

# No ONE HAS IT TOGETHER

## By Grace Nunziata

### It's Easy...Right?

No one knows what they're doing when it comes to "balance" in college. Everyone talks about finding that perfect balance like something you just magically stumble upon once and then just keep forever. In reality, balance is more like something you keep losing, adjusting, and rebuilding without even realizing it.

Some people get to Loyola and go out every night. Others practically move into the library. Most people somehow manage to do both in the same week. Before I got to Loyola, I assumed I would just naturally fall into a routine that made sense: stay on top of my work, go out when I had the time, be productive but also have a life. It's an expectation many first-year students share, and almost none experience right away.

### Everyone Starts a Little Unbalanced!

The first few weeks feel like a social experiment. You say "yes" to everything because you want to, but also because saying no feels weird when you have just met these people. So you go to every event, every spontaneous plan, every "quick" hangout that is never actually quick.

Then comes the overcorrection. You stay in, catch up, and feel like you finally have everything under control. For approximately 48 hours. Soon enough, you notice everyone else is out doing something, and you are back at your desk, wondering how you ended up stuck there again. That experience is not unique. Abbey, a biology major, described a similar mindset: "I felt like I would have it all figured out, like coming to college would give me some kind of superpower... but it's a learning process." This cycle happens way more than you would think. Not because people are bad at managing their time, but because no one really knows what the "right" balance is supposed to look like.



## Prioritizing Sounds Easy, Until You Have To Do It!

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Prioritizing seems like common sense, until everything feels equally important, as if every assignment somehow feels like it is worth twenty percent of your grade. Assignments, friendships, sleep, extracurriculars, they all demand attention at the same time. The challenge is in not knowing what matters, but having to decide what cannot be done in that moment.

For some students, the struggle is procrastinating. Reflecting on her habits, Alondra, a bio-psych major balancing cheer, a job, and academics, admits, "When it comes to school, I'm a very big procrastinator. I needed to learn to prioritize and learn how to divide my schoolwork throughout the day." Rather than relying on last-minute efforts, she emphasizes working on assignments earlier in the day to avoid unnecessary stress.

For others, the issue is the opposite. Grace, a senior, reflects on her first year, admitting, "I was so type A and so high stress that everything had to be done right when it was assigned. Like I know there is something due, so I must do it now." Her experience shows that constantly trying to stay ahead can be just as overwhelming as falling behind. Trying to get all your work done over the weekend for the upcoming week is unrealistic, but so is not doing anything over the weekend.

Successfully managing time requires intentional strategies. Breaking assignments into smaller, manageable tasks can make large workloads feel less overwhelming. Setting personal deadlines before the actual due date also helps reduce procrastination. As Alondra explains, having "times, dates, and places" scheduled on her phone is the only way she can keep up with everything.

At the same time, prioritizing also means accepting trade-offs. Choosing to stay in and complete work often means missing out on social plans. Choosing to go out may push assignments to a later time. Learning how to be okay with missing out is part of the process. As Grace reflects on her first year, "Just because you say no once doesn't mean you are never going to get asked again." This mindset helps shift the fear of missing out into a more realistic understanding of balance.



## A Social Life is Part of the Process!

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While academics are important, completely sacrificing a social life is not a sustainable solution. In fact, maintaining relationships can improve overall well-being and reduce stress. The challenge is finding a balance that feels realistic.

Abbey emphasizes the importance of being intentional with time, explaining that when she studies, she "puts the phone away" and focuses fully on the task. At the same time, she tries to socialize in small,

meaningful ways, like eating meals with friends. This allows her to stay connected without losing control of her schedule.

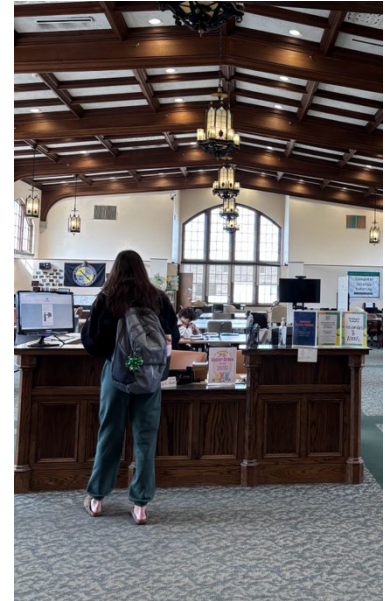
Alondra takes a slightly different approach, choosing to separate her responsibilities by time. She explains that she usually saves social plans for the weekend and avoids “big things during the week,” sometimes meeting friends to study instead. This balance allows her to stay productive while still maintaining a social life.

## Structure Helps... But Won't Save You

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Planners, calendars, time blocking, color coding your entire life, all of it helps. Loyola gives you a lot of freedom, especially compared to high school schedules, which means you can build a schedule that looks exactly how you want it to. And for a while that works, until something interrupts it.

A longer assignment than you expected. A plan that comes up at the last minute. A day where motivation is simply not there, which happens more than people like to admit. That is when you realize that structure is only useful if you are willing to adjust to it. As Justine Khadduri, the Director of Learning Support at Loyola, explained, “Being aware of your time is the most effective way to manage it.” That awareness allows you to make intentional decisions rather than strictly following a plan that may no longer be realistic. If you need some help with this, you'll find support at [The Study](#).

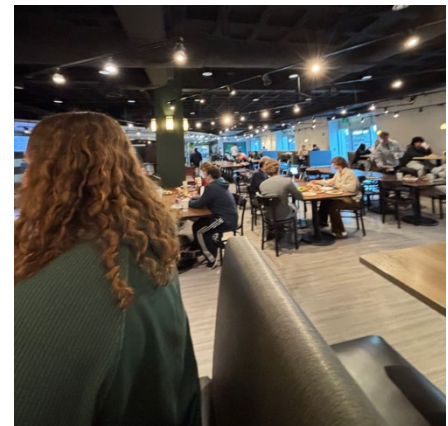


## No One Actually Has It Figured Out!

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Some people seem like they have everything under control. They go out, stay on top of their work, get enough sleep, and somehow still have time to go to the gym. Honestly, a little suspicious. But even they are adjusting constantly. You just don't see it. At the end of the day, balancing academics and a social life at Loyola is not something you solve. It is something you keep working on, whether you are a first-year or an upperclassman.

Some weeks, you will feel completely on top of everything. Other weeks, you will feel like you are choosing between being a good student or being a normal person. Both are temporary. Instead of trying to get everything right immediately, give yourself time and grace to figure it out. Your version of “balance” is probably going to change more times than you expect. Which is slightly inconvenient, but the whole point.



**“In reality, balance is more like something you keep losing, adjusting, and rebuilding without even realizing it.”**