

Deirdre St. John
First Semester at William Paterson
Journalism Field Studies

By: Deirdre St. John
Staff Writer

With the End of the Semester Comes Stress

Mary Grace Czapran, a media production major, was walking over the pedestrian bridge to Hobart Hall last week. Her heart was racing. Her hands were clammy. She felt like she could not breathe. As she headed toward her classroom, she wondered why she hadn't prepared better for what she was about to face: her final presentation in a directing class.

"I got so nervous and stressed that I didn't remember all of my lines," Czapran said. Of course, Czapran is not the only William Paterson student stressing out at the end of the semester. It is a fact of university life: As months of coursework culminate in a series of deadlines for final papers and exams, students pull all-nighters in the Cheng Library and post Facebook statuses and tweets about the pressure they feel.

But students are increasingly falling into two camps. Some favor tradition: They want to take their final exams during the university's designated finals week, which gives them more time to prepare.

Others, however, appreciate when professors schedule exams before the final examination period, spacing out the exams and lessening finals week anxiety. "I prefer taking finals before finals week, so I could just get it over with and not anticipate them," Czapran said.

Outside of Hobart Hall last week, Lisa Baca, a communications major, was putting away her books and study guide for her last final of the fall semester. She said she preferred to have finals before finals week. "I prefer to take finals before finals week because it is a little less stressful," Baca said.

If you have a lot of students cramming in the dorm or at the library, it gives you some space between the other students that are studying for science or math. Some professors agree. Psychology Professor Janet Ahn said that she prefers to give final exams the week before finals week to reduce stress on students.

"It might help them focus better since they are not competing with other exams, which presumably are given during finals week," Ahn said.

On the other hand, Luzaidy Calderon, a public relations major at William Paterson, said she prefers having finals before and during finals week. Walking into her third final before finals week, Calderon said she still had two tests left to take during finals week and she's glad that she has the weekend to study.

In some cases, "I prefer exams before finals week and in some cases I don't," Calderon said. "If there is a lot of information to study for, then I'd rather have it during finals week."

Calderon said that she had a paper due Dec. 6 and the final exam for the same class on Dec. 8. She said she wished the exam took place during finals week, so she could have more time to prepare. For some William Paterson students, the stress becomes so unbearable that they forget the information they studied the night before.

"Finals stress me out a lot and then once I get stressed out I blank out and just forget everything," Baca said. "it seems like I never studied and it's not a good at all."

Then there are students who become stressed when they cram the morning of their final exams. "I am really bad at taking a long period of time to study, so I always do it the morning of," Calderon said. "But luckily, my memory is good."

Some professors frown upon their colleagues who distribute exams before the final examination period. "I have two tests during finals week because the two professors said, 'You know, you are not supposed to have finals before finals week. Do you have any teachers that are doing it?'" Calderon recalled. "And I said, 'I'm not snitching'."