First Semester Pitfalls

Pitfall # 1: Not making an organization or getting involved

When I tried out for different organizations my freshman year, I did not make a single one. All of my friends were involved in something and I was ready to give up. I thought to myself, “I could either stay hopeless, or I could keep trying to find organizations that I am passionate about.” Come sophomore year, I tried out for multiple organizations again, but only made one organization. I knew that it was a start, but I still wanted to find things that I was passionate about. Junior and senior year I learned the art of interviewing, talked to staff members for advice, and most importantly, I got to know myself. As a senior, I now hold two executive positions.

-Maggie Ferguson, 2015-2016 SOS Orientation Leader Coordinator

Pitfall # 2: Not initiating conversation

At my previous university my largest class was 27 people, with the majority of them being teammates or friends. I never wondered who I would sit with or who I would get notes from if I missed class; there were always people around that I knew. On the contrary, my first class here had 250 people in it and I knew no one. As you could imagine, walking into a packed auditorium was extremely overwhelming. I had a choice to make. I could sit in silent fear and isolate myself or make new friends and potential study partners. Rather than isolating myself, I started a conversation with a person that was sitting alone. Turns out, they were thinking the same thing. I would highly recommend that you take the initiative whether on the transit or just moving about campus. Don’t be afraid to strike up a conversation; you may be surprised at how easy it is to find connections with those around you! Before you know it Auburn will begin to feel a lot smaller.

-Joy Dees, 2015-2016 SOS Orientation Leader Coordinator

Pitfall # 3: Not taking advantage of Auburn’s resources

I know how overwhelming coming in as a first year student can be with all of the different activities and resources around campus. Personally I wasn’t sure how helpful any resource like Supplemental Instruction, Miller Writing Center, or Study Partners would be. My first semester I struggled in an English class because I thought I didn’t need any help. After receiving a grade on my first paper, I quickly realized I needed to take advantage of the Miller Writing Center. With the help of an amazing writing tutor I was able to do well in the class. This experience opened me up to the many resources Auburn offers to help out every student who needs it. I encourage you to seek out help before you go through a struggle like I did.

-Will Davis, 2015-2016 SOS Orientation Leader Coordinator

Pitfall # 4: Assuming your college workload will be like your last college workload

As humans we like to draw on our past experiences to guide us when we encounter new and challenging terrain. Unfortunately, this approach may not always work in college. It is easy to assume that your experience here will be similar to your experience at a previous college, and this is not always the case. The types of activities available to get involved in, your professor’s expectations, and the ways that you interact with and meet new people can also drastically change in this new environment. But don’t be discouraged or frightened about making this transition! My best piece of advice is to take a step back, understand that this is going to be a completely different experience in so many ways, and remain open minded to all of the amazing new opportunities in store. They don’t call it the best four years of your life for nothing!

-Zach Blomeley, 2016 CWE Head Camp Counselor
**Secrets to Soar**

**Dropping a Class**

As the semester gets into full swing, the amount of course work and the difficulty of the content may exceed your expectations. There are many options if you feel that a class may be too much. The Academic Support Office, located 01768 in the RBD Library, has several resources available. There is Academic Coaching that will work with you on skills such as workload management, goal-setting, test prep, and more. Study Partners (free tutoring service) and Supplemental Instruction (peer-assisted study sessions) are also available. More information about Academic Support is below.

Meeting with your professors during their office hours can also provide you with extra help. If you still feel overwhelmed, then dropping the class is another option.

To drop a course, log-in to AU Access and go to Add/Drop courses page. The last day to drop a course with no grade assignment is February 1st. This means that any course dropped before then will not show up on your transcript. Please be aware that if you drop a class from January 19-Feb 1st, you will be required to pay a $100 fee per course dropped. Recently, the last day to withdraw has changed. Now for this semester, you can withdraw from a course from February 2nd through March 31st. A “W” will be assigned for the course. After March 31st, you can only withdraw from a course due to extreme circumstances and with special permission from your Associate Dean. Withdrawing from a class during this period may result in either a “W” or “WF” on your transcript. A “WF” is given if you were failing the course at the time of withdrawing and this will factor into your GPA as an F.

Before dropping a course, we suggest that you talk with your Academic Advisor. They are the best person to discuss this decision with. They can have helpful tips to help you get back on track towards passing the course or help you see if there are any unforeseen consequences for withdrawing from the class. For example if that course is an important prerequisite for your next semester or if it would affect your financial aid.

**Academic Spotlight – Academic Support**

The Academic Support office has several resources available to students, including Academic Coaching, Study Partners, and Supplemental Instruction (SI). These services are not only for students who are struggling, but also for students who wish to improve their grades. Our Student SI instructor, who has a history class and it had an SI available. Our student SI instructor had previously taken the class and earned an A. He broke down the information and had creative ways to help us learn the material. After going to SI several times, I saw that my grade improved by a whole letter grade.

We encourage you to use these as extra review even if you are doing well in the class. The hardest classes I have taken here was a history class and it had an SI available. Our student SI instructor had previously taken the class and earned an A. He broke down the information and had creative ways to help us learn the material. After going to SI several times, I saw that my grade improved by a whole letter grade.

Take advantage of these resources early and often, especially before your first test to make sure you have a solid understanding of the material. When utilizing these resources, you can stay on top of your work, clear up any topics you may be confused about and be successful in your coursework.

Check out auburn.edu/academicsupport at the beginning of the semester to see what classes will have Study Partners and SI details are normally announced on the first day of class if your section has one assigned.

**A note from the Involvement Ambassadors**

By: Lauren Leahy

As Involvement Ambassadors, we represent the Office of Student Involvement and the nearly 500 organizations on campus. We are located in Suite 3130 in the Student Center Monday through Friday.

Involvement is important for any Auburn student, whether you’re here for four years or one semester because involvement helps students meet people who are interested in the same things.

Below are some tips specifically for transfer students on how to get involved once at Auburn:

- **Check involvement opportunities on AUinvolve**
- **Attend interest meetings for organizations. Those dates, times and locations can be found under the Events tab on AUinvolve**
- **Fill out your interests profile on AUinvolve to find organizations that are specific to your interests**
- **Come to a one-on-one consultation with an Involvement Ambassador in the Office of Student Involvement (3130 AUSC)**
- **Don’t be afraid to step outside your comfort zone! “Involvement was important to me no matter what school I chose to attend, so getting involved was definitely one of the best choices I’ve made as a student here at Auburn,” said Meredith Browning, a transfer student who now serves as the Assistant Director of Public Relations for the Involvement Ambassadors. “Meeting other students who were involved helped and encouraged me to get involved. I can honestly say that I have found my home here in student involvement and I hope you do too!”**

For more information, please visit wp.auburn.edu/involve/involvement-ambassador/who-are-we/ or our page on AUinvolve.

**Welcome to Auburn, and War Eagle!**

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Transfer Tip:

Wanting some help to pay for school next year? With the Auburn University Scholarship Opportunity Manager (AUSOM), you can search and apply for scholarships, accept awards, and more.

To be considered for 2017-18 General and Departmental Scholarships, you must submit the application through AUSOM by 4:45pm CST on March 1. To receive consideration for need-based scholarships, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be received by March 1.

You can find AUSOM on your My Finances tab within AU Access. Additional information about AUSOM, including application completion and submission instructions, can be found on the Office of University Scholarships website.