

The Undergraduate Experience at RWU

What to expect

Why you should read this booklet and use it

"We, the undergraduate students of Roger Williams University, commit ourselves to academic integrity. We promise to pursue the highest ideals of academic life, to challenge ourselves with the most rigorous standards, to be honest in any academic endeavor, to conduct ourselves responsibly and honorably, and to assist one another as we live and work together in mutual support." Academic Integrity Undergraduate Pledge

Where are you now?

Every ending has a beginning. Just a few months ago you graduated from high school - an ending celebrated with family and friends, and teachers and counselors. Now, you commence work towards the first major goal of your adult life: a college degree. To help you understand what is expected of you, and to map out the complex and very exciting road ahead, we've created this Graduation Planning System - your personal GPS.

What does a GPS unit do? A Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-based navigation system made up of a network of satellites placed into orbit to assist travelers in plotting a course. We are using GPS as metaphor for the booklet you have in your hand. If you use it correctly, you will stay on course. Hazards in the road will be made visible and unknown territory can be explored thoughtfully and carefully if you use the recommended navigation tools.

The Academic Integrity Pledge you recited at Freshmen Convocation just a day or two ago is a statement of our expectations of you as a student, and as a member of our community. Read it over carefully - we hope you have the same high expectations for yourself that we have for you. ***Think of it as your true north.***

You've settled into your residence hall. New friendships are being forged. You now have responsibilities that just a few months ago were left up to parents, guidance counselors, and high school teachers. In just a few days, you will encounter new and perhaps very challenging academic requirements in the college classroom. All of this may feel overwhelming. Many First year students often feel the need to call home, or even to consider going home.

All of this is normal. In the beginning, it's normal to feel anxious. You have come from a community of friends, teachers, and family that has developed over a lifetime. This is your first truly adult experience and responsibility. Accept that things will be different.

Part of maturing is learning to be flexible and to be comfortable with uncertainty. Roger Williams has faculty and staff to support you in this transition - we want you to succeed, we want you to feel that our campus feels like home, a safe harbor, for the next four years!

Where do you want to go?

In a few days you will begin your undergraduate career. In your first two years, you will complete the RWU core curriculum. It encourages each student to consider and reflect upon three central questions:

*Who am I?
What can I know?
And, based on what I know, how should I act?*

These are important and challenging questions. The faculty you will work with - in classrooms, in advising sessions, in independent study projects - will guide you through to your answers. Plato developed the argument that you cannot know the one without having considered the many. In other words, we cannot choose what is best for us without having considered all the choices.

Whether you major in Philosophy or Security Assurance Studies, the Core Curriculum will guide you through an examination of classic texts in the traditional disciplines of western civilization. This process will help you to articulate your particular answers to these three pivotal questions. You will encounter classes and subjects that you might not have voluntarily chosen. In fact, some of the material we expect you to master may feel more like a road hazard than an opportunity to explore new horizons. And you may find the completion of these classes difficult.

However, having decided to pursue a college education, you have chosen to make an intellectual stretch - a big one. The next four years will at times dazzle and amaze you; certainly at times, frustrate you and worry you; but throughout this remarkable journey you are about to start, will be academic and social experiences that will shape you into the woman or man you want to be. Based on what you learn in the next four years, we hope you will have confident answers to those three central questions. When you feel you aren't sure of your bearings, hopefully your GPS will help to get you back on course!

*Who am I?
What can I know?
And, based on what I know, how should I act?*