

Hope you found the video to be a thought provoking account of Eric's journey to become the first visually impaired man to climb to the summit of Mount Everest.

One of the things that you may remember from the video is the statistic early on that indicates only 10% of the people who attempt the climb are actually successful in making it to the summit. While the success rate of completion in community colleges is much better, it is still a challenge. Nationwide only 28% of individuals who begin a community college education for a first time complete their degree within two years. We do better than that here at SCC with a 36% completion rate, but it's still a challenge.

So, with this challenge that lies ahead of you I hope you will also draw some lessons from the video that you just watched. In reflecting upon the video, I think you will be able to identify several lessons that we can learn from Eric's goal to reach the summit of Mt. Everest.

First, he set a goal, he knew at the beginning that he wanted to be the first visually impaired man to reach that summit. You have also set a goal for yourself of obtaining a college education here at Southwestern Community College. Take a moment to envision yourself receiving that college degree and walking across the stage here at SCC.

Secondly, Eric assembled a team, the right team of individuals that could provide the unique support that he needed in meeting that goal. Take a few moments to consider who may be a part of your success team as you embark upon your education. Family members who will be there to support you, coworkers who will work with you and adjust your work schedule as needed to help accommodate the classes you will be taking, What about inclement weather, who will be there to assist with childcare? What are the backup plans in the support network that you will have in place there? Then here at SCC there are also a number of individuals who I think you will find to be particularly helpful for your team. Your advisor is an excellent team member and is here to provide you with guidance and support all along the way. Your instructors will be providing you with valuable information, not just related to the classes that they teach, but to the journey that you are

undertaking to complete your college education. Tutors and learning consultants will be here to help you with specific content area questions that you may have as you complete your classes and progress through your program. Counselors, financial aid counselors, career counselors, they are all here to be valuable members of your team and help you meet that goal. Also, you need to be willing to take the support from individuals. They're here to offer it to you and its part of what makes the college journey an enriching and fulfilling journey, but a successful journey depends upon working with all of those team members.

Making this journey also requires careful planning on your part. Consider the obstacles that you may face along the way, which member of your team will you turn to when you encounter these obstacles? How will you react? How will you keep yourself focused on that goal? Whenever Eric encountered a challenge, he envisioned himself once again sitting at that summit, having reached his goal. It kept him grounded and kept him focused on why he was there and why he was moving forward. I challenge you to do the same during your journey here at SCC, and very importantly, be willing to accept that guidance again.

You'll notice at the end of the video one of the team members wasn't even a part of that party that was making the trip up Mt. Everest, they were staying back monitoring the weather and they gave important information that helped them chart the final stages of that journey. Be willing to take guidance, especially from those who can see the big picture, who have helped folks along the way before you, and I guarantee you if you allow these folks to work with you and be a part of your team here at SCC, we will do everything possible to help you meet that goal. We are here for your success.