Freshmen Orientation Frequently Asked Questions

Are Extracurricular Activities in College Important?

Students who join groups for extracurricular activities can improve their overall learning experiences and future careers depending on the activities chosen. Here are some examples of extracurricular activities that could be considered value added endeavors in the long-term.

- Professional Organizations Related To Academic Majors
- Diversity Student Groups
- Student Government
- Intramural Athletics

How Do I Find Scholarships?

Applying for scholarships is a great way to help offset the cost of your college education. The University's priority scholarship deadline is March 1st for both institutional and private/foundation scholarships. You should also think locally. Your community may have scholarship funds earmarked for exceptional students from local schools. Look into any possibilities offered by community groups, the PTA, and religious organizations. In addition, you should find out whether your parent’s employer offers scholarship opportunities and whether you qualify.

If you’ve already chosen a major, look into opportunities offered by professional organizations in that field. Many have scholarship funds available for budding new talent. This is especially true if you’re unique for that specific profession; for example, if you’re a woman entering a profession that is traditionally male-dominated. In addition to your professional aspirations, think about what makes you unique. Play an instrument? Excel in an unusual activity or sport? There’s probably a scholarship out there that caters to you.

Can I Find a Job on Campus?

Students who work between 10 to 15 hours per week on campus are generally much more likely than their classmates to persist in earning their degree. If you are looking for ways to expand both your resume and your wallet while studying, read on to learn everything you should know about finding student jobs on your college campus.

Does Campus Housing Affect the Value of My College Experience?

If you live on campus, you will undoubtedly be able to partake in activities with other students during evenings and weekends. Living on campus keeps you “in the mix,” right in the middle of all the action.

Does Obtaining Minors to Your Degree Benefit You Financially when Getting a Job?

Today, a college degree is required or highly recommended for most positions, and all graduates must choose a major, while minors are often optional. Does this mean that minors aren’t important? Not necessarily.

How Can I Avoid the “Freshman Fifteen”?

You should make sure to eat right, exercise and avoid stress to avoid gaining 15 or more pounds during your freshman year.

Watching what you eat is probably the most obvious way to avoid gaining weight. Different people have different nutritional needs, so don’t just assume that you need the same amount of calories as your friends or family members.

The CDC recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, and aiming for 300 minutes is even better. Make use of your school’s resources to get the exercise that you need.

If you’re stressed out, you’ll be more likely to binge and less likely to exercise, so stop the stress before it starts. The more that you plan ahead, the less stressed you’ll be – especially when it comes to schoolwork. Do your homework right when you get it instead of waiting until the last minute, and study all semester so that you don’t have to sweat your finals. Don’t forget to take time for yourself, though. To have a nice balance, try giving yourself at least one hour each day and one whole day each week to do whatever you want. To make sure that you can afford this leisure time, don’t stretch yourself too thin. For instance, keeping your work hours low if you have a job and only joining one or two clubs is a great way to become involved in college life without overdoing it.

Many college freshmen end up gaining weight, but that doesn’t mean that you have to. By eating right, exercising and avoiding stress, you should be able to avoid weight gain.

How Can I Best Keep Up with My Classwork?

College students need a wide range of skills if they hope to succeed in school, and one of the most important of those skills is time management. Students often enter college and assume that they can get the same grades as they did in high school while doing the same amount of work. That leads to students failing one or more classes and dropping out after the first year. Students simply don’t understand how to budget their time. With some tips, students can learn how to dedicate time to their studies and still have time for themselves.
- **Use a Calendar:** take the time to sit down and write out every assignment, project and test. This shows them when they need to study for different classes.
- **Create Time Blocks:** Think about which courses are the hardest and will require the majority of your time. You generally need to spend a minimum of three to five hours on each course every week. Create blocks that show you when you can work on your assignments every day. Make sure that you leave time in your schedule for working and hanging out with your friends.
- **Keep Your Books with You:** Instead of spending several hours in a row, try spending 15 to 30 minutes at a time on your schoolwork. Take your books and supplies with you when you’re at work or even meeting friends. Every second you spend working on your assignments is a second of free time you’ll have later.
- **Treat Yourself:** When making your schedule, write down events you want to attend and things you want to do with your friends. This helps you see when you need to study and gives you a reward for your hard work. If your friends want to hit a frat party on Friday night, you’ll know that you need to work a few hours earlier in the day to get that time off.
- **College students lead busy lives:** In addition to your classes, you need time for working on assignments, hanging out with your friends, dates and dozens of other social obligations. Though you might struggle with finding time for yourself and your friends while in college, these time management tips will help you find all the time that you need.

**How Do I Leverage My Community Service Experience in College?**

Students who participate in service learning activities experience levels of personal development that they would have a hard time gaining from most academic curricula. The connections with people from all types of socio-economic backgrounds and cultures as well as the skills that they often learn from service activities help to prepare them for life beyond college. Students who excel at both academics and community service appear very attractive to companies and many of the top tier universities who want to enroll students with the most potential to make positive social and economic changes locally and abroad. Here are some specific examples of how serving the community can pay off in a big way during and after college.

- **Gain Valuable Work Experience while Serving the Community:** Working with like-minded people on projects for which one is passionate is often a welcome break from the narrow confines of university class rooms. However, students who participate in these service related projects continue to learn skills that they can often use throughout their lives. For example, nursing or health science students can obtain work experience while still in college when they volunteer to care for seniors at assisted living facilities. Education majors who offer to tutor children through community outreach organizations gain verifiable experience for future teaching opportunities. Moreover, students’ work can help lay the foundation for future professional reference requests.

- **Seek Opportunities to Network with Community Leaders:** Some students graduate from university degree programs without the necessary contacts to gain desirable jobs in their chosen career fields, but this is likely not the case for students who have invested their time serving their community. A community’s most active, effective and influential leaders may not be the ones that are visible for all to see on the city’s website, but a service focused student may come into contact with these real movers and shakers within their community while participating in their favorite projects. Even if the student is known for excellent work on community projects that are not associated with their career field, their contacts will likely relate the person’s good qualities to other people who may be able to help the recent graduate professionally.

- **Make Service Activities Double as Academic Projects**
**How Do I Save Money on Textbooks?**

When possible, students should always:

- Comparison shop
- Buy or Rent Used
- Go Digital
- Share with Peers

**How important is it to declare a Major in the First Year of College?**

Declaring your major in college is one of the first adult decisions many people make. There are advantages to choosing a major within the first year. Studies show that roughly one in four students change their major freshman year. At eighteen, you are young and still figuring out who you are. Not knowing what you want to do with the rest of your life, isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It could be that you are more cautious than your peers or even those who graduate into a profession they don’t even like.

Further, it could be you may not have even seen the profession that will later speak to your heart so loud you can’t ignore it. Your major could come to you in a course, an extracurricular activity, a summer trip abroad, or just a casual conversation that leaves you thinking, “Wow. I didn’t even know that was a job!”

Your first year will be mainly general education requirements. A lot of these will be big lecture courses like Freshman Composition, and general science and math courses. Some schools even require freshman to take a course on the art of going to college, covering material such as study skills, life skills, and school culture. You may take an introductory course in your major, or attend a welcoming seminar in your department. But, it’s nothing you can’t make up if you switch later on.

Some majors also require a separate application process, and these can be quite rigorous. It is not uncommon for high-demand majors to only take sophomore and above applicants—stipulating that all applicants must have “satisfactorily,” completed certain college-level courses.

If you discover this major well into your freshman year, you still have to take the prerequisites and may put yourself behind schedule for graduation. On top of that, you may take the prerequisites and not even get accepted. This can waste a lot of time.

Further, after your first year, you do need to have a major. Sophomore year still has a lot of general education requirements, but your peers will be moving past the introductory major courses, and into the intermediates. If you are still vacillating on your major, you can spend a lot of time and money and get nowhere.

If you don’t know your major your freshman year, don’t stress. You will be fine. You don’t have to have it all figured just yet. Declaring your major should be undertaken with thought and care, not hastily scrawled on a form.