University College

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Tamara Pratt, M.A., Director, Assessment and Learning Center

Mission of the College
Founded in 1942, University College was one of the first academic units in the United States to focus on meeting the special needs of new students. University College is the entry point for all new undergraduate students who come to the University of Oklahoma directly from high school, as well as many transfer students. It is also the academic home of all pre-health professions majors and many students who have not yet decided on an academic major.

The primary mission of University College is to assist new students in making a successful transition to the university and building a solid foundation for further academic success. The staff of the college provides academic advising, assessment, career counseling, orientation, and other services designed to familiarize students with the university and its programs and to foster academic success. The services of the college are available to all students of the university, and the staff of the college provides information and assistance to all who seek it.

Academic Advising
Janel Russell-Pendergraft, Director
Holley Brewer, Academic Counselor
Sandra Brown, Senior Academic Counselor
Bret Burkhart, Academic Counselor
Connie Divine, Senior Academic Counselor
Amy Hesselgren, Academic Counselor
Tim Jones, Senior Academic Counselor
Shari McGuire, Academic Counselor
Lillian Miller, Senior Academic Counselor
Brian Nossaman, Senior Academic Counselor

Academic advising is the primary function of University College. Professional academic counselors are available throughout the year to help students decide on majors, select appropriate courses, and become acquainted with university policies and resources. Our goal is to provide students with the support they need to succeed at the University of Oklahoma.

While enrolled in University College, students will typically take courses common to all degree programs at the university. These include two courses in English composition, three hours in American history, and three hours in United States government (political science). Students will also enroll in courses required for general education, courses required for the major, or courses designed to explore various fields of interest. Students may also take courses to supplement their high school background or to help them be successful in college.

Students whose American College Test (ACT) scores indicate high aptitude for college work have many opportunities to tailor their programs to their particular abilities. If they have taken high school courses that are equivalent to college work, they may be encouraged to omit certain freshman courses and move into more advanced courses. If they need college credit for the courses omitted, they may take advanced standing examinations to earn that credit. Students should take such action only after discussion of their individual needs and objectives with an academic counselor. Qualified students are also encouraged to apply to the Honors College.

Admission to a Degree-Recommending College
A student may be admitted to one of the degree-recommending colleges on the Norman campus if he or she has declared a major, completed 24 or more credit hours of college-level work, and achieved a combined retention grade point average required for graduation from that college. Admission to the degree-recommending colleges at the OU Health Sciences Center requires a separate application process and is governed by requirements unique to each college or program.

Career Development Services and Advising for Undecided Students
Many students in University College have not yet chosen an academic major, and at least half of the students who have declared a major will change their minds during their first year. University College offers students the unique opportunity to take a semester or more to explore different career options and academic majors. Rather than being forced to make a premature decision, students are encouraged to evaluate options by enrolling in exploratory classes, participating in inventories designed to assess abilities and interests, and interacting with academic counselors who are experienced in working with undecided students.
CARE Program

The Counseling and Assistance for Retention Effectiveness (CARE) program is an intensive advising program for students with potential academic problems. The program is designed to help students learn about and take advantage of the academic support systems available at OU. Students are identified based on various factors that predict success in college, including high school grades, ACT scores, poor class attendance and mid-term grade reports. Each CARE student formulates a contract with his/her assigned academic counselor.

Making the Transition to College: Two Courses for Freshmen

The transition from high school to college is always challenging and sometimes difficult. Freshman students must adjust to new intellectual standards, find new social relationships, and make appropriate decisions about significant events, often for the first time in their lives. Perhaps the biggest challenge of all is finding the necessary support to help understand and respond to these changes.

To provide this kind of support the University of Oklahoma created two separate multi-section courses with enrollment limited to 28 freshmen per section.

The first course, “Gateway to College Learning,” takes a direct approach in the study of three areas: success in academic life, success in personal life, and success in accessing resources at the university. The course covers such topics as time management, study skills, building community with people of diverse backgrounds, and maintaining physical and mental well-being.

The second course is a series of “Freshman Seminars.” Students study a specific topic with a professor who has a particular interest and special research skills in that area. The intent is that the professor will share enthusiasm about the research subject with the students, exciting them about the learning process through a unique topical approach.

A computer-assisted Speed Reading course is also offered in multiple sections each fall and spring. A short-course format helps to increase both speed and reading comprehension.

President’s Distinguished Faculty Mentoring Program

In the President’s Distinguished Faculty Mentoring Program students and experienced faculty mentors are matched to help create nurturing and personal relationships, thus easing the transition from high school to college. This program provides the opportunity for a student to build a connection with faculty and gain valuable life experience. It is a chance to become acquainted with someone who is personally interested in the student’s success, and who can guide a student through the complexities of university life. The minimum expectation of the mentoring program is that the student will meet with the mentor twice during the fall semester, once in a group setting, then individually. To participate, a student will enroll in UNIV 1210. This is a zero-credit course, which costs nothing. A student who participates throughout the semester will receive an “S” (satisfactory).

PACE Awards

Each spring University College recognizes freshman students in the top 1% of their entering class based on Participation in campus activities and events, Academic achievement (3.25 minimum fall OU GPA), Community Service during the fall term, and Excellence in Leadership. Eligible freshmen may be nominated by a faculty or staff member, or students may self-nominate. PACE awards are presented at a special University College ceremony during Parent’s Weekend in April. PACE winners are also recognized at the all-campus awards event that same weekend.

Alpha Lambda Delta, National Freshman Honor Society

The national freshman honor society, Alpha Lambda Delta, is sponsored by University College. Students must have completed a minimum of 12 letter-graded semester hours during the fall term with no less than a 3.5 OU GPA and no grades of I, N, D, F, or U. A one-time payment of national and local dues provides lifetime membership and opportunities for both national and local scholarships. Letters of invitation to qualified freshmen are mailed in February and Alpha Lambda Delta initiation is held during Parent’s Weekend in April. Parents are invited to attend the ceremony.

Strategies for Success Course

Strategies for Success is a course designed for students who are on probation. UCOL 202 is a letter-graded two-hour credit course which consists of a lecture one hour per week and a discussion one hour per week. It helps students learn to identify obstacles that may have hindered them in the past and outlines methods to overcome these obstacles. The course focuses on study habits, time- and self-management, emotional intelligence, having a positive attitude, and many other habits that successful students use in school, work, and life.

Center for Student Advancement

The Center for Student Advancement (CSA) is committed to enhancing the educational experience of students at the University of Oklahoma by providing programs and services that promote retention and academic success. CSA strives to help OU students navigate the process of changing majors/careers after experiencing academic challenges, works with students to help them to develop an action plan to accomplish their educational goals and complete their degrees.

Summer Advance Enrollment/ Orientation Program

Beginning in mid-May and continuing for most of the summer, University College provides an enrollment and orientation program for new OU students. Students and their parents spend a day on campus in small groups, accompanied by university guides who are current OU students. Activities include learning about OU, taking assessment tests to ensure proper placement in classes, meeting with an academic counselor to discuss majors and select courses, sessions specifically for parents, visiting other campus services and resources, and enrolling in fall classes. Students leave the campus feeling comfortable about OU, with a schedule in hand, and a sense of what they can look forward to in the fall.
Entry-Level Assessment

The Assessment and Learning Center provides assessment and course placement services for new and transfer students to give them the best possible chance of success in attaining their academic goals.

All new students at the University of Oklahoma will be assessed in three areas: reading, English and mathematics. The American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) will be used as the preliminary screening instrument. Students scoring at certain levels may be placed in developmental coursework or further evaluated with a computerized placement examination and/or a writing sample. These tests are used to provide academic counselors with information on students’ current skill levels. If the test results indicate a need for improvement in any of these areas, an academic counselor can help students select courses designed to develop or enhance skills.

Student Success Series

Free, non-credit seminars are offered by the Assessment and Learning Center to help students learn college survival skills. Topic areas ranging from time management to career decision-making are covered each semester to help students successfully make the transition from high school to university life.

University College Enrollment Policies

ALL-UNIVERSITY WRITING REQUIREMENT

All University of Oklahoma students must complete a university writing requirement, consisting of six hours of English Composition and/or Expository Writing (ENGL 1113 and 1213 or EXPO 1213). Any student who has not fulfilled the requirement is encouraged to enroll in English and/or Expository Writing.

PASS/NO PASS OPTION

Freshman students in University College may not enroll in courses on a P/NP basis. Students in University College who are above freshman standing may enroll in courses on a P/NP basis only if they have a declared major and the approval of that major department.

FORTY-FIVE HOUR RULE

Students who have attempted 45 or more semester hours, based on grades of A, B, C, D, F, I, P, NP, S and U, may enroll or continue to enroll in University College only with a 2.00 or higher grade point average in their last OU enrollment period or with a 2.00 or higher OU retention grade point average.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

Students suspended from University College are not eligible to take correspondence courses at the University of Oklahoma.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

University College students on academic probation must be advised by an academic counselor in University College before they may enroll for the next semester.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All colleges and universities establish certain requirements that must be met in order to earn a degree. These include coursework in both general education areas and courses in a specific major, as well as compliance with academic standards and policies. Although academic counselors and departmental advisers are available to help students plan their programs of study, the individual student has a three-fold responsibility in this regard:

1. to know his/her academic standing relative to published standards;
2. to understand the published degree requirements; and
3. to know and observe academic calendar deadlines, as printed in the official Class Schedule.