

What Mom never told you

by Mike Spindloe

So, you've finally made it to the big time! You've transcended the mundane experience known as high school and traded in the chance to work at a fast food restaurant for the rest of your life. You've enrolled in university in the hope of actually learning something useful, or at least getting a degree which would allow you to manage a fast food restaurant for the rest of your life. Now, there's good news and bad news.

The good news is that you've probably made a wise decision. There are reams of statistics, compiled by sociologists, which sort of almost prove that university graduates are better read than most people you meet in biker bars, tip better in restaurants, and quote Joyce belligerently when stuck in traffic jams. Unfortunately, like everything else which sociologists have purported to discover, these statistics are totally irrelevant.

The bad news is that over the last few weeks, months, or even years, you've likely been given all kinds of valuable advice on "how to survive in university." My advice is to forget about those American mail-order essay houses you've heard so much about, and to follow these simple rules for success:

1) Learn to tell professors from graduate students from undergrads. With half of Alberta's workforce going to university, this isn't an easy task. Students can no longer be identified by their Beaver Canoe and Benetton togs. Professors are middle-aged, bearded men wearing jeans and a tie, carrying books and papers in faded plastic Safeway bags. Grad students are middle-aged bearded men wearing jeans and no tie, carrying a briefcase. Distinguishing female grad students from professors is far too complicated to explain, although in

general, female grad students do not expect to be called "sir". As for undergraduates, second and third year students are impossible to tell apart. First year students are the people standing around in groups of 20 or more blocking hallways between classes, engaged in frank, meaningful discussions about what to wear to the INXS concert. Fourth year undergrads are the ones giving the first year students dirty looks as they struggle to get to classes which they've finally realized the importance of.

2) Don't expect to get out of here with a degree in four years. You might think you want to be a civil engineer right now, but by next semester the workload will have you scrambling for the relative safety of the English program (like most *Gateway* staff).

3) Don't ask too many questions, especially stupid ones, in class. Most professors don't actually expect you to understand what they're talking about. Don't succumb to the urge to panic. Go home and read the chapter, think about the material and then ask questions. That way your questions will stand a chance of sounding halfway intelligent, which will impress the professor no end and also convince him that you actually pay attention rather than sleep through the class.

These, then, are the three most important rules to follow on the road to a university education. There are others which I could mention, like not spray painting anarchist slogans on the administration building during lunch hour and being in the bar early on Friday afternoons prior to exams or long weekends, but half the fun of first year is finding these things out for yourself.

Finally, since virtually every first year student must take some sort of English course, I'll leave you with a bit of humorous but useful advice from my first year English professor. That is, when writing essays, keep things simple and straightforward. Don't show off your awesome vocabulary too much; you're not expected to be pretentious until next year.

Have a good one!

Enduring first year hell

First year university is a traumatic experience for everyone. Whether you are fresh out of high school or have been out in the 'real world' for several years, academia is bound to confound you. Most students take a year (more or less) to adjust to university life, but after that initial period of terror, they find the path easier and yes, even enjoyable. To get new students through the time known as *First Year Hell*, here are a few hints and suggestions from people who have already made their mistakes — and lived through them.

1. Don't be intimidated.

Yes, there are a lot of very intelligent people on campus. There are also a lot of fairly bright folks, and a good number of just plain idiots. You will soon find that many of the know-it-alls are no more intelligent than you — they just act smarter.

2. Read your timetable carefully.

Double check all your courses the first week, to make sure you are really going to English 200 and not to Poli Sci 430. It is very easy to wander into the wrong room on your first day of classes, and not realize your mistake until the midterm. Your best clue: does half the class look as confused/terrified as you do? If so, you are probably in a first year class.

3. Follow the unwritten traffic laws.

Rule number one: Keep to the right. People walking against the flow of traffic are liable to be stabbed with sharp mechanical pencils. Stopping to talk to a friend in the middle of V-Wing at a class changeover is an offense punishable by having your library card force-fed to you.

4. Know when you are in over your head.

The combination of culture shock and academic expectation is often too much for new students. A full course load is sometimes more than they can handle. Your guidance counsellor might hate me for saying this, but IT IS NOT A SIN TO DROP A COURSE. If you find that the work load you are carrying is really too much for you, don't hesitate to drop something. Talk to your program advisor (yes, you all have one — just go to your faculty office and ask). These people get paid to help, so take advantage of it.)

On the whole, though, it is much better to drop that killer course (Chem 250 and Math 202 are prime candidates) than to grit your teeth, stick it out, and wind up with a "3" on your transcript. You, your blood pressure, and your GPA don't need that kind of stress.

Intro week wrap-up

by Lisa Hall

The Students' Union has increased its activities during Freshman Introduction Week. Other than the traditional Beer Gardens, new events include a pavilion dance, a Community Information Display, a pancake breakfast, and a treasure hunt.

Florence Pastoor, Freshman Introduction Week coordinator, said the new activities were organized "out of a need to do something for freshmen and a need to boost spirit and unity on campus."

The dance takes place Friday, September 9, in the Butterdome. Three bands will be playing: Bachman Turner Overdrive, 1964, and Skaboom. Tickets are \$2 with a \$1 service charge and are on sale now at SU info booths. The dance runs from 8 to 1 pm with last call at midnight.

The popular Beer Gardens started Tuesday and continue until Friday. Held in QUAD from noon until five, the Gardens provide a relaxed atmosphere for students, with plenty of beer, music, and free burgers.

The Community Information Display, pancake breakfast, and treasure hunt all took place during the two days of registration.

Set up in the pavilion, the purpose of the Community Information Display was to welcome and orient students by illustrating life on campus and in Edmonton. Several campus services had displays, showing what kind of help was available to students. Community displays included ones from the *Sun* and the *Journal*.

The pancake breakfast was held yesterday morning on the basketball court outside the Butterdome. This proved to be an ideal location as students exiting the pavilion after registering would walk right out to the site of the breakfast. Many students and staff savored pancakes, sausage, and juice for only a dollar.

The treasure hunt was the only event intended for freshmen only. It was held yesterday afternoon in QUAD. SU led several groups of students on a hunt around campus and followed it up with a barbecue for the participants.

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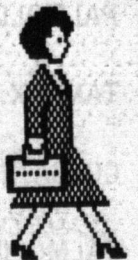
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