

WELCOME TO UNIVERSITY!



WAHOO! You've made the decision to attend university. Congratulations. This is exhilarating and terrifying in the same breath.

Your first year of university is a significant year in the quest for education because it marks a transition. This year, you will experience the most change, the most learning and the most development.

It also marks the year where you will develop the academic habits that are likely to persist throughout the rest of your degree.

Alright. Deep breath. Take a second to orientate yourself. Change is scary and it's okay to feel that fear. What scares us is the unknown, so hopefully... this will lay some of your fears about university to rest.

The Differences

- How you earn your marks will change
- You will have more written assignments (papers, reviews, reflections, etc.)
- You will be expected to study more outside of class
- Your instructor will likely provide less guidance and instruction
- In university, there is more responsibility on YOU to make sure you understand the material, to finish the assignments and hand them in on time. That's not to say there aren't resources available to help!
- Reach out to your professor if you're unsure of something
- Speak to them after class, set up an appointment or visit them during their office hours
- Does your textbook explain information differently? Perhaps it will make more sense to you than your instructor's lecture
- Study with a classmate. They might understand what you don't and vice versa
- Reach out to a peer tutor (these are students who have previously taken the class and done well!)

- There will also be a difference in how you are taught
 - You will be required to attend class and take notes from your instructor's lecture
 - Unfortunately, not all instructors are created equal
 - Some will be more engaging... others will be dry as dust
 - It is YOUR job to take good notes regardless
 - The lecture material is the #1 place from which instructors create their test/exam questions
 - So, your notes are simply answers to future test questions
 - If you choose not to attend class, it is up to YOU to get notes from a classmate
-
- And, you will experience a greater degree of freedom in university
 - YOU decide how you spend your time outside of class
 - University is less structured than high school or working fulltime
 - You will be in class for 9 – 15 hours a week... What are you doing with the rest of your time?
 - Your instructors will not check up on you to see where you are with assignments
 - This freedom is wonderful and exciting!
 - BUT. Due dates have a nasty tendency to sneak up on us
 - If you find that managing your time is difficult and you are rushing to finish assignments, please check out the information on Time Management, attend a time management workshop or make an appointment with the Learning Strategist (who I must say, is a pretty cool individual)

Decrease the Unknowns

- Again, often we are afraid of what we don't know
- Do your best to answer the questions you can
- Get familiar with the campus
- Find the rooms where your classes will be
- Find the cafeteria, library, computer labs, printing stations, the various coffee shops and services you will visit and use throughout the semester
- Get familiar with the clubs and activities your university has to offer
- Check out the posters on bulletin boards in communal areas, these offer a wealth of information
- It is important to build relationships with your peers
- It is important for you to participate in activities you enjoy

- The more you participate, the friendlier university will become

It's Okay to Feel the Feels

- It is 100%, without a doubt, totally, completely, natural for you to feel scared, or anxious, or homesick, or like you don't belong
- This last one is called Imposter Syndrome, where you doubt your own capabilities and accomplishments
- If you ever find yourself sitting in class, believing you are the only one who doesn't understand something.... THIS IS FALSE
- Guaranteed, most of your peers feel the Exact. Same. Way.
- Or if they don't at the present time, they have in the past
- Admit these feelings (there's no sense wasting energy in trying to deny them)
- This alone could help!
- If these feelings do persist and begin to obstruct your daily activities, please seek a counsellor
- These folks are professionals who know how to help you feel like you again

Learning Through Failure

- There is a chance you will not do as well on an assignment or test as you wanted
- That you will find taking good notes, reading, writing or studying difficult
- Again, university is different and takes time to get good at
- These are all skills and skills take practice, dedication and time to master
- Failure, can be an excellent learning tool
- If you don't receive the mark on a paper that you wanted, figure out where you went wrong
- Read your instructor's comments and go talk to them if you're confused, then incorporate their suggestions into your next paper
- Did you visit the Writing Center? These are folks with loads of experience when it comes to all things written
- And did you give yourself enough time to write it? I guarantee you will write a better paper over five days than five hours before it's due
- Failure is an inevitable part of learning
- But shift your thinking

- Try viewing failure as feedback on areas that you're doing well on and areas where you could improve

University is different. When something is different, it takes time for us to adjust and feel comfortable. This is okay. But it is important to understand that you and only you can hold yourself accountable.

We all make choices. You can choose to work on that paper or you can choose to watch Netflix. There are consequences to either choice.

You will probably choose to watch Netflix sometimes. Again, this is on you. University requires a greater degree of self-discipline. If this persists and becomes a problem, please reach out. There are plenty of resources available on campus to assist with your struggles, but it requires you to make the first move.

In the end, try and enjoy your time here. You will learn so much, grow so much and hopefully make some lifelong friends.