All the staff and faculty at Blinn want you to succeed. But, while we believe that you can succeed here, we can’t do it for you. You will have to earn your success, both here and in "the real world". The real question, you will find, is whether you want success enough that you will put in the hard work and exert yourself to attain it.

Some tips about college math courses:

. . . . . 1. Many of you were taught in high school at the level of students much weaker than yourself and with aspirations lower than college.

*If you didn't have to learn any math in your last high school course from reading the textbook on your own, you are in this majority. Expect a change. (You were taught at someone else's level, not yours.) Here, you are expected to put in more effort to learn better, so that you can use the methods you learn in any situation where they apply.*

. . . . . 2. You are capable of learning the easier material in the course largely on your own.

*You may not realize this, but it's true! Were you asked to do that in high school? Probably not. Why? And how much time in class should be spent on the easier material? Very little.*

. . . . . 3. The typical situation in a course is that you will not have seen most of the material before.

*It is best to go to class with the sense that you have seen the material before. So, get into the habit of reading the textbook beforehand to get a feel for the material that will be discussed. You'll be surprised how much this helps.*

. . . . . 4. It is quite normal to face the task of patching up your background when something you do not know well is considered essential prerequisite material.

*Even professors have to do this! The longer you have been away from mathematics, the more you will have to do in addition to working on the material for this course.*

. . . . . 5. The responsibility of motivation for learning the material rests ultimately with you.

*If your major requires a course, then the department of your major thinks you should learn its material. If you want a good grade in the course, ... then learn the material well!*

. . . . . 6. It is your responsibility to learn the material of the course.

*The instructor will be trying to help you learn the material, but often in ways you may not be used to (keep the above in mind). Much of the learning will be taking place outside of the classroom. At a minimum, expect to spend 8 or more hours per week outside the classroom working on this course.*

The information on this page was adapted from a letter directed to entering freshmen and was written by Steven Zucker, Professor of Mathematics at John Hopkins.