

ON BEING A STUDENT

ACADEMIA 101

Entering a university after 13 years of elementary, junior high and senior high school is a definite change. There are new rules, new expectations of you as a student, and even a new vocabulary. This provides a quick introduction to these changes.

What's the difference between a college and a university?

In general, a university is composed of a group of colleges. The college you belong to depends on your academic major. FSU has six undergraduate colleges—Allied Health Sciences, Arts and Sciences, Business, Education and Human Services, Technology, and University College. FSU has two graduate colleges—the College of Pharmacy and the Michigan College of Optometry. Each of these colleges has its own requirements. Students may transfer to another college if they meet the requirements of that college. The requirements listed in this book are those of University College.

How do I address my instructors/professors?

“Instructor” is an all-purpose word that refers to anyone who teaches. Most instructors at Ferris have a specific rank, either Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Full Professor. Many of them have a Doctor of Philosophy degree. A few instructors have no advanced degree but much experience in their field. Your instructor will probably tell you how he/she would like to be addressed, such as “Doctor,” “Professor,” “Mr.” or “Ms.”

What are office hours?

Your instructor will set aside specific hours during the week to be available to assist students in his/her office. The days and times will be the same each week of the semester. If the office hours do not work for you, ask your instructor for a specific appointment time that works for both of you.

How do college courses differ from high school courses?

Nearly all college courses include a lecture that meets between two and four days per week. At FSU, many classes meet either on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for 50 minutes or on Tuesday and Thursday for 75 minutes. These courses are listed in the course schedule as “LEC.”

Many science and technology classes also include a laboratory session each week. Laboratory sessions usually meet for two or three hours. They are listed in the course schedule as “LAB.” When students register for a lecture/lab course, they register for the

laboratory section. That automatically registers them for both the laboratory AND lecture section of the class.

Many courses are scheduled with two additional workshop sessions to provide students with additional opportunities to succeed. These workshops are called “Structured Learning Assistance” workshops and are listed in the course schedule as “SLA.” When you register for a course with an SLA workshop, you will automatically be registered for the lecture, the lab (if there is one) and the SLA workshop.

Is attending class important?

If you are serious about your academic success, it is vital. There is no other way to receive the professor's information, ask for clarification, and hear the discussion except by attending class. Illness may force you to miss some classes, but you should miss for no other reason. In addition, for every hour of class time that you "cut," you throw away at least \$11.00 in tuition.

If you are ill, contact the instructor as soon as possible and make arrangements to make up the missed work. If you must miss class and know about it in advance, (e.g. athletics, funeral, court dates), be sure to contact your instructor before the expected absence. Remember that the instructor determines the attendance and make-up policies. Not all absences will be excused.

If you decide to drop a class, you must do so in your dean's office. This office serves as the Student Services (student records) office for students in each particular college.

What is a syllabus?

A syllabus is a printed document that lists what the instructor plans to do during the course and when he/she plans to do it. It is a timeline. The syllabus will tell you the topics that will be covered, the textbook to purchase, chapters in the textbook to read and when to read them, the dates of tests, the grading scale, instructor's office hours and office location, and other helpful information.

Cracking the Code

You will see and hear many acronyms at FSU. (An acronym is a word made from the first letters of a name, such as WAC for Women's Army Corps.) Some of the more common ones are:

GPA: Grade Point Average

ECCC: Educational and Career Counseling Center

FSUS: Ferris State University Seminar

SLA: Structured Learning Assistance