

The Second Year Success

The second year road map

Help for Your Journey

Year-at-a-Glance

It's your second year at college. What opportunities await you? What decisions do you have to make? Will you be able to cope? These are some of the questions you might be asking yourself as you begin your second year of college. For some of you, it might be an exciting opportunity to learn and grow while for others, it might be filled with uncertainty due to decisions about major, career and study abroad that are in your near future.

There are things to think about during the second year and times to think about them. Check into specific deadlines and requirements so you don't miss out. Here is a calendar to help you plot your journey.

September

It's time for settling in! Reconnect with friends. Attend some of the programs offered for first year students to reacquaint yourself with what this school has to offer.

October

Begin thinking about study abroad. Visit with a study abroad advisor to see what your options are. Also start thinking seriously about what you would like to major in if you are undecided.

Think about what classes to take next term. How will these decisions affect your choice of major?

November

If you are thinking of a summer internship then it is never too early to start the process. Visit the career center before the year is out to see what options are available.

December

Having trouble deciding on a major? Visit an academic advisor who can help you explore some ideas that you might have. Now would be a great time to take a personality test at the career center. These tests can help you determine your skills plus the subjects and careers that would be a good fit for you.

January

Many study abroad deadlines fall between now and March. If you have not already visited the study abroad office, make an appointment now if you are interested.

Think about joining a new organization... if you have not connected back to campus as well as you thought, then joining a student group can be a great way to meet new people while also contributing to campus life.

February

Major choice requirements, study abroad and internship deadlines are likely to occur from this month forward. Also, find out about housing deadlines if you plan to live on campus next year.

If you are interested in becoming a residence life staff member, talk to a current staffer for information on the application process. These applications are often due at the beginning of the year. Also, if there are student staff orientation positions on campus, interviews often come up during February and March.

March

Spring Break!! Only a few more months until you are done with your second year!

April

If there's no on-campus residency requirement, you may be planning to move off campus for your junior year. Where do you want to live and with whom? Sometimes, you may need to sign a lease to hold the place over the summer – so think about how you can budget for this. Contact the off campus housing office for information.

May

If you're planning on getting a summer job, a quick visit to the career center is a great way to clean up your resume and learn interview techniques so that you're ready for all those job interviews!

Majors, Careers & Internships

Major Goals:

What Choose This One?

Are you undeclared, or declared but doubting your choice? College is a time to explore your passions and learn new skills. It is important when thinking about your major to determine what your goals are for choosing that major:

- Is the major closely tied with your career choice?

- Is the major something your parents or other family members are encouraging you to pursue?
- Is the major something you have a passion for but you're not sure where it will take you as a career?
- Is the end goal of getting your degree to get a job in the same field or are you at college to explore an academic subject to PhD level?
- Do you want to go to graduate school?

Many universities and colleges have a requirement that students must declare their major by the end of their second year. If this is true for your school, speak with an academic advisor early on if you are unsure what direction to take.

- What class or professor really made/makes you think?
- What subject matter makes you curious to learn more on your own?
- What have you always wanted to do?

My Career: Why Think About That Now?

It is really easy to think that visiting the career center is something you do in your senior year. STOP! Think again. Visiting your career center early is a great way to relieve the stress of your senior year. You can get assistance with your resume, job searching techniques, personality tests, and internships.

Internships:

Why Should I Consider?

If you are contemplating an internship, ask yourself these questions:

- What is my major area of study?
- Have I identified one or two "ideal" career areas I want to pursue?
- How much do I know about these careers or job titles?
- Where would I like to intern? City? Organization?
- When, and for how long, do I want to intern?
- What specific things do I want to learn?
- Could I work an unpaid internship if it was a quality experience?
- Do I want academic credit for the internship?
- Do I know how to write an effective cover letter and resume?
- How sophisticated are my interviewing skills?

Getting Involved – On and Off Campus

Getting reconnected to campus or the local community is a great way to stay involved in your second year. Plus, you'll meet new people!

Where Do I Start?

- [Volunteer Opportunities](#). If you are interested in volunteering or working in the community, contact the service learning or community

service office for opportunities. Many universities and colleges may have work-study agreements with local non-profits, which can give you great experience while at the same time earning money!

- **Student Organizations.** The student activities department on campus can get you in touch with various student organizations. It is very easy in your second year to get stuck in a rut, and stop meeting new people. One of the best ways to stay engaged and connected to your campus community is by challenging yourself to join a student organization. If you have a passion that is not being met, then think about starting your own student group!
- **Campus Happenings.** Check out the central campus calendar that lists events on campus. Sometimes it may list local for finding things to do in the evenings or on the weekend.
- **Fun for Credit.** If you are getting bogged down with your studies, think about taking a fun class that you can really enjoy. Many degrees have some kind of physical education requirement. Or maybe there's an art class that looks appealing. Every school is different, but often, having some kind of release from the academic rigor of core classes can lighten the schoolwork load. It is also a great way to have fun and meet new people for credit.
- **Non-Credit Classes.** Some schools offer non-credit classes, too, where you can explore different interests and connect with new people. These may be offered through the student union, continuing education or another department. Keep your eyes peeled for new opportunities!
- **Student Programming.** Campus programming boards made up of elected students sponsor events that can range from comedians to live bands. Watch for these programs, as they are often free and designed specifically for the students, *by* the students. Seek out opportunities to get involved, at a pace that fits your interests and available time. There's so much happening on campus and in the community – your choices are plentiful.

Students Say...

“Remember that it's important to make an effort to stay close with your friends who you lived with freshman year...because it's totally worth it. But try to meet new people by getting more involved too.”

The Sophomore Slump

- *Are you feeling de-motivated and don't know why?
- * Are you having trouble reconnecting with your friends?
- * Are you questioning whether university or college life is for you?

The *Sophomore Slump* is seen at institutions of higher education everywhere. It's often marked by indecisiveness, depression, and a feeling of being "lost." As your transition from your first year to your second year, you may find that the arrays of services offered in your first year are not as visible now. You may not remember where to go for help. If you live off campus, you may find the connection you had to campus activities in your first year is vanishing. Or, if you're living off campus during your second year, you may be craving a new experience but are not sure how to find it.

Historically, colleges and universities have made an assumption that, as a second year, you now understand college, know where to seek help and know your directions in life. However, these assumptions are rarely true! So, if you're feeling "lost" or experiencing your own *Sophomore Slump*, please don't worry. You're in the majority.

Students Say...

"Expect changes at every level the second year of college. Friendships become closer, classes harder, decisions more important, and involvement more significant. Trust that if you plan right, the advantage of opportunities and deepen your studies to find out what you really love, the 'sophomore slump' will turn out to be your all-time high."

Here are some of the signs that maybe the slump has found you:

- ✓ Lack of motivation
- ✓ Uncertainty about being in college
- ✓ Uncertainty about continuing with your major
- ✓ Indecision about what major to declare
- ✓ Indecision about career choice
- ✓ Possible conflict between what you want and what your parents want, which can lead to decreased motivation and disinterest in school.
- ✓ Sleeping a lot
- ✓ Heightened procrastination
- ✓ Fear that success of your first year cannot be repeated
- ✓ Lack of energy and excitement about studying things you may have been interested in before.
- ✓ A feeling of being lost or invisible, and not having much in common anymore with your first year friends.

If you are experiencing any of these signs, then seek assistance. Chat with a residence life staff member, a trusted professor, an academic advisor or a counselor. There are many people here who can help you move through this.

Useful Resources

There are a variety of places you can go on campus for assistance with any concerns you might have or any questions on your mind. The list below can help you tap into campus faculty and staff who are here to help you:

Visit the Campus Counseling center to Discuss:

- *A feeling of being lost
- *Decreased motivation
- *Not connecting with other students
- *Stress

Visit the Campus Career Center to Explore:

- *How does my major fit my career?
- *How do I figure out what I want to do for a career?
- *What is my personality type?

Visit the Campus Health Center to Check Out:

- *Stress and/or headaches
- *Loss of sleep
- *Feeling lethargic
- *Loss of appetite

Visit Professors to Talk Through:

- *Academic concerns
- *Tutor recommendations
- *Homework and assignment management
- *Major guidance

Visit the Division of Student Life/Campus Life to Discover:

- *How to get connected
- *Student organizations, whether it's joining one or creating one
- *Ways to contribute to campus life
- *Volunteer opportunities

And don't forget to connect with family and friends for general support as well as career and major advice. They can often help you process through the good information gathered from all the other sources.

Your second year is a big one, there's no doubt. Yet, it's also an exciting turning point in many ways. Don't at go it alone – there are plenty of people willing to offer help and support. Just take that first step and make it a very good year!