

9. To fulfill all of your foreign language requirements, consider attending the Summer Language Institute between years 1 & 2 at UVA. The course provides an intensive introduction to a language and can fulfill the UVA College of Arts and Sciences requirement. (Note: You will earn 12 credits in the summer session to complete your language requirement, and study well and work to earn an A or B in the course.)

**True or False: Spanish is an easy language to learn. Answer: Not quite.** Success with foreign languages in high school is not a guarantee of language success in college. Consider taking German, Korean and/or Arabic in the Summer Language Institute. Based on feedback, students perform well in these three languages with intensive summer study at UVA.

10. **Balance your UVa Experience:** There are over 800 Contracted Independent Organizations (CIOs) in which students can participate with various degrees of involvement. These organizations help to create an inclusive community and offer freedom of expression. Participation in extracurricular activities is an important tool to diversify your UVa experience, can create networking opportunities, and can aid in acquiring real-life skills. But, many first year students “over” engage and make extracurricular activities more paramount than their academic coursework. Ultimately, your GPA can suffer. Talk with upperclassmen and Office of African-American Affairs staff to find a good balance.

## Office of African-American Affairs Staff

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# 10 Things I Wish I Had Known



## A Guide To Success

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## START STRONG with GOOD GRADES at UVA!

Opportunities for job placements, graduate or professional schools will follow.

**Here are some helpful tips gained from students and professors.**

**Remember: GPA matters!**

- 1. Do not feel pressured to decide your profession or vocation in the first semester of college.** Take a general set of classes with one major science or quantitative course, so that you will have more 2<sup>nd</sup> semester choices, esp. if you are interested in a pre-professional program area (i.e. commerce, engineering, education, medicine, etc.).
- 2. Meet with your Association Dean at the start of the semester.** Do not wait to meet him/her at a group session in your dormitory, or meet for the first time when you have a problem. Your Association Dean proactively helps you to declare a major in your 3<sup>rd</sup> semester. Your major advisor and association dean can help you to choose successful course strategies in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, including what courses may be missing on your academic transcript. Your Association Dean will conduct a graduation audit with you to ensure that you can graduate with the right courses in your major area on time. Do not wait until your last semester to learn that you lack a course to graduate in four years.
- 3. Visit the OAAA office during orientation week & before classes start** to meet the deans and staff to learn about the many UVA resources available to you. Sometimes, re-advicing is needed when a professor who does not know your interest area gives advice.
- 4. By the first week of class, get and use a planner** to post major University deadlines and event dates, including major exams and paper due dates. Mark the calendar dates for program and course add(ition)s, drops and withdrawals to aid your planning.
- 5. Pay serious attention to your course combinations.** For example, if you are a premed student, it is a deadly and unnecessary combination to take General Chemistry and Calculus in the first year, especially when calculus is only required by fewer than 30 medical schools.
- 6. To increase your likelihood of earning a high GPA during your first three semesters, and to facilitate favorable admission into the McIntire School of Commerce, graduate or professional school, take these courses in the following sequence.**
  - **Calculus** to learn the concept of **change** in multiple dimensions;
  - **Statistics** to grasp the concept of **chance** (the 2120 level is required; but take the 1100 level first to get a foundation and increase your mini quantitative GPA that the Commerce and other professional programs may privilege over other admission factors)
  - **Economics**, to apply the concepts of change and chance to make economic predictions.
- 7. Do your best to pay particular attention to your prerequisites.** Examples: enroll in Statistics (STAT) 1100 before taking STAT 2120; take a statistics course before taking a Genetics course so that you will learn to make predictions, determine the probabilities and work with models in general. **For psychology majors who usually take Psych 305 and 306, Applied Calculus I is now a prerequisite for acceptance into the psychology department program.** The suggested sequence is: (i) Applied Calculus, (ii) Statistics at the 1100 level, then Psych 305 and 306. This will ensure you grasp concepts about change from calculus, chance from statistics and can make predictions in psychological research courses.
- 8. If you have not had calculus before coming to UVA, consider taking a course in college algebra and trigonometry at a community college and transferring the credit to UVA.** College Algebra and Trigonometry is rarely offered at UVA. If you do well, transfer the credits to UVA. It is generally, not a good idea to take Calculus for the first time at UVA because many students who have had calculus in High School repeat Calculus I in college to make sure they have filled the gaps from High School and to receive a better grade than their peers. **Unless you plan to major in Mathematics, Physics or a STEM area, Math 131 (a more abstract calculus course) is not a suitable option.**