

5. Remember that Java Live 'light roast' coffee has more caffeine than 'dark roast' coffee.

This is crucial information to have during exam week, as well as for those eight a.m. classes. Speaking of which...

6. Draw up your timetable very carefully.

The two big points to remember:
 a. Ninety minute classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays are killers. Staying awake and alert for 90 minutes in university is nothing like in high school. Do yourself a favor and ease in slowly; take no more than two classes on Tuesday/Thursday.
 b. Don't leave big breaks between classes. You might think it is a good idea to leave yourself one hour between each class, in order to allow enough time to get from class to class. Wrong. Granted, you won't have to do the ten minute mile from one end of campus to the other, but at the same time, you won't do anything constructive with the 45 minutes you have left over. You will probably sit around and have coffee with your friends, and then decide to skip class. Actually, the day goes much faster if you schedule as many of your classes as possible back-to-back.

7. Join a club.

There are over 30,000 full-time and part-time students at the university. Most of them are very nice and often highly interesting. Yet it is all too easy to go through your first year, or indeed your whole academic career, and never meet anyone other than your teacher-assigned lab partners.

The U of A is lucky enough to have literally hundreds of active clubs and organizations just begging for new members. The Student Handbook has a fairly comprehensive list of clubs; fraternities, male and female, 'rush' for pledges at the beginning of each term; and organizations such as CJSR and even the Gateway are simply thrilled silly to have new volunteers show up and offer to help out. Many of your best memories of campus life will be made with friends you meet here — and it is always a comfort to be able to talk to someone who has been through or is going through the same things you are.

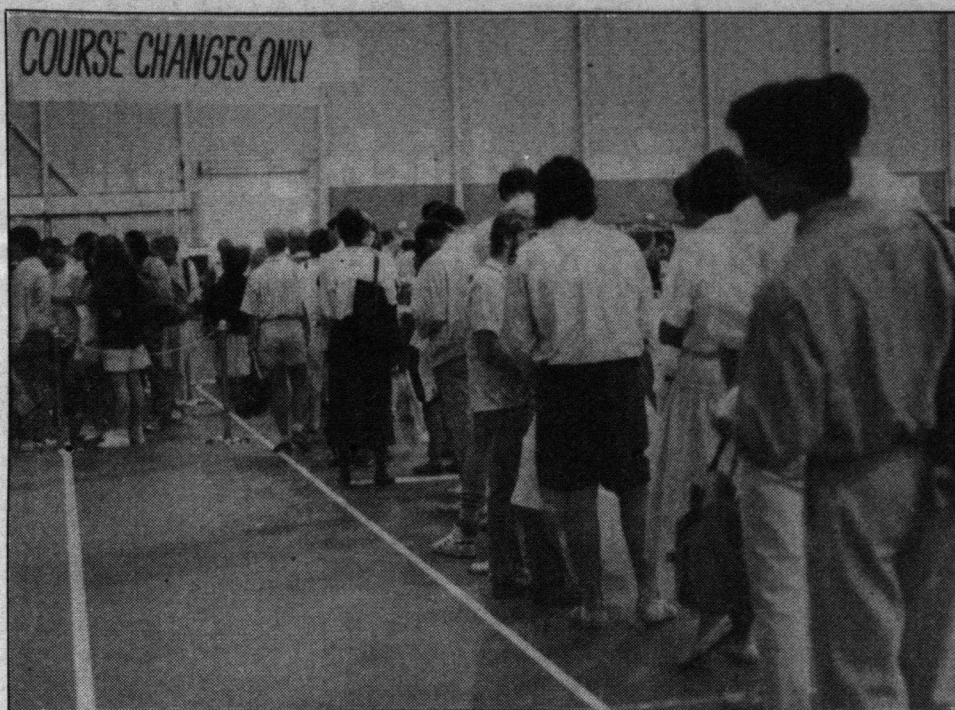


Photo by Roberta Franchuk

Welcome back!

The most popular pastime of the year for campus students.

8. Learn to use the library.

Spending an hour or so on one of the many library orientation classes may be the best thing you can do for your school work. The library staff will be happy to show you how to do all sorts of scary things like using the "on-line" catalog and finding all the different libraries. Besides orientations, spend a little time at the beginning of the year just browsing. Find out what kind of books each of the libraries hold, where each one is, what those stupid abbreviations on the "on-line" catalog stand for, and how to use the reserve room. The last is especially important for classes like Psych 260, where you have to regularly sign out reserve readings. You don't want to wait until just before the midterm to figure out how to take things out of the reserve room, because by then all of the smart people will have put reserves on the books you need and you will be OUT OF LUCK.

Another extremely important point: take your books back on time. Library fines run about 50 cents per day per book; reserve room fines are one dollar per hour.

Fines can mount up in an incredible hurry, and don't think you can get away without paying. If you don't pay, you don't get your marks, you don't get to register, and you don't get your DEGREE. These people play hardball.

9. Talk to your professors.

In many first year classes, you are but an anonymous face in a crowd of 275 or so. Were it not for your ubiquitous student ID number, you would scarcely rate any attention... unless you go and talk to your professor.

You will be truly amazed at the difference this can make. Your prof will almost invariably be delighted to help you with any problems you are having, and most profs, contrary to myth, are human. You may even find that the difference between a "6" and "7" in a course lies in the prof being able to put a face to the name on the exam paper, and to realize that you have really been trying.

The corollary to this advice is: Take advantage of the help that is offered. Help sessions and tutorials are run by many

departments for first year classes. They are often staffed by TA's and grad students who once asked the same questions you are asking. Don't be afraid to look stupid by asking a question: you'll look a lot stupider with a 3 for your final GPA.

10. Use the services available to you.

Besides the libraries and professors, the U of A offers competent professional counselling at Student Counselling Services; health care at Health Services; use of athletic equipment in Athletics; late night escorts through Campus Security, and lots more. The Students' Union also offers service like the Exam Registry (an absolute must for everyone; old exams are one of the best ways to study), Student Help, and the Housing Registry. Services of one kind or another are easily accessible; just check the Student Handbook or calendar.

11. Keep your eyes open.

There is a lot more to the campus than you will see on your daily route from class to class. One day, take some time to wander around the areas of campus that you don't usually visit. Walk through Arts and Humanities, hike through Mechanical Engineering or V-Wing. Check out the Old Arts Building, Athabaska Hall, and the Power Plant. Walk around the perimeter of campus, admire the view of the river valley from the 14th floor of the Tory Building (that's as far as the elevators go). Besides giving you a new appreciation for the size and architectural, shall we say, eclecticism of the campus, this will also allow you a measure of confidence when you find your class has been moved and you have to find it in five minutes. It will also be useful for finding the shortest and warmest route across campus for those bone-numbing winter days.

12. Don't lose your sense of humor.

There is nothing uglier than a student who approaches life like a Mission. The people who sit stonily through the jokes the profs tell, the people who object to any interruption of their education for something as mundane as fun — these people are truly terrifying. University, for all of the trials and terrors it can and will invoke, can also be one of the most enjoyable times you will ever have. Keep your sense of proportion and most of all, keep your sense of the absurd.

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