

Tips for New SCS Undergraduate Students

A. Planning and Organization

- Take a campus tour to familiarize yourself with where the classrooms, library, bookstore, and administration offices are.
- Learn how to navigate CAESAR. You will be using it a lot to update personal information, add or drop classes, pay tuition, and much more.
- Check the technology requirements for classes and make sure you have access to the necessary softwares.
- Register for classes early; a class may be canceled if there is insufficient enrollment.
- Get up-to-date information about the academic calendar, especially the add/drop deadlines for courses.
- Mark important dates on your diary at the beginning of the quarter (such as paper due dates, midterms, and finals) to keep track of your work load. Adjust your personal schedule, if necessary, to meet the course requirements in a timely manner.

B. Communication

- Get your Net ID as soon as possible so you can start accessing various password-protected sites.
- Log on to Blackboard often to stay current on announcements and course materials posted by the instructor.
- Check your Northwestern email account regularly. Alternatively, forward messages sent to your Northwestern account to an account that you use regularly.
- Subscribe to listserv to obtain up-to-date information about your major.

C. Resources

- Get in touch with academic counselors early. (If you are an undergraduate, request a credit evaluation to know where you stand. It helps with planning your course load and date of graduation.)
- Check the “Information for New Students” page on the SCS web site.
- Read student comments on CTEC to understand more about the classes that you are interested in taking.
- Use the Writing Place, a free tutoring service that provides assistance to students who need help writing papers. Likewise, use the Math Place, a free tutoring service that provides assistance to students who need help in Pre-calculus, Algebra, Calculus, and Statistics.

- Seek help from faculty, academic counselors, and the SAB when you feel overwhelmed (and you probably will at some point). In any case, do not give up; explore the various sources of help available to you before you make any decision to quit.

D. Study Skills and Habits

- Buy your textbook early so you can review the first few chapters before the first class meeting.
- Do not miss class; better late than never!
- Bring a snack to class. Some class locations may not have a vending machine nearby. You do not want to go hungry for three hours and compromise your ability to focus in class.
- Do you know how to use NUCat and Einstein? Take a library tour and find out. You will need research skills to complete your papers and projects.
- Block off times to study regularly. Little and often is better than cramming through the night right before the exam.
- Grab 15. If you have 15 minutes while you are waiting in line, use it. Carry flash cards with you to study or an article to read. Do not underestimate small chunks of time; you will be pleasantly surprised at how much you can accomplish.
- Do not fall behind. Most courses are cumulative in nature. It does not pay to play catch up. Attend office hours or contact the instructor if you are not following. Even if you are following, finding out the instructor's expectations is always a good idea.
- Form a study group or a virtual study group. It is a good way to stay motivated and make sure that you understand the material. A study group also provides moral support. So, it's good for your sanity when the going gets tough!
- Remember Murphy's law? (If anything can go wrong, it will.) Budget enough time to get to class, complete your assignments, and study for exams. Things may take longer than you expect.

~ Good luck! ~