

*Brooklyn College – The Office of the Dean of
Undergraduate Studies*

Your First College Year

F a l l S e m e s t e r 2 0 0 9

I am happy to welcome you, entering first-year students, to Brooklyn College. Whether you are an '09 high school graduate or an adult with years of military or career experience, you are embarking on a new venture and you will never be the same. Learning is change and change is always to some degree disorienting and destabilizing, both intellectually and personally. With that in mind, we have designed First College Year programs that will integrate you into our community of inquiry and help you make the most of the opportunities for learning and for change that a Brooklyn College education affords. This little guide will help you get started, but don't stop there; the faculty, the staff in the Undergraduate Dean's Office and in Student Affairs, and a host of peer mentors are eager to assist you in the transition to college and to receive you into this vibrant campus community. Together, we can make *terra incognita* (unknown territory) also *terra firma* (solid footing).

-Dr. Donna F. Wilson
Dean of Undergraduate Studies

FIRST COLLEGE YEAR PHILOSOPHY

The First College Year program integrates students into the College community as engaged learners and participants in campus life and facilitates the transition to college. It fosters a sense of belonging and appreciation for social differences. Students are challenged to reflect critically on the educational process and are encouraged to understand and value the meaningful connections between the liberal arts and their career aspirations. A coherent curricular and co-curricular program, guided by the ten common goals of the Core Curriculum and Student Affairs, strengthens the academic, personal, and civic skills that will set students on a successful path to graduation.

nil sine magno labore -- 1

FAQ's

Part of starting at a new school is having a lot of questions. Here are the answers to some of the most frequently asked questions on campus:

What are the First College Year programs at Brooklyn College?

The First College Year programs are designed to meet the goals set forth in the First College Year Philosophy Statement (see cover). These programs will help you to navigate majors, credits, and coursework. Included in these programs are your orientation and registration meeting, the presidential convocation, and all of the events planned for the opening weeks of the semester. They will engage you in the diverse community of learner-scholars where the curricular and co-curricular choices that you make will help inform your decisions well into the future. The First College Year programs will provide you with targeted advisement, participation in TOP, and the opportunity to participate in a learning community or a freshman seminar.

Why was I invited to participate in a learning community? What is a learning community?

If you join a learning community, you will take three required courses with the same group of students at highly desirable times. This will leave room in your schedule to take a course in your major or to take an elective that will count towards your degree.

By participating in a learning community, it will be easier to make

friends, to form study groups, to share notes, and to prepare for exams. You also have the benefit of knowing that the faculty in your learning community are committed to working with you to ensure your success. Although many students are initially hesitant, 85% of students that participate find it a highly positive experience and would recommend it to their friends.

What if I don't know what to major in? Is there anyone I can talk to?

Yes. You have many options. First of all attend a "Finding the Right Major" workshop offered by the Magner Center for Career Development and Internships (1303 James Hall, 951-5696). Through the Magner Center, you can attend workshops on various fields and intern at different companies to find out firsthand whether or not you are interested in a particular career. You can also speak to other students who have already declared majors and have clear career goals. Perhaps they can offer you some insight into how they arrived at their decisions. You should make an appointment with an advisor in the Center for Academic Advisement and Student Success – CAASS (3207 Boylan, 951-5471) where you can discuss your academic performance, interests, and career goals. You can also speak to departmental advisors and explore your interests and career goals with them. In addition, the Center for Diversity and Multicultural Studies (3309 James, 951-5766) offers a variety of credit bearing work experience programs. You should declare a major by your second year, if not before.

What are the differences between a BA and a BS and how soon must I make up my mind about which one I want?

At present, a BA requires that you complete 120 credits with an average of C or higher, including all required courses. In addition, you must meet the requirements of the department in which you are majoring, which will include at least 18 credits of advanced work. If you decide to get a Bachelor of Science degree, which also requires 120 credits, you will need 60 credits of science courses, at least 24 of which should be advanced courses taken at Brooklyn College in your major (or majors) with a grade of C or better. Included in the 60 credits are Core math and science, and various courses in Anthropology, Economics, Physical Education, Health & Nutrition Sciences, Philosophy, and Sociology, as well as those in the Biology, Chemistry, Computer and Information Science, Geology, Mathematics, Physics, and Psychology. If you think you might be interested in a BS, consult CAASS or a departmental advisor in your first semester as the requirements are quite specific. Check the online Bulletin for more information.

How do I declare my major?

You declare your major by meeting with an advisor in the department you are interested in and then filling out a Declaration of Major form. Then bring the form to the ESC (0100 Boylan, 758-8150). You can also declare your major online using the student portal. You should also be aware that if you don't declare your major by the time you earn 61 credits you will be ineligible for TAP—this is state law. Once you have

declared your major, make sure you follow-up and ensure that it is reflected on your transcript.

Is there any way to find out before I register what the requirements of a course are and what courses go well together?

Many departments prepare lists of their courses and the professors teaching them. Some even prepare guidebooks that include brief course descriptions and class-work requirements. Also, check the student portal- the syllabi for many Core courses will be posted online. Look these over and then talk to students who have already taken the courses in which you are interested. You might also try to speak to the professors, departmental advisors, or the tutors in the Learning Center (1300 Boylan, 951-5821). There is no hard and fast rule as to how to select courses to take together. Part of your decision should be based on your knowledge of yourself. Then, consider how much reading the courses will require and how many papers you will have to write. Also take into consideration how many classes have labs. They can run from an hour and forty minutes to five hours long and can be a bit more work than traditional lecture courses.

Once classes begin, if you start feeling overwhelmed by your schoolwork, remember that there are people willing to help and advise you: CAASS, Personal Counseling (0203 James, 951-5363), the Magner Center, the Women's Center (227 New Ingersoll, 951-5777), the Learning Center, the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies (3208 Boylan, 951-5771), and your professors.

But whatever you do, if you have to drop a course, do it officially.

How much time should I spend studying for all of my classes?

Studying for college classes is very different than studying for high school classes. College professors assign a substantial amount of reading and expect that you will attend class prepared to discuss it. As a general rule, you should expect to study two hours outside of class for every one hour that you are in class per week. For a 3 credit course you should be prepared to spend six hours studying during a normal week.

The Personal Counseling Center offers many workshops on study skills over the course of the semester – plan to attend several of them. The Dean’s Office sponsors the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Students workshop series every spring semester – make it a priority to participate in the 7 Habits.

What do you do if you think that the grade you were assigned for a course is wrong?

First of all, contact the instructor. Your professor will know why he/she assigned you that grade, and if a mistake was made it can be corrected. If you are not satisfied with the professor’s response, contact the chairperson of the department to formally initiate a grade appeal. The chair will refer the case to a departmental grade appeals committee, which reviews written evidence (and, in some cases, hears testimony) provided by both the student and the instructor.

If you are still not satisfied, you can ask an advisor in CAASS about how to

appeal the decision to the Committee on Course and Standing, whose decision is final.

If you failed the course and exhausted all of your appeals, you can retake the course. If you get a grade of C- or better, the new grade will be figured into your grade point average and the F will be dropped from it (although it will still appear on your transcript). You can do this for up to 16 credits over your entire academic career at CUNY.

What if I get a C or a D in a Core course? Is there any way to prevent that from affecting my GPA?

Yes, there is. You can retroactively change your grade from a letter ('C' or 'D') to a Pass grade ('P'). You may only do this with two Core classes. You must inform ESC (0100 Boylan, 758-8150) of your decision to use the Core Pass/Fail option no later than the start of the semester after you earn 96 credits.

Why was I asked to sign the Policy on Academic Integrity?

When you enrolled at Brooklyn College you committed yourself to becoming a member of the campus community of learner-scholars. Part of that commitment is holding yourself to the highest standards in your work. Any attempt to cheat or to present the ideas of someone else as your own subverts the purpose of higher education and can call into question the integrity of your entire record. Academic Integrity is explained in detail in the Student Handbook and in the Bulletin; the policy is also online at <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies/pdf/CUNY%20PolicyAcademicIntegrity.pdf>. Please consult these resources to

better understand academic dishonesty and its consequences. If you have any questions about plagiarism or the academic integrity policy, contact your professors or the Academic Integrity Officer in the Undergraduate Dean's Office.

Is there an organization on campus for students interested in women's issues?

The Brooklyn College Women's Center is the place for you. The Women's Center has a lounge where you can relax, enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, and meet and share ideas with others interested in current affairs, women's issues, college life, and other related topics. The Women's Center has a small computer lab where you can access the internet and work on papers. In addition, it serves as headquarters for several women's clubs (including The Revolutionary Alliance of Womyn--RAW); it is a hub for organizing activities, and it provides information on financial aid, health care, as well as job and educational opportunities in fields related to women's issues. For more information or the Center's hours, contact the Women's Center directly.

What should I do if my name, phone number, or address changes?

There is a form you can fill out in the Enrollment Services Center to make all of these changes.

If you need....

Part of engaging yourself in the Brooklyn College community is knowing where to go to solve the specific problems that you are having. The following list addresses the most common problems that students have and where to go to solve them.

If you need information about....

....go to

Admissions	1103 J*
Academic Advisement	3207 B
CUNY BA	3207 B
Degree Audits	1115 B
Disability Services	138 R
Diversity	3309 J
Financial Aid	1306 J*
Grade Appeals	**
Graduate Studies	3238 B
Information Technology	x4188
Internships & Careers	1303 J
Majors	1303 J
Paying your bill	0100 B
Scholarships	0416 J
Sexual Harassment	2147 B
Study Abroad	3208 B
The On Course Advantage	3219 B
Transfer Information/ Credit Evaluations	1112 B
Tutoring	1300 B

* You can also contact ESC

** Speak with department chairperson

Buildings: J – James; B – Boylan;
R – Roosevelt;

I wish I knew...

Inevitably, when you graduate from Brooklyn College you will realize that there are several things you wish you had known when you started. Here are some suggestions from students who have gone before you:

- ❖ I wish I had known to check the school and local libraries for books that I needed for my classes.
- ❖ I wish I had known the importance of deciding on a major earlier, I could have finished my degree sooner.
- ❖ I wish I had known the importance of taking part in co-curricular activities both on and off campus.
- ❖ I wish I had known that while selecting a major is important you don't necessarily have to work in your major field of study.
- ❖ I wish I had known that my advisors were not there to make decisions for me, but to help me learn how to make my own decisions.
- ❖ I wish I had known that one of my main priorities in college was to become more independent.
- ❖ I wish I had known to go see my professors more often during their office hours; I could have learned much more from them.
- ❖ I wish I had known just how much information and resources were available to me at the College's library.
- ❖ I wish I had known to file for financial aid early (in January).
- ❖ I wish I had known about the fitness room (208R) it would have helped keep off the pounds from the fast-paced life of a college student.

Who's Who in the Undergraduate Dean's Office

- ❖ Dr. Donna F. Wilson, Dean of Undergraduate Studies
- ❖ Dr. Niesha Ziehmke, Acting Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies
- ❖ Mr. Jesus Perez, Director of CAASS
- ❖ Mr. Patrick Kavanagh, Executive Assistant to the Dean
- ❖ Ms. Nicole St. Clair, Administrative Liaison for CUE Initiatives
- ❖ Ms. Helen Brereton, Administrative Assistant
- ❖ Ms. Takiyah Charles, TOCA Coordinator
- ❖ Ms. Renae Wooten, Coordinator of Transfer Student Services
- ❖ Ms. Shaunette Cave, Special Projects Assistant
- ❖ Ms. Tracey Rojas, Study Abroad Advisor

Just the beginning...

This is only a very brief introduction to the wide variety of opportunities that are available to you as a Brooklyn College student—download a copy of the Undergraduate Bulletin, read the Student Handbook, use the Student Portal. Also, read the campus newspaper, check the website for events and activities on campus.

Commit yourself to the campus community – get involved. As you complete your first year inquire about study abroad opportunities, seek out an internship, and engage in a research project or a service learning experience.

Brooklyn College of the City University of New York Job Description

Job Title: Student

RESPONSIBILITIES: Reporting to and directly responsible for yourself, the job of student is the most important role on campus. In partnership with the faculty, administration, and staff of the College you are responsible for transitioning yourself from a Brooklyn College student to Brooklyn College graduate:

Typical duties include:

1. Attend class and participate in all class sessions. Professors may test on all course materials as well as grade for attendance and participation. Don't abuse your new freedom. Showing up on time is your responsibility. Being a college student is your job.
2. Find and get to know one individual on campus who knows you are here and cares about your well being. Try your advisor, a professor, a club sponsor, or a staff member. This will help you to build contacts that you can use as professional references in the future.
3. Get involved! Take an active role in the curricular and co-curricular activities that the campus has to offer. Join a club, attend a lecture, participate in student government, write for the student newspaper, and attend events at the Student Center.
4. Understand why you are attending Brooklyn College. Your college experience will be much more productive if you can relate your education in the liberal arts and sciences to your career goals.
5. Set up a daily and weekly schedule and stick to them. You'd be surprised how much more time in the day there is, once you plan it all out. Make a semester schedule, too, with important due dates for all of your classes.
6. If you are attending classes full time, try not to work more than 10-15 hours per week. If you must work more than 15 hours a week, seek advice about combinations of courses that you can manage.
7. Assess and improve your study habits. Often, it is the students who had the easiest time in high school who have the hardest time in college. They never learned how to study!
8. Encourage teachers to involve you in the learning process. Attend classes, actively participate, and take advantage of office hours/appointments to meet with your professors individually. You'll learn more easily and enjoyably, and you'll feel like the professor notices your efforts.

9. Know how to use the campus library!
10. Improve your writing. Visit the Brooklyn College Learning Center and utilize the resources available there.
11. Develop critical thinking skills. Always challenge yourself about the "why" of the material. Why is it important? Why is it believable? This will help you make wise, well thought out decisions in other areas of your life.
12. Make one or two close friends among your peers. That way, you can take some of this big, new social life with you after graduation, and they'll share your most important memories.
13. Learn to be assertive. It's never too late to learn how to stand up for your rights in a way that respects the rights of others.
14. Learn what helping resources your campus offers, where they are located, and what their hours are. Don't forget to tell your friends!
15. Take your health seriously. How much sleep you get, what you eat, whether you exercise, and the kinds of decisions you make about drugs, alcohol, and sex all contribute to the way you feel. Get in the habit of being good to yourself, and you'll be a happier person... and a more successful student.
16. Learn how to manage stress. College can be very stressful-minimize the impact on your peace of mind.
17. Remember that you are not alone. Many other students are facing the same uncertainties and worries that you now face. Find strength in numbers by talking about it and supporting each other.
18. Learn to appreciate yourself. You are unique, valuable, and Brooklyn College would not be the same place without you.
19. Try to have realistic expectations. At first you may not make the grades you made in high school. Improvement comes with new skills and practice. This goes for your social life too. College can feel very lonely in the beginning, but time will allow you to build a new set of friends and interests!

Adopted from: <http://www.jmu.edu/stusuccess/waystosucceed.shtml>

Goals of the First College Year Program

- ❖ students will be integrated into the campus community as participants in campus life and in the intellectual life of the College;
- ❖ students will engage with faculty both inside and outside of the classroom;
- ❖ students will express a sense of belonging and will demonstrate an appreciation for social difference;
- ❖ students will reflect critically on the education process and will understand and value the meaningful connections between the liberal arts and their career aspirations;
- ❖ students' academic, personal, and civic competencies will be developed to enable them to persist to graduation and succeed in their chosen field of study.

Brooklyn College expects that all graduates of the College will:

1. Be able to think critically and creatively, to reason logically, to reason quantitatively, and to express their thoughts orally and in writing with clarity and precision;
2. Be able to make sound moral and ethical judgments;
3. Understand the arts, histories and cultures of the past as a foundation for those of the present;
4. Understand the development and workings of modern societies in an interdependent world;
5. Acquire the tools that are required to understand and respect the natural universe;
6. Understand what knowledge is and how it is acquired by the use of differing methods in different disciplines;
7. Be able to integrate knowledge from diverse sources and acquire mastery of an academic discipline;
8. Understand the necessity for tolerance and appreciate individual and social diversity;
9. Be informed and responsible citizens of the world;
10. Establish a foundation for life-long learning and the potential for leadership.

Approved by Faculty Council November 14, 2006