I recently attended a chapter meeting at the University of Arkansas, where a video was shown of the chant the chapter recited during roll call at this year’s Region V Fall Regional Conference. One line stuck out to me: “All I want for my birthday is a 4.0! All I want for my birthday is a 4.0!”

Surely, we all know this feeling. At the beginning of every semester, we proclaim that “This term will be different. This is my semester to shine in my classes.” We begin with such great zeal, but then things disrupt that focus. Many can attest that being a NSBE leader or engaging in other worthy extracurricular activities sometimes brings stress and makes being a student even tougher! This coupled with a lack of study time, management skills or disciplined study partners equals a recipe for disaster that affects more than 65 percent of black engineering students, causing us to choose between dropping a class or settling for a lower grade: very tough decisions that no one ever wants to make.

I discovered the Guaranteed 4.0 Learning System (www.guaranteed4.com) for the first time as a senior in college. I briefly reviewed it but didn’t take it very seriously. As a graduate student, I continued to hear the success stories of my peers who devoted to the system and heralded amazing results. GPAs were transformed from 2.7s and lower to 4.0s in one semester. I took in some of the techniques the system taught and even saw my own GPA improve, but still didn’t fully commit. However, I knew I needed to give it my all. Upon my election as national chair, I knew I would be completing my master’s degree, working in a full-time position, as well as serving the National Society of Black Engineers. Many thought I couldn’t do it, but I knew I could. There was only one system that could help me make that happen: Guaranteed 4.0.

I took very seriously my preparation throughout the spring and summer, and executed the program last fall as outlined. I received a 3.85 GPA! What I learned from the program was how to study effectively. Fully participating in the program actually made my time management and studying easier. More than half of the members of the National Executive Board have benefited from the program, as well. So have thousands of students all over the world. In addition, the founder of the program is a former NSBE national chair. This program was born from NSBE! And because we want to see all NSBE members achieve this kind of academic success, NSBE has decided to look into incorporating the program into our chapters.

I encourage every chapter to make NSBE’s Retention Program and Guaranteed 4.0 the cornerstones of your activities. I believe the future of NSBE lies in improving the retention rate and academic success of black engineering students. This means that each of us at every chapter must make Academic Excellence the main focus. One day, people will know NSBE as the place for the most academically strong and technically talented engineers in the world. It requires us all doing our part to ensure Academic Excellence is at the top of our chapters’ and our personal agendas.