

New to UBC: Learn from Peers

Chapman Learning Commons



On screen: **Briefly introduce yourself!**

Manel: Hi, I'm Manel. I'm a science student majoring in biochemistry, and I am a domestic student.

Suha: Hi, I'm Suha, and I'm currently a fourth year at UBC. I'm an international student, and I'm studying political science with a minor in economics.

Raghav: My name is Raghav. I'm an international student, and I study history with a minor in political science at UBC.

Xelena: Hi, I'm Xelena. I'm going into my third year in the Bachelor of Media Studies, but it's actually my fourth year standing at UBC.

On screen: **How did you choose your major?**

Manel: Ooh, okay. So, I actually did not ever like the idea of studying political science or like ever getting into it. But, when I came to UBC, I took an introductory poli sci course and I really enjoyed it, and the prof was really nice as well. So, I think that's where it sparked my interest to do poli sci in the future.

Raghav: I realized what I really wanted to study was people and society and why societies function the way they do, and the best avenue for that for me was history. I supplemented it with an understanding of political science because that's how I understand the structure behind society as well.

Xelena: It was majorly trial and error. I started off in Sauder studying commerce and then I was in the middle of my accounting class and I realized this was not right for me. So I kind of took a step back and reflected, like what do I actually enjoy doing? And it was making art, like graphic design, film, like just creating stuff. Going through the list of programs that UBC offered. I think media studies just stood out to me because it was like a combination of everything that I enjoyed. So, just kind of reflecting on what it is that I like doing and then trying to find something that fit that.

On screen: **How did you set yourself up for academic learning at UBC?**

Manel: Studying independently. I feel like when I'm by myself I can take the time to solve stuff at my own pace and it's only until I'm very stuck where I go to office hours so that's kind of how I study to be excelling.

Suha: Well, this was initially really tough for me because I came from a very different

educational system and I was not in IB either, so it was interesting to adjust to the system here. But I feel like once I did, it got much better. Initially, what I did in first year was I went to office hours and I would just chat with the prof and like kind of understand what they're looking for in assignments and exams. Just going through the syllabus really well, and also just making friends or just like a buddy in class to keep up with work is really helpful as well.

Xelena: I also, like, reached out on different forums, r/ubc is a good one. If there was something that I felt too shy asking the advisor, I'd see if that question has been asked before. I also reached out to my peers to see if they're going through the same experience as me, like study dates, asking questions about the syllabus or any of the course guidelines, has been a really good way to make sure that I'm on the right track academically.

On screen: **How did you make friends at UBC?**

Manel: I made friends mostly through labs honestly. Through labs, you kind of have to talk to your lab partner and discuss in order to do the experiment, and through there there's kind of small talk which leads to actual friendships.

Suha: When I initially came here I didn't know anyone and I also came by myself. When I got here. I think I met one of my good friends and she's the one that actually introduced me to all of my, most of my other friends who I'm still close with. I also attended jumpstart so it was nice to get to know people before university actually started. If I was to give any advice I would definitely tell anyone to sort of get in touch with people that you might go to university with beforehand so you know people when you get here.

Raghav: During the summer, I sent off an Instagram message to this random person I know saying something that they were wearing was cool, and they ended up introducing me to like 12 people, five or six of whom I'm actually still really good friends with today. And the rest all came from things like classes, events and clubs, just talking to people, putting yourself out there. That's the only way you can really make friends.

On screen: **What piece of advice would you give to upcoming first years?**

Suha: So I feel like university is just a place where you really get to know yourself, your interests, and the way you connect with people a lot better. So I really recommend joining clubs. That's one of my biggest advice. I highly recommend joining those and gaining or going on top with positions. I think that really opened up a lot of new interests in me as well, and I grew significantly. If there's any events happening near you—networking or any volunteering—that you're interested in you should definitely go for it. University is just a place where it's trial and error so it's better you try and, if you do fail, you fail now than later.

Raghav: For upcoming first years, I'd probably recommend to take your time, settle in. Don't rush things. It's going to take you a little bit of time to get used to campus, get used to the swing of things, especially if you're an international kid. Don't stress yourself out with wanting to fit in. University is the perfect time to explore and just be yourself and find who you are. Focus on your academics. Don't slack off. It's tempting, but don't do it.

Xelena: For upcoming first years, I would say just be open to new experiences. Say yes, even

though it's scary and it's a bit daunting. Just be open to learning new things. There will be many times in university where you'll be like, oh, I don't know how to do this or I'm too nervous or something like that—and that's so valid and that's so real. But everyone around here wants you to learn and wants to help you. And just being open to just doing those things and jumping right into it. I think the best experiences I've had has been just by saying yes.

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