



# -THE- FRESHMAN SURVIVAL GUIDE



**Y**ou finally made it. You're done with your parents, done with high school, and now bursting onto the college campus, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, acting aloof but trying to make friends. Maybe you're nervous and hiding in your dorm while you read this, or maybe you've decided to take on a whole new identity since you've moved to a new state.

Whatever you're thinking, let me be your guide to the trappings of life at University of Oregon. As a recently graduated senior, I can help you through the highs and lows of freshman year.

## HOW TO PICK A MAJOR

Hopefully you picked this university because you already are passionate about one of the many majors offered at UO. If not, I'd suggest picking something you're interested in and exploring a few majors that have lucrative future careers attached.

I chose journalism, which opens the doors to a not-so-lucrative career. Other good options include education, most of the sciences, architecture and pre-law. If you're passionate about something like English, I will point out that all my recently graduated English major friends are working in retail, delivery or the food industry. Take it as a minor to explore your passions, but choose something that can make you a living after you graduate. It's worth it.

Also, college isn't for everyone. Electricians make more money than I do with my bachelor's degree, so going the unionized skilled-labor route is a great idea if this college shit isn't for you.

## HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS AND GET INVOLVED

You're probably living in the dorms, which may be a stressful can of hormones and awkward social situations.

Dorms are also a great place to make friends. Don't assume everyone in proximity is going to be a lifelong pal — if you don't mesh, move on without drama. If you're living at home or in an off-campus apartment (or if you're

a nerdy introvert stuck in a dorm that's a pseudo frat live-out), then consider joining a club to meet people. You can find hundreds of clubs on campus. You can join ethnicity-based clubs, religious clubs, charity-driven clubs, major-based clubs and club sports. The UO has clubs focused on analyzing video games like *Think.Play*, clubs based on atheism, and numerous campus publications you can apply to work for. Check [uoregon.orgsync.com/BrowseOrganizations](http://uoregon.orgsync.com/BrowseOrganizations) for a list of organizations.

If you're the activist type, you can also make friends by getting politically involved. Politically active student groups include the Black Student Union, the Associated Students of University of Oregon (ASUO) Women's Center, the ASUO Men's Center, Movimiento Estudiante Chicano de Aztlan and the Sustainability Center.

You can also run for election to ASUO itself, if you're that sort of political.

If none of these tactics work for finding friends, try talking to people during lunch or in class. I met a few friends freshman year in my Writing 121 class, and I found another good friend and eventual roommate in my Reporting 1 class.

Worst-case scenario, make a Tinder profile. I made a few friends over the summer out of mutual boredom and an honest profile. (Taurus, UO, seeking friends and/or a hot date! <3)

## HOW TO PARTY (SAFELY)

You've left the nest. It's time to spread your wings and get wasted.

Or not. I recommend starting with just a few drinks at your first party to keep your bearings. The first half of

your first term of college is known as the "Red Zone," the period of time a young college woman is most vulnerable to rape, according to the UO Dean of Student's sexual violence prevention website. And each year, the ASUO Women's Center puts up scores of red flags in the quad to represent these campus assaults.

To avoid risky situations like this, I'll go with the standard stereotype and recommend avoiding frat parties and strangers. You probably have a dorm-mate with an older sibling; try to go to parties at their house. Go with friends you trust and look out for each other, and always keep an eye on your drink.

Co-ops like Campbell Club and The Lorax invite students in and can be a great place to attend your first themed party or see some live local music. Bring cash for the cover and, again, go with friends.

## HOW TO PASS CLASS

Ah, yes, the school part of college. College professors aren't actually out to get you, despite what your high school teachers might have said. If you introduce yourself on the first day of class and actually attend most of the time, your professor will probably want to help you do well.

I recommend sitting in the front (it helps you stay focused), asking questions when you're confused, and doing all the assignments. Even if you're bad at the class material, an engaged student gets a lot of points from the professor for effort. You might be able to retake a test or redo an assignment if you show that you've been trying.

Oh, and professors hate when you send rude emails. Start with "Dear so-and-so," be direct and respectful, and include your class name in the subject line. Treating them like people goes a long way.

## HOW TO GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE DEBT-FREE

You can't, unless your parents are paying for you. Good luck!