Get S.M.A.R.T. About Setting Your Goals

S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym for 5 strategies that result in clearer, more attainable goals:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Action-oriented**
- **Realistic**
- **Time-framed**

**Specific:** Clearly defined (Who, What, Where, When, How)

**Measurable:** Know how far away you are from completion, Know when the goal has been achieved

**Action-oriented:** Identify strategies for achieving your goal and overcoming potential obstacles, Know that the outcome is within your control

**Realistic:** Within the availability of knowledge, resources, and time, Requires honest self-evaluation

**Time-framed:** Enough time to achieve goal, Deadlines provide motivation to get started and help you monitor your progress

**Examples:**

I will earn a 4.0 GPA.  
vs.  
I will visit the Center for Written, Oral, and Visual Communication 3 weeks before each of my deadlines and work with a consultant to develop clear hypotheses and outlines for each paper.

I will eat healthier.  
vs.  
I will consume meals that consist of at least 50% fruits and vegetables.

I will be hired for a summer internship.  
vs.  
I will contact 2 potential employers each month this semester and request informational interviews.

I will put a stop to global warming.  
vs.  
I will reduce my contribution to Rice’s carbon footprint by participating in the Green Dorm Initiative challenges with my roommates.

I will get more sleep.  
vs.  
I will begin preparing for bed at 11:00pm and rest for a minimum of 8 hours each night before my 8:30am classes.

**Guiding Questions:**

- What is your goal?
- Why did you choose this goal?
- How will you benefit from achieving this goal? What are the potential costs associated with this goal?
- What strategies will you employ to achieve this goal?
- What challenges might you encounter? How might you overcome those obstacles?
- Are there any resources on campus that could help you?