

# **Spring 2018 Beginning of Semester Note to My Students**

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At the start of each semester, I e-mail my students in advance of the start of classes to address the issue of course expectations. I include a copy of my syllabus, which is also posted on Blackboard. Student understanding of course expectations may enhance their overall performance.

Below is the note to my incoming spring 2018 students:

**To all,**

**Welcome to my BBA 407 (Strategic Management Course).**

**The purpose of this e-mail is to introduce you to the course's requirements and expectations (see the attached syllabus for more detail). BBA 407 is a sort of capstone course. It draws upon concepts learned in earlier courses ranging from financial accounting to corporate finance.**

**The course grade is a function of homework, one or two library sessions covering research and research resources, one quiz, a mid-term exam, the final exam, and a group research paper. The allocation of points is covered on page 8 of the syllabus.**

**In this note, I will expand a little upon the importance of the homework assignments.**

**Last semester, the class completed just 61% of its homework assignments. One-out-of-every five students submitted no homework assignments whatsoever. The end result was among the lowest class averages in any of my semesters.**

**Following the semester, I divided the students into two categories. Those who completed 50% or more of their assignments were classified as "completers." Those who completed fewer than half of their assignments were "non-completers."**

**On the Mid-Term Exam (20% of the course grade), completers scored an average of 4.2 points above non-completers. On the higher stakes Final Exam (40% of the course grade), completers had scores that averaged 10.6 points above those of the non-completers. The increased gap suggested that the impact of a failure to complete homework assignments grew over progression of the course. This makes sense, as understanding of later concepts depends, in part, on understanding of earlier ones. Therefore, if knowledge of earlier concepts was limited, that deficiency would impact how well students could learn and apply later concepts. In other words, the expanded gap was a result of the combination of a continuing failure to complete homework assignments and the knowledge gap in earlier concepts.**

**In Act 1, Scene 2 of Shakespeare's "Troiles and Cressida," Cressida observed, "Things won are done." In one's courses, the "things won" are everything that one learns. The**

**“things...done” are participation in class discussions, reading, completion of assignments, and other related work. The work is an investment in learning. Without such investment, one can achieve little or no return on one’s course.**

**All said, effort matters greatly. Every student can succeed with sustained and ongoing commitment to the course’s work. I very much want to see every student meet his or her full potential.**

**Good luck in the coming semester, both in BBA 407 and in all your other classes.**