **As a white student on a predominately white institution (PWI)**, it is important to show up as an inclusive leader by actively working to create a more welcoming and inclusive community for people of color and other marginalized groups. Here are some tips for showing up as an inclusive leader on a PWI as a white student:

1. Educate yourself: A key aspect of being an inclusive leader is being knowledgeable about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues. Make an effort to learn about the experiences and perspectives of people of color and other marginalized groups and be open to hearing about the challenges and barriers they face.

2. **Be an ally:** Be an ally to people of color and other marginalized groups by standing up for them and advocating for their rights and needs. This might involve speaking up when you see discrimination or microaggressions, supporting DEI initiatives on campus, or simply being a listening ear when someone needs it.
3. **Try to be inclusive:** Make an effort to be inclusive in your leadership style and approach. This might involve being mindful of language and communication, seeking out diverse perspectives and voices, and creating inclusive environments where everyone feels welcome and valued.
4. **Take ownership of your privilege:** As a white student on a PWI, you may have certain privileges that people of color do not. It's important to recognize and take ownership of your privilege and be mindful of how it might impact your interactions and decisions.
5. **Be open to feedback:** Finally, be open to feedback and willing to learn and grow. You may not always get it right, but it's important to listen to others and be willing to learn from your mistakes.

As a student of color on a predominately white institution (PWI), it is important to show up as an inclusive leader by actively working to create a more welcoming and inclusive community for people of other marginalized groups. Here are some tips for showing up as an inclusive leader on a PWI as a student of color:

1. **Educate yourself:** A key aspect of being an inclusive leader is being knowledgeable about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues. Make an effort to learn about the experiences and perspectives of people of color and other marginalized groups and be open to hearing about the challenges and barriers they face.
2. **Be an ally:** Be an ally to people of color and other marginalized groups by standing up for them and advocating for their rights and needs. This might involve speaking up when you see discrimination or microaggressions, supporting DEI initiatives on campus, or simply being a listening ear when someone needs it.
3. **Share your perspective:** As a student of color, you have unique experiences and perspectives that can be valuable to others. Don't be afraid to share your perspective and experiences and be open to discussing DEI issues with your peers.
4. **Take ownership of your identity:** It's important to embrace and take ownership of your identity as a student of color and be proud of who you are. Don't let others define or diminish your identity, and don't be afraid to speak up about your experiences and perspectives.
5. **Be open to feedback:** Finally, be open to feedback and willing to learn and grow. You may not always get it right, but it's important to listen to others and be willing to learn

By being an inclusive student leader, you can help create a more welcoming and supportive environment for all and work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

Get Connected

College can be a time of great change and growth, and it's important to stay connected with the people who matter to you. This could be through staying in touch with friends and family or finding a support network on campus. Being the first in your family to attend college and showing up on a PWI as a student of color are two major reasons **Staying Connected** is number seven on the key factors needed to thrive in college.

Attending a predominately white institution (PWI) as a student of color can be a challenging and sometimes isolating experience. Here are some tips for thriving on a PWI as a student of color:

1. Find a support system: It's important to surround yourself with people who understand and support you. This might include finding a mentor, joining a student group or club, or seeking out therapy or counseling.
2. Educate yourself: To better understand and navigate the challenges you may face as a student of color in a PWI, it's important to educate yourself about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This might include reading books, attending workshops and seminars, or participating in educational programs on campus.
3. Advocate for yourself: It's important to speak up for yourself and your needs as a student of color. This might include advocating for more inclusive policies and practices on campus or seeking out resources and support when you need it.
4. Take care of yourself: It's important to prioritize your well-being, especially in a challenging environment. Make sure to take breaks, set boundaries, and find ways to relax and recharge.
5. Build alliances: Building alliances with other students of color and allies can be a powerful way to create change on campus and make your voice heard. This might include participating in student government, organizing events or campaigns, or working with faculty, staff, and administrators to promote diversity and inclusion. (do not let titles intimidate you)
6. Seek out opportunities: Look for opportunities to get involved on campus and make a positive impact. This might include joining a club or organization, participating in community service, or pursuing leadership roles. If an opportunity that you seek does not exist, work with others to create it!

By following these tips and seeking out support when you need it, you can thrive in a PWI as a student of color. Remember to stay true to yourself and your values, and don't be afraid to speak up and advocate for what you need and believe in.

Here is some advice specifically for **first generation college students**:

1. Seek out support: First generation college students may face unique challenges, so it's important to seek out support when you need it. This might include finding a mentor or tutor, joining a student group or club, or seeking out financial aid or other resources.
2. Take advantage of resources: Most colleges and universities offer a wide range of resources and support services to help students succeed. This might include tutoring, career counseling, health

and wellness services, and financial aid. Take advantage of these resources to help you reach your goals.

3. **Communicate with your family:** It's important to keep your family informed and involved in your college experience, even if they are not familiar with the college process. Share your goals and successes with them and let them know how they can support you.
4. **Get involved:** One of the best ways to make the most of your college experience is to get involved on campus. This could be through joining a club or organization, volunteering, or participating in sports or other extracurricular activities. Getting involved can help you meet new people, gain valuable experience, and have fun.
5. **Don't be afraid to ask for help:** College can be overwhelming at times, and it's okay to ask for help when you need it. Whether it's with coursework, finding a job, or dealing with personal issues, there are many resources available on campus to support you. Don't be afraid to reach out for help when you need it.

It is just as important to recognize the power in your voice as a student. Growing up in the American society we are socialized to follow directions and not challenge the status quo. Discovering your voice and being empowered to let your voice be heard and recognized is a message every first-generation college student needs to hear. The student voice has the power to bring about positive change on campus and beyond. Students have the unique perspective and experience of being on the front lines of the college experience, and their voices and actions can be a powerful force for change.

On a predominately white institution (PWI), student activism can be especially important in advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion. By speaking out against injustice and working to create a more inclusive and welcoming campus, students can play a vital role in promoting positive change.

There are many ways that students can get involved in **activism on a PWI**, such as:

1. Joining a student group or club that focuses on social justice or equity issues
2. Participating in protests or other public demonstrations
3. Writing letters, op-eds, or articles for campus or local publications
4. Working with faculty and staff to promote diversity and inclusion on campus
5. Volunteering or participating in community service projects that address social justice issues

By getting involved and using their voice, students can make a real difference in promoting positive change on their campus and in their community. It's important to remember that activism can take many forms, and every student has the power to make a positive impact.

Disclaimer for student activists: For students of marginalized social identities who are moved by social justice activists, change agents, disruptors of status quo on campus, you must be aware of the fine line between student activism to support the pathway to change and doing the job of campus administrators. It is not always easy to tell when it has gone past the fine line, but it is something you must be conscious of as you enter the work of being a social justice warrior on a PWI. I cannot stress enough that you are paying the institution to learn and be educated, not do the educating to the

educators! I promise you the minute you organize and speak up as a student activist you will almost always be asked to form or join a committee, taskforce, etc. as a response of the administration. In these working groups you may be asked of your own experience, asked to offer solutions, charged to conduct research, collect data, etc. You must assess your own interest, schedule, and capacity to understand your threshold.

Hear me clearly when I say, I encourage you to speak up, stand up, and push back to demand equity and inclusion as your voice as a student is required at all tables making decisions that impact the student experience. In that same notion, when your role moves beyond consulting/guiding in the process you must and should be compensated for your contributions. Again, you are a student first and you are paying for your education. Compensation can be offered or requested in the form of a stipend, internship credit (if it's required for graduation), independent student, or even course credit depending on the intensity of your involvement. There is no clear standard for determining the threshold or equitable compensation in these situations however, it is important that you are aware and prepare yourself to negotiate your time and talents when/if these situations present itself.

Have Fun!

Finally, don't forget the eighth factor to thriving in college which is to **Have Fun!** It is with great intention that having fun is the last key factor in thriving in college. It is a factor that must not be forgotten, yet, it is best reserved as a reward along the journey for your hard work and commitment towards success. College is a unique and exciting time, and it's important to make the most of it. Try new things, take risks, and enjoy all that college has to offer.

A combined learning in and out of the classroom is an important part of the college experience. While formal coursework is an important way to gain knowledge and skills, there are many other ways to learn and grow during your time in college that can contribute to your growth and ability to have fun!

Here are some reasons why it is important to **learn out of the classroom** in addition to in-class learning while in college:

1. **Broaden your horizons:** College is a time to explore new interests and try new things. By learning in and out of the classroom, you can expose yourself to a wide range of ideas, perspectives, and experiences that can help broaden your horizons and deepen your understanding of the world.
2. **Gain practical skills:** While coursework can provide a strong foundation of theoretical knowledge, learning outside the classroom can help you gain practical skills and experience that are valuable in the real world. This might include internships, co-op programs, or part-time jobs that give you hands-on experience in your field of interest.
3. **Enhance your resume:** Participating in extracurricular activities and learning outside the classroom can help you stand out in the job market and enhance your resume. Employers often value real-world experience and a well-rounded skill set, and these experiences can help you stand out from other candidates.
4. **Make lasting connections:** College is a time to make lasting connections with others and learning in and out of the classroom can be a great way to do this. By getting involved in extracurricular activities or participating in study abroad programs, you can meet new people and build relationships that can benefit you long after graduation.

By learning in and out of the classroom, you can apply theory to practice and set yourself up for success after graduation. Remember to take advantage of the many opportunities available to you, and don't be afraid to try new things and step outside your comfort zone. Having fun while working hard and prioritizing your responsibilities in college is important for several reasons.

First and foremost, having a balance between work and play is crucial for maintaining good mental health. College can be a stressful time, with demanding coursework and pressure to succeed. Taking time to have fun and relax can help alleviate stress and prevent burnout.

Additionally, having fun can also help improve your productivity. When you enjoy what you are doing, you are more likely to be motivated and engaged in your work. This can lead to better performance and ultimately, better grades.

Furthermore, prioritizing your responsibilities and making time for fun can also help you develop time management skills. By effectively managing your time and priorities, you can ensure that you are making the most of your college experience and setting yourself up for success in the future.

In conclusion, having fun while working hard and prioritizing your responsibilities in college is essential for maintaining good mental health, improving productivity, and developing time management skills. It is important to find a balance between your academic and personal life to ensure that you are able to fully enjoy and make the most of your college experience.

Through it all, remember to stay true to your passions and interests, and don't be afraid to move out of your comfort zone and seek out meaningful opportunities to learn and grow. I hope this guide is helpful to you as you embark and thrive through your college career, best of luck and stay blessed!