Tutoring is Not for Dummies

Are you receiving poor grades on your papers or exams? Are you worried about failing a class? Do you feel overwhelmed and stressed about doing college work? If you are, then take a deep breath and read on.

College is more difficult than high school. Sometimes you may have trouble understanding the subject matter or the professor. Occasionally your method of studying may not match the content being assessed on the exams. At times you may receive a poor or failing grade on a paper even though you worked really hard to write it.

If any of these things have happened to you, it doesn't mean that you are doomed to failure, and it doesn't mean that you're not smart. What these setbacks should tell you is that you need to get some assistance. Yes, that's right—colleges and universities offer assistance to students who are struggling. The key is knowing where to get help.

Tutoring
Colleges and universities offer multiple services to support students in their pursuit of academic success. These support services will have different names, such as a learning center, an academic support center, a learning assistance center, a tutoring center, or a resource center. Many of these academic support centers offer tutoring, which can be provided by peers or professionals. Some tutoring may be performed on a drop-in basis, while other tutoring may have to be scheduled in advance. Be sure to ask the academic support center what their scheduling policy is so that you can get the help that you need before your next big exam or paper.

While reading your college newspaper or walking past bulletin boards, you may see advertisements for tutoring. These services are usually not in conjunction with the university, and the individual who provides the tutoring will charge you per hour.

Workshops
Most colleges offer additional sources of academic assistance. Sometimes departments on campus and dormitories will offer workshops on study habits, time management, or writing academic papers. Libraries may also offer workshops on how to conduct research. Watch for announcements and be sure to sign up for these events if pre-registration is required.

Counseling
It's not uncommon to feel stressed or overwhelmed this first year, especially considering that this may be the first time that you have had to deal with being away from home, trying to make new friends, or juggling an enormous workload. Talking about your feelings with someone who works with students on a regular basis might make you feel less alone. Most colleges have counselors available to talk with you if you are feeling stressed. Your dorm RA may also be a good person to talk with since he or she has experienced and survived many of the same challenges that you are facing now as a freshman.
If you feel overwhelmed but don't know where to turn for assistance, talk with your RA or faculty member for advice or a referral. Your RA and professors will be able to steer you in the right direction so that you can get on the path to academic success and personal well-being.

People who work at colleges and universities want you to succeed. Take advantage of services that are there to help you. You will be glad you did!