DIVISION OF
Arts and Sciences

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Dear Arts & Sciences Students, Faculty, and Staff:

Hello, I am Jason Stone, the Division Head of Arts & Sciences at OSU-OKC. Let's continue our conversation about your future. I am delighted that you chose to invest in yourself and attend to the next video in our series about the Habits of the Mind. The Habit that we are stressing in this video is striving for precision and accuracy in your thinking. In this video, we will briefly explore the value of thinking precisely.

Precision and accuracy are important in every facet of professional life. There are very few professions where employees use vague guesses. In fact, everything you do in a professional organization from the time that you apply for a job until you retire will be based on striving for precision and accuracy. Ponder for a moment, the cover letter. It represents your ability to communicate professionally with and within the organization. It is the key first step to landing a job with that company that you want to work for. According to Mark Mehler, co-author of Career Xroads, an Internet-based jobs directory, most cover letters are examined for 5 to 10 seconds at most. It stands to reason, that if the first eye-catching thing about your letter is a spelling or grammatical error, chances are your letter, along with your hopes of getting your dream job, goes into the trash can.

Obviously, striving for precision and accuracy is important to get your foot in the door. Precision is also important to keep you there. In September of 1999, NASA attempted to put a climate orbiter into near-Mars orbit. Shortly after executing the final course adjustment rocket burn NASA discovered that they had lost contact with the orbiter. After an extensive and lengthy investigation the cause for the failure was discovered. The contractor, Lockheed-Martin, had used the metric system and calculated their measurements for the burning of fuel for the mission in Newtons/second. However, NASA had used their default measurement, foot-pounds/second.

This mishap has been since known as the "metric mix-up". This is an example of how even rocket scientists can fail to think with precision and accuracy. The metric mix-up cost NASA and the American taxpayers $328 million. If you fail to think with precision and accuracy the results may not be as pronounced or impact as many people, but failing to think with precision and accuracy usually causes problems.

Please join me and attend to the other videos in this series. Invest in yourself and your future. Attend to your thinking habits. Your mental habits will determine how far you go. Thank you for your time and attention.

Have a great day and "Go Pokes!"

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