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Group 2 Summary of Transcript

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Freshmen Enrollment Focus Groups

Summary of Group 2

Conducted January 17, 2008

Ten students participated. All ten students in this group took 14 or fewer state support credits in fall quarter, and all scored higher than one standard deviation above the mean verbal SAT score for the freshmen class. One student took 12 credits in the fall, three took 13 credits, and six took 14 credits. Their interests were distributed among the colleges, as represented by Summerstart advising group assignment—Three in environmental studies, health, or math and science, three in humanities or Fairhaven, two in education, one in music or fine and performing arts, and one undecided. Five are female and five male. Four are students of color, seven transferred credits, one participated in an FIG and one in an FYE, three are honors students, eight attended Summerstart, and none are athletes.

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Introductions

First, let's go around the room and say a little about yourself—Why you chose Western, what major you were interested in when you first started at Western and whether that's different now, and your educational plans for the future (do you plan to stay at Western, and how many years until you graduate?)

The majority chose Western for the following reasons:

- A certain program
- The location (close to home)
- The size (not so big)
- The environment (bay view, trees, close to mountain)
- Nice campus; great town
- A variety of things to do here
- Friends or family attend (or have attended) Western

The majority came to Western with a major in mind. For some this has remained the same, while others have changed their minds. Current major interests include Creative Writing, Science Education, Engineering, Linguistics, Liberal arts (2), Business Management (2). One student is undecided as she has several interests. One student's major was not understandable on the tape. Projected graduations vary from two years (because of transfer credits) to four and a half years (due to the program, or if it's necessary).

I came to Western because it kind of ties in with the second question. My major is creative writing and I'm originally from California so, there aren't very many creative writing schools in California so I applied all over the country but Western just happened to have the best one that I could find and so I came here. It is still what I want to do, and I anticipate graduating in maybe three and three quarters years.

I chose Western for a variety of reasons. Some of it was that it was close to home, and there's some really important things to do at home, and another part was that the major that I wanted. It had a great education program and I'm interested in education as well as science. So I'd like to major in science and get my teaching certificate as well, possibly in secondary education. I plan on getting my bachelor's and probably my master's degrees.

I chose Western because I really like this area of the country and Western was about the right size of where I wanted, and there's a wide variety of things to do. I'm interested in engineering, so I plan to do something like that. I hope to graduate in four years but it may be a little bit longer than that.

I chose Western because it has a really nice campus and my parents are alumni so I visited a lot of times over the years. Also, I went to do the Running Start program in high school, thinking about college, so I had 80 credits that way and Western accepted all 80 of them. They all transferred and (not understandable) is my major. I'll probably graduate with a bachelor's in a couple years because of the extra credits.

I chose Western because, again it was the ideal size for a state school, I mean, compared to like the other big schools. You have a good teacher and student ratio here especially for undergrads so that was a really big incentive and I really love Bellingham. It's a really great town. I got into the honors program here so that's probably why I chose the school. I came in thinking I would major in biology, but now I'm thinking liberal arts. Probably 4 years for my bachelor's.

I chose Western because my dad's an alumni and I lived overseas so I didn't really have much of an idea or scope of the different colleges, so this was probably the smartest choice

for me. I think I originally wanted to do business, but I'm thinking more towards linguistics now, and it'll probably take me 4 to 4 and a half years to graduate.

I guess I chose Western for three reasons. I was looking mostly in state and I liked the size. It felt like a good community, and just the experience that I had when I came and visited. As far as a major, I came in undecided., I'm still pretty undecided, still looking around for GURs and seeing what interests me, and I have lots of interests. I like journalism and English a lot and I also am enjoying biology and all the science, so we'll see what actually comes out of it. I'm shooting for four years but we'll see.

I chose Western because I was always pressured to go to UW but I wanted to be a rebel so I decided to move 81 miles north. And I also chose it because of the Ethnic Student Center and there are a lot of the other universities in state that had something like it. When I came to Western, I was interested in English, and now I'm considering liberal studies and the concentration of religion and culture. That's all kind of interesting to me, and I'm shooting for four years, but whether it will be four years, I don't know.

I chose Western because it kind of got me away from the east side of the state and Gonzaga where all my family wanted me to go. So I just really liked it over here, liked it more than UW and the other options I had. As far as right now, I'm planning on majoring in business management, going into the automotive industry after that. And then, as far as graduation, I'm just shooting on four years and then probably getting my MBA after that.

When we came to Western I only really seriously considered two schools, UW and Western, so it was just easier that way, not too far from home. But I live really close to UW so I didn't – that would mean living at home for another four years and I just didn't want to do that any longer. And I'm planning to major in business management. For graduation, four, four and a half years if necessary.

Registration Experience

Think back to last summer and early fall when you were registering for Fall classes. Tell us about your registration experience and the reason why you chose to take the types of classes and number of credits that you did.

Students in this group took less than 15 credits Fall Quarter. They chose certain courses because they fulfilled GURS, or because they could be applied toward their major, or because they looked interesting. Students chose the number of credits they did for a variety of reasons. Four students say it was because they wanted to get established here and not be too overwhelmed.

Initially, I registered for 12 credits for my first quarter. I took Econ 101, Communications 101, and English 101, and I just kind of figured they were all just entry level classes, all GURs, stuff I could pretty much put towards any major if I decided to switch majors, even though I'm pretty decided on business. I didn't really want to get too heavy of a load, the first quarter around. I wanted to get up here, maybe get established a little bit, you know, being away from home and whatnot, so that's kind of why I didn't want to take 17, 18 credits first quarter. I didn't want to be too overwhelmed. Turned out pretty good...The Summerstart advisor sort of helped, but me and my roommate really wanted to get home, so we just kind of checked everything off, and drove back to Spokane.

I took 13 credits first quarter. I took English 101, originally Arabic 101, and History 104. I took English because it's a GUR and I needed to take it eventually so I figured I'd get it out of the way now. Arabic because I wanted a challenge and because after three years of Spanish it got pretty boring, and I figured I'd try something I didn't know a word in. I mean, I didn't know a single word of Arabic. And I took History 104 because I like the time period that it was covering. Civil War to present day. And I took 13 credits because I didn't want to overwhelm myself first quarter and end up being swamped with being in classes. I figured I'd take classes that I new I could pass and just get established, prepare myself for other quarters. And I changed from Arabic to Latin, after the first few days because I felt like I was falling behind already and I figured Latin would be easier but still difficult. And I actually passed the class. I went up to the first day of Summerstart and the advisor was there but he didn't really do anything. He just sat in the front of the class and if people raised their hands, he would come, but other than that, I did it pretty much myself.

I registered at Summerstart, and I came in with a list of classes that I liked, and basically I was choosing classes that I thought were interesting and also filled GURs because I wanted to work on that and fill requirements and see what I liked doing. So I took Intro to Greek Literature, Intro to International Relations, and Bio 101. And I signed up for those classes, but they weren't originally at the top of the list I came in with. I wanted to get into some journalism classes, and English and some other things, but those were already full right away. I think the journalism got taken by FIGs or something like that. Also it was only 13 credits and I wanted to keep a small load because I wasn't really sure how much work college would be so I wanted to be able to kind of ease into it and then be able to also have time to look around campus and look for stuff to do, so that way I can have some cushion to do that...There was an advisor in the room when were signing up, but I don't think we had a one on one conference type thing.

I did not register at Summerstart because I live out of state, so I registered when I got

here. I had an advisor. He was very helpful. He made a point of going around and checking everybody's schedule and saying "Is that what you want to do? Maybe you should do this," and that was nice. I enrolled in a FIG program, which I was really interested in because it had Shakespeare 214, and Music 105 which were both classes that I really wanted to take and were really a lot of fun, and that came with Seminar 101, which was fun but was not a choice of mine. It came with the FIG and I had to take Math 107 because my mom made me, and so my credit load was 14. I didn't want to take more than that because I have generalized anxiety disorder and I didn't want to tempt that, I didn't want to give myself any more stress than was necessary and it was a good load.

This student was advised to keep his credit load low ("like 15"), "because they are incoming freshmen in the Honors program." He originally registered for 15 credits, but dropped mountain biking because it conflicted with lab.

My fall quarter schedule was motivated by me wanting to fill in some GURs. I took Chemistry 121, and Math 114, Honors 102, which is a required class for people in the Honors program, and I took mountain biking. I took these classes mainly because I wanted to fill in GURs, and chemistry just to see if I wanted to do science. It was a 15 credit load. I ended up dropping my mountain biking class because it conflicted with my lab for chemistry... Oh yeah, my advisor told us to keep our credit load pretty low because we're incoming freshmen in the Honors program. Because a lot of, not me, but a lot of the other kids took really hard classes, like Honors chem and math. He told us to keep it low, like 15.

One student was advised during Summerstart to take 15-16 credits, but her four classes totaled 14 credits.

I registered at Summerstart. She didn't really talk one on one with the students, but she did advise us on the loads. 15 to 16 was her essential advice, I guess. And the classes I did register for were Journalism 190, Liberal Studies 231, PE 103, and Math 107. I took journalism because it's my interest as a major and it's a GUR. Liberal Studies is a GUR, Math is a GUR and I wanted to get that out of the way. PE, that was just for fun. And that was 14 credits total.

One student was advised against taking Accounting 240 in the first quarter, so he switched from Acct 240 to Hist 104. He ended up with 14.

I registered at Summerstart. I was gonna take classes towards my major requirement, because I wanted to work on that as immediately as possible. I was going to take Math 112, because math 157 is a requirement towards my major. I was going to take

Accounting 240 because it's also a requirement for my major, and a GUR. And I talked with my advisor and he advised me to drop Accounting 240 because it's apparently not a great class to take for first quarter freshmen. So I ended up dropping that and taking History 104 instead, and so it totaled out to 14 credits.

This student originally registered for 15 credits (three Honors courses and a fun class as recommended by the advisor); but badminton was canceled so the credit load dropped down to 14.

I registered at Summerstart, too, and our advisor talked in general, (inaudible) how many credits we should take, and I already knew what I wanted to take before I was there. I had gotten into Honors Chemistry 125, and Honors Calculus 124, and then I'm starting in the Honors Program, so I had to take Honors 104. My advisor gave me the advice that I should probably take a fun class with all the Honors classes, so I decided to take badminton, but it was canceled in the first week. So I originally signed up for 15 and it dropped down to 14. I took Chemistry because I liked the idea of 30 students vs. 60 to 100 in a Chem class, and I'm interested in science and the challenge, so I took that, and then calc because I wanted to understand calculus better. And I have to take the Honors sequence, so I took Honors 104 because it's part of the Honors program.

Two students ended up with 14 credits because classes were full.

I signed up for classes the day pretty much school started, because I was not here until that time. I was living in Texas at the time. So all the classes that I took were sort of the like scraping the bottom of the barrel because everything was full. So I ended up with 14 credits, Math 106, Chinese 101, Philosophy 102, and Mod Hop. So that was all that was really left to take.

Before I actually came to Summerstart, I was looking at the catalog online to figure out what I really wanted my schedule to be before I got here. So I signed up for – well, I'm in Fairhaven, so Fairhaven 101, 201 because they're required classes. And then Honors 103 and then Etec 110, and so I took classes from the Honors program, and Etec because I'm interested in engineering. I'd also planned to take Art 109 but at Summerstart the section was full. They closed the section already. There was still room in the class, but they closed certain sections during Summerstart so people at the very end could get in. And that totaled 13.

Academic Advising

How did the academic advising you received at Summerstart or from the Advising Center affect the number of credits you registered for? Were you encouraged to enroll in 15 or more credits? What were you told about this? What was your reaction to the advice?

(This topic was covered by most students in the Registration Experience section above.) Each of the following students received different advice from advisors—take above 12 or 13; take between 13 and 16; take 15 credits each quarter to graduate in 4 years; make sure it is a course load you can handle.

The only point I remember my advisor making was that she wanted people to take above 12 or 13. She wanted to have it above that, but she didn't have a ceiling really. I'm assuming if somebody tried to take 18 or 20, she would have stopped them. She just wanted to keep them taking too few, is how I remember it.

I was told take somewhere between 13 and 16. They didn't want me doing any more than that.

I was told that if you take 15 credits each quarter, you will graduate in 4 years exactly, so that was their sort of, thought on that.

I'm pretty sure the advisors didn't set a limit anywhere or say "Oh it wouldn't be good to take more than 17." I don't ever remember hearing specifics. But I was definitely told to make sure that it was a course load I could handle so I could get used to it.

Did other students or family members influence your decision about how many credits to enroll in or what classes you would take? Who? How? Why?

Two students were influenced by their mom's to take certain classes.

I took Chinese 101 because I wanted to take a language course, and then I'm taking Chinese 102 this quarter, because my mom wants me to have a full year of Chinese just because she thinks it'll be a really good to have the basic knowledge of Chinese.

My mom made me take math 107. She's just like "You need a math class, take that one," so I did. She said it would probably be a review. It's mostly statistics and I did very well in statistics in high school so she said "Maybe you'll learn something new." It was mostly review, but in hindsight, she thought it was a good idea.

Friends also gave advice: Take fun classes, and don't take morning classes.

Well I had a couple of friends who graduated earlier than me, they told me to take fun classes. There's one about film that they told me to take but that had nothing to do with my fall quarter schedule.

From my family and friends, what I heard is try not to take morning classes. So that kind of actually shaped a lot of my schedule. And I got to sleep, so that was nice.

Parents have left decision-making to these students.

Well my parents didn't care what I took as long as I got good grades. That's all.

The classes I picked were solely my decision. My family has a kind of hands off approach to my education, and kind of left it up to me to do what I want. So, no one influenced my decision.

My parents didn't help, it was completely my choice. But I did get some help from my aunt because she's a career counselor.

This student enjoyed his first quarter more than his friends who took 17-18 credit loads.

Pretty much all my buddies who I came with, they took 17, 18 credit loads, so I was just kind of sitting back, just kind of chuckling thinking about how much more of an enjoyable first quarter I was gonna have, and did have than them. So, I kind of one upped them in a different way.

Logistics of Registering

Since Western has courses with different numbers of credits attached to them, did this affect your ability to register for 15 or more credits? How did this work for you?

Two students were shooting for 15 credits, but because of the credits attached to the courses they signed up for, the credit load turned out to be lower. It would be easier if they could take three courses, 5 credits each.

I think it influenced me because I think I was mentally kind of shooting for 15. I wasn't seriously doing that, but, it was just kind of set in my head that I'd be at least taking 3 classes, and just kind of make it easy. That added up to 15 credits for me. Because one of them was 5 credits and I think it would have been 14 or 15 had I gotten the classes I initially was looking for. But when I dropped one class for another because I couldn't get

in the other, it ended up being a lower credit load.

Yeah, that's what I thought, too. I was thinking it should be easy, you know, 15 credits, in as few courses as possible to reach 15 credits, so 3 5-credit courses would be the easiest. It turned out to be 14.

One student was just looking for interesting classes, and another says it's nice to know how much work the class will be based on credit hours.

I didn't really care how many credits each were so long as they were interesting.

I mean, it's kind of nice to know, like, how much work each class is going to be, like how many hours.

As many of you will remember, the Summerstart registration process can be fast and furious, and many times students can't get the classes that they really wanted. Did this affect you in terms of how many credits you ended up registering for?

Four students said classes were filled when they tried to register, and they didn't get the classes they wanted.

I didn't get the schedule that I wanted, because the class was filled. Well, there was room in the class, but for that Summerstart session, it was closed. For that day or whatever. So, the people the next day could get in. I couldn't get into it later, because it already had too many people in it.

It affected mine because I didn't go to Summerstart, I came up and a lot of the classes that I was interested in filled. I mean there is a cap on Summerstart, but if you're in the latter half of the non-Summerstart registration, then you have a disadvantage, because a lot of it is full.

Some of the people said "You gotta sign up quick in your session" so I just kind of had everything set up that I had wanted to take. I just kind of went "Okay I gotta get these 3 classes" and I figured out how to get to it fast on the site. I did it as fast as I could and got into everything I wanted.

It affected me not so much directly. I think it was more that I might have chosen different courses if I had more time, but like you say, it is really fast and as soon as you sit down you look into "Okay well, these courses aren't at this time, what can I use to fill this?" For me, a lot of the other courses didn't fit in the little box I had for them, because I had

gotten, like, 2 that were on my list, and then it was pretty much just looking for one that that I thought was interesting. I didn't want to move my other classes. If I had time, I probably could have gone out and reshaped everything, so it would fit my schedule better, but instead, it was just going to find more classes.

Two students mentioned that it is very difficult for out-of-state students to register (they were not able to attend Summerstart).

I think living out of state it was really, really hard to register for things. I was very shocked when I got to school. Like, I had no clue what was going on, I didn't know where anything was, I didn't know really what to do, so like, all I remember is just like, trying to get it done. It was really hard to do.

I agree with that. For an out of state student, it's really hard.

Academic Interest Area

Do you think that the academic area that you're interested in pursuing affected your decision to take the number of credits that you did? How? In what way?

These students talked about requirements for the major, which affected their decision to take the number of credits they chose to take.

The major I was interested in requires a lot of different courses to take and since it's a pretty high amount of credits you have to take just to get all the requirements done, so I'd say it effected the amount of credits I decided to take because it occurred to me that I'd have to take more credits in a shorter amount of time just to get everything done. They recommend you get all the like, foundation courses done by the end of your sophomore year.

The classes I took were either GURs or required for my major. Like, the classes I took were required for the Honor's program.

Etec was a prerequisite for engineering.

A lot of my decision was also because it would help have more free time, and since a lot of writing is practice, I would have time to actually write rather than try to scribble during lunch. I wanted to have time to do it every night.

For those of you who are undecided or unsure, do you think this uncertainty affected the number of credits you enrolled in? How?

One student did not feel pressured to take a lot of credits because he is exploring.

Well, maybe kind of the opposite of that statement. I guess I wasn't pressured to take a lot just because I don't feel like I was rushed into anything. So maybe that, and a lot of the times, I wasn't looking at prerequisites for a major necessarily. I was looking for prerequisites for other classes I was interested in because I still had a fair amount of things I need to get through, and I wanted to explore some areas because I wanted to look around. So I'm using this quarter to get a lot of the prerequisites out of the way, so I can explore more next quarter.

Co-Curricular and Extracurricular activities

When you were registering for classes, how many of you were interested in participating in extracurricular activities your first quarter? (Show of hands)

Clubs — 7

Intramurals — 4

Recreational activities outside of school — 1

Did these types of interests affect your decision about how many credits to take your first quarter?

The majority of students say these types of interests did not affect their scheduling because they didn't sign up for clubs, etc until after registration. However one student was interested in a lot of clubs so she purposely signed up for a 13 credit load.

Not for me because I didn't know about any of the clubs until after I'd already come to school when they had the info fair down in Red Square— and that was after I had my classes picked out already.

Well for me, I was looking at a whole lot of clubs actually when I came, so I was looking to take lower course loads so I would have time to look around campus. So it wasn't specifically for that, but that was definitely one of the factors that made me okay with the 13 credit load, so I'd have some time to do that.

Financial Concerns and Work Schedules

Did financial concerns enter into your thinking in any way when you were thinking about how many credits were enough or best for you your first quarter? In what ways?

One student is concerned about finances because she has to pay for most of her own tuition.

Financial concerns did enter into it because I do have work study. I also have a little bit of financial aid, not covered though. I have to pay for most of my own tuition because my father has been unemployed for quite some time. So I think really, back to how I thought about credits, it was in the back of my mind about when I was going to work and how long, that sort of thing.

Students with financial aid and scholarships must register for a minimum of 12 credits, and they must maintain a 2.5 gpa in order to keep their scholarships. Five in this group have scholarships.

I have my entire expenses paid for through financial aid and scholarships, so the work that I am doing is strictly for pocket money. I have to register for a minimum of 12 credits.

I guess being able to keep up my GPA to keep my scholarship.

It's just basically that you can't fool around. But it didn't matter much with registration.

I thought it was good to know when I was registering.

As long as I stay above a 2.5, it's okay.

Did work levels or scheduling affect your first quarter credit load? How?

Five students worked part-time Fall quarter. Work schedules did affect fall quarter credit loads for two students.

I wasn't in any clubs, but I have a part time job I was hired for in Fairhaven commons, and I believe I knew I was hired before I actually registered for classes, because they got that going really early, so that effected my credit load in that I didn't want to take too many credits with a job and I didn't want to take classes late in the afternoon because of evening shifts, so that played a role in my schedule a little bit, but not too much.

I knew I wanted to take a lower credit load, because I wanted a part time job for like, spending money, and I wanted to go do clubs as well. It was kind of a minor impact on my credit load.

Academic and Social Confidence Levels

To what extent would you say that you took the credit load that you did because you weren't extremely confident about your ability to do well your first quarter?

None of the students in this group felt "extremely confident" coming into Western. Six felt "somewhat confident". They took a lighter credit load because they didn't know what college would be like and they wanted to ease into it.

I can kind of relate to that. At my high school, my classes seemed to be easy and A's came really easy, but I wasn't sure if it was just because I was good in my classes or if the classes were trivial. So, everybody knows college is a lot more difficult than high school, so, I figured I better make sure I take it easy, just in case I'm not ready, I can get what I need without being swamped, and losing all hope.

I did really well in high school, and I wasn't really sure how well I'd do here, so I wanted to take a lower course load to ease into it.

Yeah I didn't have any idea what was going to happen.

I was just terrified pretty much, so I didn't have any thought as to whether I would do well

This student didn't want to take a lighter load because she wanted to push herself.

Mine was kind of the opposite. I didn't want to take less because like, I know myself and if I am not challenged or it's too easy for me I will get bored with it and sometimes that makes me lazy or whatever, so I kind of wanted something to push me, so hopefully I would do better than with a smaller load.

To what extent would you say that you took fewer credits because you wanted to make sure that you first got comfortable with the social climate here at Western?

Some students admitted they wanted to get comfortable with the social climate first.

I definitely wanted less of a load so I could create time to hang out and meet people and do stuff after class, and I did.

I think I sort of did but more like, I think for me at least, I was thinking more along club lines, so it was kind of in the same boat there.

That was my initial intent, but (inaudible – talked about not having a life because even with few credits, Honor’s program took up too much of her time). Most of my time was spent studying. That’s just the way it was.

Looking back, it was probably a good idea, but, it was good to have social time, but that wasn’t my intention.

Transfer credits

Some of you brought in credits from either AP courses or community college coursework. Did having these credits affect your decision to take fewer than 15 credits? How?

Six students came to Western with AP credits, and two came in with Running Start credits. Most did not feel concerned about meeting certain credit loads, because they had so many credits coming in.

I had about a full quarter’s worth of credits coming in, so I was not really concerned about, you know, meeting the average credit mark that the rest of the students had imposed on them. So that was that, and I also had all my humanities done. I just took that one or two classes and now I’m focusing on other things.

I came in with 46 credits, and I wanted to take another class but it wasn’t much of an issue, because I had so many credits coming in.

I had 80 credits through Running Start, and they all transferred here, and so that did influence my decision because I didn’t feel like I was rushed so much to get GURs done, to get prerequisites done because I had 80 credits. I’m technically a junior right now, credit-wise. Which makes registering for next quarter very, very easy. But I felt like I could take more time, because of that.

I had most of my humanities done and my social sciences, I just needed math and science. That’s why I signed up for math and science, as far as registration goes.

Academic and Social Adjustment

Now we would like to find out how you think your credit load affected the experience you had at Western during your first quarter. Do you think that taking fewer than 15 credits affected your ability to do well in your classes this past quarter? Explain

The majority say they did well Fall quarter (only three people say they did not.) Why do students feel they did well, based on their credit load?

I had a whole lot of free time, and I had Thursdays off. And since I had so much time, I was able to go out and hang out with friends and try different clubs, and I just, with a low credit load I could look around. And if I did get swamped sometimes, if I wasn't used to how the work would work out with the college load, I'd have time to work it out. So I was definitely glad I didn't take as many. I had a great time my first quarter.

I second that.

Third. It helps having a lot more free time to study and get things done. Not constantly pressured to fulfill this task and that task, focus on one or the other.

I think definitely taking not as many credits is a good thing like to get used to like, how much work college courses are. Just to get adjusted to it.

These students are happy they took fewer than 15 credits fall quarter, because they had a much better time than their roommates, academically and socially.

My roommate took probably 18 credits, or 19, I'm not sure something large, and in fact, she was making fun of me for taking only 14. But I wasn't the one who was always up the night before the tests stressed out and freaking out and I actually got to go out with friends where she had to stay in the room a lot. So I got out. I feel like I got a little benefit that she didn't, and she always complains about it. Well then take 14 credits!

Yeah, that's exactly my situation, too. My roommate this quarter's like "It feels like I have no life outside of Alpha. I don't know anybody else." I'm like "That's because you take 18 credits your fall quarter of freshmen year. You didn't have time to go out and get to know anybody because you're always studying and not having time to do what you want." So, I pity him.

Advice for Incoming Freshmen

What advice would you give to new students coming in next fall with respect to how many credits they should try to register for? Why? What would you tell them about strategies they should use to make sure that they have a good course schedule?

In sum, students in this group would advise incoming freshmen as follows:

- Don't be pressured to take 15 or more credits. Do what you're comfortable with. Take a lower credit load first quarter—to adjust to college, have fun, build a social life, and have time to study
- Take classes you're really interested in and shuffle your schedule if needed
- Set up your schedule so you don't have early morning classes
- Take advantage of Summerstart in order to get the classes you want

Don't be pressured to take those 15 credits. As long as you get above 12 you're okay. Have fun your first quarter and then winter quarter, buckle down, get some real work done.

I had the same idea. I really enjoyed taking less credits, so probably I would suggest taking an easier first quarter, find classes you're interested in, and also shoot for afternoon classes because it's really nice and it was a good experience.

Take classes that you're really interested in, and don't be afraid to add and drop because if you have a class that you're just miserable in, but you don't want to drop it for whatever reason, or try and shuffle your schedule, you just end up being miserable for the entire time. Even if you have a larger credit load, as long as you like those classes, you'll probably be more relieved and do better.

Take a lower credit load, because it'll give you ample time to build a social life and to study as well. Get adjusted to college and finals and everything.

I would say new students really need to take advantage of Summerstart if they can. It's the only thing freshmen students have going for them in terms of getting the classes they want. It's unfortunate that out of state students don't have access to that, and I think something should be done about that. But, new students, if they can, should go for Summerstart. That way they can get classes they want and if they want to relax a little more their first quarter and take less credits, do that because they can get more interesting classes that they would not have access to if they didn't sign up at Summerstart.

I would say, beyond all that, I found this quarter that I do a lot better when I had a day or two a week that I didn't have a morning class, where I could just kind of recharge, get some

extra work done, stuff like that. Just set up your schedule in a way that you have a morning or two where you don't have to get up at 8 or 9 or 7 or 10 or whatever.

I think it's nice to have time to meet people and study, so I don't know if more or less credits... it would depend on who the person was. Probably less credits, I would think, would give you more time. It just like, depends on who you are.

I would say definitely along those same lines. Take low credits your first quarter, have time to socialize and make friends, and that's when everybody's meeting each other, your freshman year and the first week, first two weeks, like that's the time to do that and make friendships. And if you want to do that, don't take Honors unless you're brilliant. I work hard, I would not say I'm brilliant.

Yeah definitely take it slow, there's not reason to be getting ulcers your first quarter of college. And don't be pressured into taking more credits by people who are taking more because by the end of the quarter, you're the one with the last laugh.

Probably just kind of do what you feel like you're going to be comfortable with, pretty much. Like if you're kind of foreseeing that you really want to spend a lot of time, you know, hanging out with other people, having a good time, don't overburden yourself with that right of the bat, because then, I don't know, it kind of would just be too much. I don't know, I had a very enjoyable first quarter and I feel like I kind of was able to make it that way by not really having to worry about class and like, I feel like if anything, I had a little bit too much time on my hands. But, I did have a very good time my first quarter. I met a lot of cool people.

My counselor told me before I left "No classes before 9 or after 5" so, most times I think go on after 5, at least the ones I go to do, and being able to wake up pretty late really helps when it comes to going to class and being able to actually focus, because you're pretty much useless if you go to class and you're half asleep and you can't take notes. Sleep late, go to class, take good notes, succeed.