

# BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

Three former INCPAS Scholars and a university program director share some of their big collegiate “lessons learned” for accounting students.

## BALANCING ACCT.: HOW DO YOU DO IT?

**When people ask me how I do “it,” they are referring to my balancing act of maintaining four jobs, a full-time class schedule at Butler University, a high GPA, relationships, and my sanity.**

To me, none of the aforementioned undertakings are choices. In order to achieve my goal of becoming a renowned, distinguished CPA, I have to work hard. There’s no way around it. Sure, some students have luck, the blessing of their parents’ paying for college or a combination of the two, but I don’t - and that’s okay.

- Just because you don’t have as much to work with as others do, it doesn’t mean you can’t succeed. You’ll just have to work a little harder, a little longer, and a little smarter. If you truly want it, you will do all you can to achieve it.

- If you want to reach your goals, there’s a great chance you will have to sacrifice other activities to be where you want to be.
- You have to have a clear view of your future and what you want it to be. Also, you have to be able to discern what is important to do in your life right now versus what you could do at an even higher level when you graduate college and begin your professional career.
- Success just doesn’t appear out of nowhere. You have to plan for it. Plan, prioritize, and most importantly - MAKE AND USE A BUDGET.

If I can do “it,” so can you. It’s not about gender, age, or your current position in life. It’s about how hard you are willing to work to change your life for the better in whatever way that statement resonates for you.



Malayna Pottschmidt,  
Sophomore,  
Butler University

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Don’t forget, though, that if you try to balance too much, you could drop everything. If that happens, pick up what’s truly important and keep moving forward.

## THE MIRAGE: LESSONS LEARNED DURING MY FIRST YEAR AS AN ACCOUNTING STUDENT

College. It’s every high school seniors’ dream! You’ve put in the work, submitted your applications, and now you’re waiting for acceptance letters. It’s a bittersweet moment. You’re about to open up a new chapter of life and think you’re ready. It’s as if you’ve trained your entire life to live up to the expectations your parents and society have constantly been telling you: get good grades, get into a good university, and the rest will take care of itself. If only it were that easy ... especially being an accounting major.

In high school, most students are accustomed to memorizing and reciting knowledge for tests or exams. In college, not only do you need to be an expert on the information but one needs to be able to think critically on exams about different situations and scenarios that might not have been discussed or considered in class.



Chaz Stringer,  
Junior,  
Indiana University  
Bloomington

For the first round of exams, I did well except for one. I received a 48% on my Economics exam. I had studied and completed the practice exams but at the end of the day it wasn’t enough. Midterms came around and I flipped my score from a 48% to an 84%. One might think I had solved my problem. Wrong. For the third exam, I received a 70% and for the final I received a 68%. In other words, I had to retake the class because a D will not cut it in college. If I didn’t have your attention before, I hopefully have it now.

If someone asked me how my first semester

went in college, I would describe it as the best-worst time of my life. The best in that I made lifelong friendships and experienced the great culture IU has on its campus. The worst in that my academic performance was the lowest in my entire life.

I had three options: feel sorry for myself, change my major and take easier classes, or go back to the drawing board and construct a plan to bounce back next semester.

So what did I do? Did I take the easy route or did I dig deep to find out what I was made of? I went back to the drawing board and dug deeper. It was the first time in life I had somewhat struggled in the classroom, so I had to do something I had never been made to do - put the time in. I did and the results

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spoke for themselves. I was able to jump my GPA back above a 3.0 and able to renew my scholarships.

Fast forward to sophomore year, I am now President of the National Association of Black Accountants Chapter of IU and will be interning with Eli Lilly and Company in Summer 2017. Through faith and

determination, I was able to turn things around and get back on the track of success.

My story isn't of a straight path and more than likely won't be going forward, as I'll continue to face trials and struggles. But I hope my story speaks to students out there who may be struggling themselves: don't give up, because you never know what's waiting for

you on the other side.

I'll leave you all with a favorite quote from one of my favorite actors, Denzel Washington, who said, "Without motivation you'll never start, but without consistency you'll never finish."

## THE JOURNEY THUS FAR

Since the beginning, everyone had told me a career in accounting would be really difficult. What I didn't expect is how difficult a career in accounting would be.



Sandra Granda,  
Junior, Manchester  
University

I know that sounds weird, but you never really know until you experience it. By now, I have successfully completed Intermediate Accounting, Advanced Accounting and Intro to Taxation. Remember the saying, "when the going gets tough, the tough get going?" Well, it is very difficult to get going when it gets tough. When you are staring at your textbook at 3 in the morning

without a clue on how to approach your homework, just remember the people who are behind you cheering you on.

Halfway through both my Intermediate and Advanced Accounting courses, I lost motivation to continue. I contemplated quitting school and working full-time because who needs a career anyway?

I know the importance of my education, but my support system reinforced what I already knew. I also found comfort and motivation by talking to professors, by going to the gym, and by finding other hobbies that relieved my stress. As difficult as my classes became, I continued to get good grades, which further boosted my self-esteem and motivation to continue my education.

Once you're in college you will have many struggles, but like every adult will tell you, college will pay off and it will all be worth it someday. 📚

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## COLLEGE DON'T & DO'S

Darren Henry is an INCPAS volunteer who presented to current and former INCPAS Scholars at their most recent Alumni Ambassador Workshop. In his role at Purdue and in the community, he helps give students practical, candid advice on how to get where they want to be and what they need to do once they're there.



Darren Henry,  
Managing Director  
– the Dr. Cornell  
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Krannert School  
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### Top mistakes from my undergraduate career

1. I lived at the gym.
2. I partied ... hard. Everyone says college is the time of your life, but the real party is when you can party where you want to, when you want to and with whom you want to, which comes later.
3. I never networked with a diverse group of students.
4. I didn't take time to develop professionally.
5. I left campus frequently. I took road trips way too much – people actually thought I went to IU. Don't go back a lot for visiting family every weekend, either – you need room to grow on your own.
6. I skipped class. I spent way too much time watching Jerry Springer, which had just started.
7. I never learned how to study.
8. I never set personal, academic or professional goals.
9. I never asked for help.
10. I thought the Purdue brand alone would carry me to success.

### Characteristics to achieve success

1. Don't use excuses – get it done. You have a syllabus, you know what's coming.
2. You know it's not just about you.
3. Early mornings and late nights. Don't just be on campus only when you have a class – be there for other activities and studying.
4. The greatest commodity is energy. You have to be able to go even when you don't feel it. Be in shape, eat right, be healthy – that will dictate how far you can go.
5. Principles. Set rules for yourself.
6. Wavering yet unbreakable faith. You can question your abilities, but use your internal motivation to get the job done.
7. A reason. Know why you want to succeed, otherwise you're just going through the motions.
8. Persevere when others don't.
9. Relentlessly study your craft.
10. Take risks. 📚