

THE BRIDGE:

Bridging The Gap Between Today and Tomorrow

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Grand Valley State University
Educational Support Program

February 2011

Tips on how to get ahead this semester

By: Ashleigh Zerbst

- 1- Get a tutor if you are struggling or think a class may be difficult.
- 2- Make friends with people in your class in case you miss a class and need someone's notes to borrow.
- 3- Read before your class. I know everyone says this, but you will actually know what the professor is talking about!
- 4- Meet with your professor early and at least once this semester. If you miss a class for whatever reason the professor will be more understanding if they have at least met you once.
- 5- Don't fall asleep in class or slack off! You're paying to go to class why not go and pay attention. This may mean less studying later.
- 6- Get into a study group and consistently go to the meetings.
- 7- Make sure to get enough sleep and drink plenty of water. This will keep your body healthy and mind sharp.



Valentine Gifts

By: Marnie Parris-Bingle

How do you say you care about someone without spending all your dough? I found these tips on yahoo.com and think there is a nice variety to choose from to fit any relationship status or personality type! My favorite is the mix CD because who doesn't love a whole CD of your favorites, especially when there are memories attached to them !

Frame a mutual memento

Start with a simple picture frame and get ready to create some low-cost art that's rich in sentimental value. No, you're not giving your partner a picture of you, silly. What you need is a memento from your first date or the time you met, like a matchbook from the restaurant, the receipt where she scrawled her number, a ticket stub from a movie, or an invitation to the party where you two first met. Put it all together for a simple, sleek piece of art that's extra-special for the two of you.

Give flowers with finesse

Put a modern twist on an old classic by buying a bunch of loose stems, choosing two or three different shades of one flower, or try different varieties of flowers, all in the same color. Then, wrap something creative around the stems, outside of the florist's paper, maybe a scarf or charm bracelet, or even a new set of ear buds or cordless mouse if your honey is high-tech.

Monogram something surprising

Start by buying something you already had in mind, whether that's a leather case for her iPod, some cute cotton pajamas, or a cute pillow for their futon. Then take it to an engraver's shop or tailor to have it personalized with his or her initials. Monogramming can make even the most mundane item feel really expensive

Nix a chore your sweetie abhors

Maybe your significant other or friend hates to clean out his or her car or bedroom, do laundry, or clean the kitchen. Often times the best way to show someone you care is an "act of service". You can make a coupon to give them or surprise them by doing it while they're at class.

Burn some fond memories into a CD

Mix CDs are a classic gift to give amongst the lovestruck. While the straightforward sentiments in love songs are surely accurate, you can make your CD even more personal by including tunes that refer to different things you've done together. Not sure what fits the bill? Check a song-lyric database, like Songlyrics.com, Sing365.com, or Lyricsdownload.com. It's not an expensive gift to give — but definitely one that showcases your thoughtfulness.



You've Got Questions? We've Got Answers!

By: Melissa Selby-Theut

If you have any other questions that you would like answered, you can either submit them to frontesp@gvsu.edu or schedule an appointment with your ESP advisor. Remember, we're here to help! I will be answering those questions in the newsletter throughout the course of the year.

I have lots of questions about the GRE! What is it? When do I apply to take it? How is it scored? What are the score ranges? Can I take it at GVSU? How much does it cost? And finally, how long are the scores good for?

Whew! That's a lot of questions, but they're all good ones so here we go. . . .

What is it?

The GRE is the Graduate Records Examination. It is a test that is used by graduate schools to help determine who will be admitted and who will not be admitted. Some graduate programs require it, some require other tests (like the GMAT for business, the MCAT for medicine, or LSAT for law). Some do not require any test at all! Be sure to check with your advisor to determine whether you need the GRE or any other test if you're considering graduate school!

When do I apply to take it?

This is a tough question as the answer is subjective, but many people agree that the summer AFTER your junior year (as you're going into your last year in college) is the best time to take the GRE. At that point, the math and writing skills that you've learned in college are still fresh; plus, you'd have time to take it again if you needed a higher score before the application deadline for your graduate program (which may be as early as October of your last year in college). Many graduate programs won't consider an application that is missing GRE scores, so you don't want to take it too late and miss out on your chance to go to graduate school!

How is the GRE scored? What are the score ranges?

The GRE is split into 3 sections – a math section, a verbal section, and a written section. There is a maximum score of 800 on both the math and verbal sections, which comprise your GRE score. So, one can earn up to a total score of 1600 on the GRE. The written section is scored differently and is not factored into your total score. It is scored on a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 being the best. You receive your total score immediately upon finishing the GRE as the test is computerized and automatically calculates it for you. Your score on the written section is mailed to you approximately 6 – 8 weeks after your test date.

Can I take it at GVSU?

No! The GRE is only offered at specific testing centers throughout the state. For a list of testing centers near you, visit: <http://etsis4.ets.org/tcenter/>.

How much does it cost?

The GRE costs \$140 each time you take it. If you receive Pell grant, though, you can talk to the Grand Valley Financial Aid Office about getting a ½-off fee waiver!

How long are the scores good for?

GRE scores are good for 5 years. After 5 years, you'll need to re-take the GRE if you apply to a graduate program.

For more information about the GRE, check out the official GRE website at: www.ets.org/gre/. You can also check out an unofficial list of frequently asked questions at: www.educers.com/gre/faqs.htm. And, as always, you can talk to your ESP advisor. She can help you with all things graduate school!



Upcoming Events, Issues, and Deadlines

By: Ashleigh Zerbst

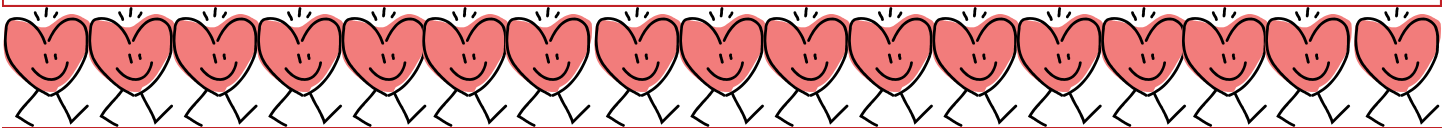
- * Feb. 4th - 75% Tuition Refund Deadline
- * Feb. 4th - Presidents Ball: Cocktails 5:30PM, Dinner 6:30PM, and event 8:30PM –12:30 AM
- * Feb. 4th - FAFSA NIGHT Henry Hall room 115
- * Feb. 14th - Valentines Day
- * Feb. 21-25th - Midterms

Money Talk

By: Vicky Powers

It's that time of year again! W2's from any employer you worked for in 2010 will be put in the mail no later than January 31st. Some employers, like GVSU, make their W2's available to print online, making it faster and easier for you. Once you have received all of your W2's it's time to start filing your federal, state, and local (if required) tax returns. There are a number of organizations that are able to help you file your tax return for free. On the Educational Support Program website (www.gvsu.edu/esp) we have a list of organizations within Kent County that provide this service. Check it out! When you go in, be sure to take the following:

- * W2's (from all employers)
- * Driver's License or State ID
- * Social Security Number
- * Bank Routing Number and Checking or Saving Account Number (if you want your refund directly deposited)



Red Velvet Cupcakes

By: India Stanford

With Valentine's Day swiftly approaching, many may be thinking about a special treat to make their friend, companion, or crush. Since most of us are far from being the next Betty Crocker, something manageable and quick is the best option. Red Velvet cupcakes provide a tasty satisfaction that everyone is sure to love. For the visual learners the following website also features a video of Paula Dean preparing these infamous red velvet cupcakes.

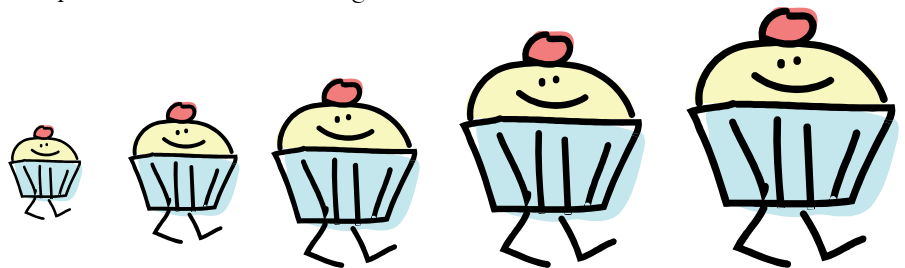
www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/paula-deen/red-velvet-cupcakes-with-cream-cheese-frosting-recipe/index.html

Ingredients:

- * 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- * 1 1/2 cups sugar
- * 1 teaspoon baking soda
- * 1 teaspoon salt
- * 1 teaspoon cocoa powder
- * 1 1/2 cups vegetable oil
- * 1 cup buttermilk, room temperature
- * 2 large eggs, room temperature
- * 2 tablespoons red food coloring
- * 1 teaspoon white distilled vinegar
- * 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Cream Cheese Frosting:

- * 1 pound cream cheese, softened
- * 2 sticks butter, softened
- * 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- * 4 cups sifted confectioners' sugar



Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line 2 (12-cup) muffin pans with cupcake papers. In a medium mixing bowl, sift together the flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, and cocoa powder. In a large bowl gently beat together the oil, buttermilk, eggs, food coloring, vinegar, and vanilla with a handheld electric mixer. Add the sifted dry ingredients to the wet and mix until smooth and thoroughly combined. Divide the batter evenly among the cupcake tins about 2/3 filled. Bake in oven for about 20 to 22 minutes, turning the pans once, half way through. Test the cupcakes with a toothpick to see if they are done. Remove from oven and cool completely before frosting. To make the cream cheese frosting, beat the cream cheese, butter and vanilla together in a large mixing bowl until smooth. Add the sugar and on low speed, beat until incorporated. Increase the speed to high and mix until very light and fluffy. Garnish with chopped pecans and a fresh raspberry or strawberry. Cook's Note: Frost the cupcakes with a butter knife or pipe it on with a big star tip.

FAFSA Night

It's that time of year again. . . the FAFSA deadline is looming just around the corner! Now let's face it, the FAFSA is kind of confusing and the stakes are high. There's money (not to mention your degree and future career) on the line! The way that you answer questions can drastically affect the amount of grant and other aid that you receive to attend college.

ESP is committed to making sure that YOU get all of the FREE MONEY that YOU are entitled to!

Join ESP for its annual FAFSA Night! The ESP staff will be there to guide you through the FAFSA so that you receive the maximum amount of money possible! And this year, it's new and improved! You'll get a handy sheet of tips and tricks alongside the personal assistance of the ESP staff.

Pizza, cookies, and refreshments will be provided! Put it in your planner or phone, and call ESP at 331-3401 to reserve your spot ASAP!



WHEN:

- * Friday, February 4th
- * Stop in any time between 4pm and 6pm for help

WHERE:

- * HRY 115 computer lab

WHAT YOU NEED:

- * Your W2's or your last pay stub
- * Your parent/s' W2's or their last pay stub/s
- * Your FAFSA pin (we can look it up if you don't have it)
- * Your social security number

**Check Us Out on
the Web!**

**[www.gvsu.edu/
esp](http://www.gvsu.edu/esp)**

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