Sleep and Academic Success

Sleep difficulties are the #3 factor affecting WU students’ academic success, according to the 2007 American College Health Association’s National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA).

Sleep researchers who study college students find:
- An association between students who report later bedtimes and participation in “all-nighters” with poorer academic achievement (as measured by GPA). Further, as sleep quantity and quality decrease, academic performance worsens (Thacher, 2008).
- Among full-time students, those reporting poorer sleep quality perform worse on tests than students reporting better quality sleep (National Sleep Foundation, NFS). Sleep deprivation impairs students’ ability to recognize and correct errors (NFS).

Ready to make a change? Forget the ZZZ’s. It’s the CCC’s that are important in sleep. That is, “C’s,” as in:
- Get the Correct amount of sleep for improved Concentration, Creativity and Critical thinking. Most experts agree that young adults may need as much as 8-10 hours of sleep for optimal performance, yet most college students report getting fewer than 6 hours a night.
- Be Consistent—go to bed and wake up around the same time every day—even on the weekends. Duration of sleep and regularity are what Counts (Maas et al, 1998).
- Get your sleep in one Continuous block. Shortened or incomplete nocturnal sleep is not rejuvenating and detrimental to your well being. Researchers believe that it is important to go through the complete sleep cycle which includes REM (rapid eye-movement) sleep and non-REM sleep. REM sleeps plays a major role in facilitating memory storage, retention, and organization, as well as processing new information, while non-REM sleep is crucial in maintaining general health (if you’re sleep deprived, you are more susceptible to viral infections like colds and flu).

So be Cool…and get some sleep!

References:

National Sleep Foundation: http://www.sleepfoundation.org

Thacher, P.V. (2008). University students and the "all nighter": Correlates and patterns of students' engagement in a single night of total sleep deprivation. Behavioral Sleep Medicine, 6 (1), 16-31.

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