



A Day in the Life of a Running Start Student

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Students enrolled in the Running Start program have the ability, for the most part, to choose when they want the school day to begin. Personally, I like to get school over with so that I have the rest of the day to myself, but I know people who also like to have the mornings off and attend afternoon or evening classes. In high school, I would wake up at 6 to get ready and go to school, but now I wake up anywhere between 7 and 8AM to get to class on time. That extra sleep may not seem like much, but it really adds up after a while. I have noticed my attention in class is much more focused with the later mornings, making it easier to learn more in class which makes for less time spent studying later.

After I ready myself for school, I pick which route I want to take to get there. Different routes have different variables that help to make my decision. These variables include; weather conditions, time of day, distance, ease of use, and stops that I want to make. Weather conditions affect the flow of traffic a great deal and on a rainy day, freeways aren't the quickest way to get from my house to Cascadia. If I leave later than usual in the mornings, I may get caught behind a junior high or elementary school bus which stops frequently and impedes progress notably. Using the freeway adds miles of transit, but because of the increased speed limits, on a sunny morning, the freeway will shave about 5 minutes off of my drive and we all know how important those 5 minutes can be. Sometimes the freeway just does not seem appealing though because of the hassle of merging and dealing with other tired drivers making poor decisions on the road, so I take the back roads. The great thing about the back roads is that before class I occasionally like to grab some coffee or breakfast while on my way to school and the freeway does not offer that luxury.

Once I make it to Cascadia, I have the choice between parking 2 blocks away in the free parking, in the garage at the daily rate of \$3, parking in the metered spots, or parking with a pass. The free parking is a considerable distance from the establishment, but some people would rather take the walk than pay the money. In fact, many people take this approach which limits the amount of free parking available. The Cascadia parking garage costs \$3 per day and is payable by credit or cash at the toll machines located on the way in. In order to use the toll machines, you must remember your parking slot number so that you don't end up paying for the slot next to yours, or having to walk all of the way back to your car. There are limited meter-parking slots on the street that goes through the campus, but if you're only going to be in class for a few hours then it might be wise to take advantage of the opportunity. A parking pass is something that should be seriously considered. The \$95 fee is no laughing matter, but if you're going to attend class every day of the week and have class for more than a few hours then it would be a good choice to buy one. Paying the \$3 each day adds up to more than \$95 a quarter making the parking pass a frugally responsible choice (the reason why I buy the pass). Parking passes are also accepted in UW Bothell's parking garage in case of the rare no-parking scenarios at Cascadia. Failure to pay for a spot or have a pass may result in a \$20 ticket that can be appealed under certain circumstances, but usually just has to be paid. The distance from the garage to the building is only about a hundred feet and there are safe crosswalks connecting the two.

My classes are all located above the ground floor at Cascadia, and I choose to take the stairs instead of the elevator because it helps to wake me up in the mornings. Classes have a very wide range of durations because they meet between every day of the week to just once a week. On average, my classes are 2 hours in length which may seem like a lot, but I go to chemistry 3 times a week, English 2 times a week, and math 2 times a week so my entire week of school equates to a little over 2 days of high school. After class I have a few options, one of which includes going to the math lab.

The math lab is a place where people in need of a place to study or a helping hand go to do their homework. There is a quiet atmosphere with plenty of tables to start up on some homework and if you're in a class that uses wamap (an online math site) there are computers for everyone to use. If people get stuck on a problem there are usually a few tutors walking around that are paid by Cascadia to help students in need. The math lab also doubles as a writing center and there are top notch writers there to offer constructive criticism for essays. The room is open until 7PM every week day except for Fridays when it closes earlier. Once I feel that I no longer need the math lab, I can do as I please for the remainder of the day.

Normally I go grab a bite to eat or visit friends for a few hours, but I do need to get home before a late hour because college level homework should not be taken lightly, especially for the math and sciences. Typically I spend twice as much time on homework as I did in class that day, but there are the days when homework seems to last forever and the days when I can either choose to get ahead or take a break from the stresses. I have spent 8 hours on calculus homework alone and it can definitely be frustrating at times, testing my willpower to succeed, but once I finish an intense load of homework I feel a wonderful sense of relief. Nights can be long and arduous, but I would take Running Start over high school any day.