**RWU Law Academic Success Program - Tips for “Tele-learning” or “Learning from Home”**

As I write, thousands of people all over the world are learning a new skillset, to work or learn from home. Their supervisors or teachers are also learning new skills, that is, to manage or teach from home. Most of us are new at this, but we’re all going to learn how to do this, and we have the power to make it a great experience. One benefit we have is that we already know one another. We have had several months, and in some cases years, to establish relationships with one another face to face. We will continue to build those relationships online for now.

You’ve all heard the term “telecommuters” - people who work from home. This guide provides tips for students who learn from home or “tele learners.” One way to look at the situation that we find ourselves in is to view it as an opportunity to work on our “telecommuting” (or for now, “tele learning” skills). Learning from home, just like telecommuting, is a skillset that can be learned and practiced. Here are some tips, adapted from Seattle Law School’s tips for telecommuters, to help you as you learn from home during this semester. Let the Academic Success Program know if you need help. Learning to “tele learn” is a useful skill, but will take time. Be kind and patient with yourself and take it one day at a time.

To be a successful at learning from home, it is necessary to work with less structure and more freedom in completing responsibilities. It requires careful planning and discipline. Get organized. Good work habits from the moment tele learning begins make it easier to complete work away from school.

**REMEMBER: Be sure to be compassionate and kind to yourself and others. Tele learning, like telecommuting, can be challenging at any time, but especially during a national crisis**.

***1. Replace the Ritual of Getting Ready for School and Ending the Day***. You will no longer have the familiar rituals of arriving to school at a certain time, circling the parking lot in search of someone who is ready to relinquish a precious parking space, upending yet another umbrella in the mind-numbing, windy gusts on your way from the parking lot, sitting on one of the couches in the second floor atrium before class or morning conversations over coffee in the Bistro. Even the drive or shuttle ride to school that symbolizes the beginning of the school day is missing.

Replace these rituals with new rituals. Some people leave their house, go around the block, return, and begin the workday. Others play specific music or begin working after a morning exercise session or bike ride. Some of you might wish to still have that cup of coffee with a friend over Face time each morning. Each of you should find a ritual which will work for you. It is also a good practice to have a ritual in place to mark the end of the workday. Be creative in deciding what to do.

***2. The Location***. Identify a safe location in the home as workspace. There is no need to devote an entire room for the office at home. Some people have successfully developed a part of an existing room, a basement room or an attic for their workstation. Locate the workstation away from distractions. Working on the couch in front of the T.V. does not work!

***3. Journal How You Are Feeling for A Few Moments Each Day***. A practice that I started during a difficult time in my life was to briefly journal at the end of the day about how the day went. I picked a journal that I liked, a pen that felt good to write with, and I would spend about five minutes or less at the end of the day just putting down in writing whatever came to mind. Just getting things down on paper can really make a difference.

***4. Set a Routine***. Set a schedule and do your very best to stick to it. This helps set a routine. Routines are reassuring and help to foster productivity. Begin and finish your school work at a regular times just as if you were at school.

***5. Make a Daily ʺThings-to-Doʺ List.*** Develop a list of goals and assignments for each day. At the end of the day, go over the list and see how much has been accomplished. Move tasks that have not been done to the next day. Feel free to reach out if you have any difficulty with this process.

***6. Managing Learning in a Time of National Emergency***. You cannot be efficient unless you pay attention to your psychological well-being, stay reasonably informed on public health and other updates, and reach out to your community. Some extra self-care and care for others may have to take place during the day. Be realistic in setting expectations. For example, if you need to do some meditation, go out for groceries, or check on a neighbor during the day, plan that in your schedule. Reach out to us if you need help.

***7. Maintain Contact by Checking and Responding to Emails***. Pick a time each day to check and respond to emails. Email will be a primary source of information from your professors and the administration. Make checking emails a part of your routine either at the beginning or end of the day and put that task in your schedule.

***8. Set up a System at Home***. Develop a system for organizing the work that will be done at home. Without the time to organize resources, notes, and case briefs, there will be trails of paper and stacks of documents everywhere! You may need some inexpensive file folders or binders. Or keep your files and folders online. **Be sure to consistently back up your computer. In addition, periodically email important drafts or documents to yourself as an extra precaution. Make this a priority now.**

***9. Set Mini-Deadlines for Yourself***. Break larger projects into smaller sub-tasks and set little deadlines for each smaller task. Make the task as small as you need it to be to get yourself to do it. Doing small tasks consistently gets things done! Put these deadlines for these smaller tasks into your calendar. Hold yourself accountable or find a “buddy” to help you hold yourself accountable. Let us know if you need help doing this.

***10. Attend Virtual School and Social Gatherings***. Do not become invisible because of tele learning. Try to virtually attend school gatherings and group meetings that are posted. Where online social interaction is available, be sure to join. If you have skills in technology to set up online platforms and come up with creative ideas to prevent remote learners from being isolated, share them with student groups or offer to set them up. Each of you can create a free zoom account to help facilitate not only learning activities like study groups, but also social connectedness.

***11. Train Family Members, Friends, and Neighbors***. As a tele learner, take your learning seriously. Avoid having too many interruptions. Determine what questions, favors, and needs may cause interruptions. Ask your family or roommates to help develop ground rules to follow while you are working remotely at home. Getting their input ensures participation in the process. Remain flexible. Sometimes an errand may be the perfect break you need.

***12. Childcare or Family Care Required in Responding to the Coronavirus Outbreak***.Some of you are trying to learn from home while taking care of children or other family members. Those of us who have ever worked from home with young children understand how stressful this can be. Reach out to us if your home situation is making it difficult for you to attend online classes or to spend the time you need on your learning. We’ll do what we can to help.

# THE HOME OFFICE Most students can create a temporary work area in their home that is adequate. For telecommuting to work there is a need to provide an ʺofficeʺ space with control over noise, interruptions, work equipment, and materials.

Consider these basic criteria in organizing the home office:

* An environment that is free of safety and fire hazards
* Good internet access
* An environment that promotes good work
* Adequate workspace
* Access to telephone or electrical outlets
* Security and safety of work materials
* Separation from on-going domestic activities
* Temperature, sound and light control

**GOOD LUCK! PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU NEED HELP. REMEMBER, TELELEARNING IS A USEFUL SKILL BUT WILL TAKE TIME!**