TRANSITION INTO THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Concordia College is committed to the holistic development of our students by engaging students in curricular and cocurricular pursuits. The first year of college is foundational to each student's academic and personal success and to your persistence in pursuing the goal of obtaining an undergraduate education.

Registering for Fall Courses

In early spring, first-year students will complete a Student Registration Inventory that asks students about their major areas of academic and cocurricular interests, and also gives options to select course titles they may be interested in taking. Once this survey is completed, the Registrar's Office staff will begin registering all incoming students for their fall courses based on their responses from this registration inventory. Students will be notified of their fall schedule in early summer. They will be given an opportunity to call or email to discuss any questions or concerns prior to coming to Fall Orientation, or they can visit with their assigned advisor when they arrive at Concordia in the fall.

Fall Orientation

Prior to the opening of the academic year each fall, three days are dedicated to Fall Orientation activities for new students. These activities are planned with the needs of incoming students in mind and focus on preparing students to make a positive academic and social transition to Concordia. During Fall Orientation students meet with their Engaged Citizenship Seminar professor and their academic advisor who will provide helpful advice for academic success, make meaningful connections with faculty and students. Students will also learn about Concordia's academic, cocurricular opportunities and campus resources.

Orientation is planned and coordinated by a student Orientation Committee that works closely with upperclass students called Orientation Leaders (OLs). The OLs work with small groups of incoming students called "orientation clubs" during Orientation. Orientation clubs and Engaged Citizenship Seminar courses are made up of the same group of students. This facilitates the development of a learning community within the course. For more information, visit www.ConcordiaCollege.edu/orientation (http://www.ConcordiaCollege.edu/orientation/).

First-Year Transition (FYT) Program

The First-Year Transition (FYT) Program is a combination of multiple experiences: Orientation, Engaged Citizenship Seminars, FYT Labs, academic advising, and First-Year Residential Curriculum. Together these experiences have been designed to help students build the confidence, competence and connections they need to thrive during their transition to college.

FYT Labs – an extended Orientation program facilitated by a FYT Mentor. FYT Mentors are upperclass students who also lead the Orientation Club. During the FYT Labs, new students will dig deeper into important topics like overcoming failure, managing your time and meeting new people in a new place. New students will also receive information about campus resources.

FYT Mentors – in addition to facilitating FYT Labs, FYT Mentors support students throughout their first year by providing targeted outreach, programming, and support.

First-Year Residential Curriculum – incoming students live together in first-year communities of approximately 30 residents to assist in creating connections with peers. Students also meet and get to know their resident assistant (RA) who provides support, advice and programming. Students will learn about topics like academic success, campus resources, intentional engagement, communication and cultural competence.

Mid-Year Orientation

A one-day Orientation is provided for students entering Concordia in January. The focus of the day is to provide new and transferring students the essential tools they need to successfully start the semester. Students receive their student IDs, dining plans, information about technology at Concordia, a campus tour, and learn about campus resources. Creating social connections with other new students is an important goal of Mid-Year Orientation.

Involvement

There are many involvement opportunities for Concordia's first-year students. Becoming involved in cocurricular activities facilitates students' personal and intellectual development, interaction with other students, and creation of community and leadership development. There are more than 100 campus organizations reflecting interests in many different areas including academics, athletics, programming, special interest, service and media/literature. With all of these different opportunities, students are able to participate in an organization that contributes to and complements their educational goals and objectives. As students begin to explore their opportunities, they are encouraged to attend the Cobber Expo – an event held each September when campus organizations are showcased and students can ask questions that will enable them to make informed involvement choices. A winter Cobber Expo is held in January for transfer students to get connected to involvement opportunities on campus.

Academic Advising

A central component of a Concordia education is the partnership between you, the student, and your faculty advisor. In this partnership, your advisor will:

- Help you understand and articulate the nature of a liberal arts education as a commitment to lifelong learning, aid you in determining career goals based on your aptitudes and interests, and help you outline a course of study that will enable you to achieve those goals and find your vocation
- Provide you with the necessary information and guide you to the appropriate institutional resources as academic and developmental issues arise
- Assist you in obtaining the maximum benefit from your total educational experiences by identifying emerging interests and relating those interests to opportunities in and outside the classroom
- Assist you in understanding the policies and regulations that give structure to your educational experience.

Advisement is a process that will encourage you to begin refining your educational, career and life goals. The faculty-student partnership is a continuous process of clarification and evaluation that will help you

tailor the many educational opportunities at Concordia to your personal interests, abilities and needs.

Each first-year student is assigned a faculty advisor. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisors outside of scheduled advising times to fully benefit from this partnership. Students and advisors work together to achieve a successful transition to the academic community and the vocation of being a student. A first-year registration guide can be found at www.ConcordiaCollege.edu/firstyearreg (http://www.ConcordiaCollege.edu/firstyearreg/).

By the second year, most students have adjusted to college life and its opportunities and challenges. The sophomore year is a good time for students to review what has been accomplished so far, to establish additional or revised goals, and to reflect on the meaning of a liberal arts education. Students need to go beyond textbooks and lectures to learn. They must take time to think about what they are learning, how it might apply to their lives and to the world as a whole, whether or not they agree with what they are reading and hearing, and how they can make connections across disciplines. Advisors encourage students to reflect on themselves and on their place in the larger community in terms of vocation as more than a career.

Many students have declared a major(s) by their third year and are well into the necessary coursework to complete their degrees. Not all students feel confident or certain about their future, however. Advisors play an important role by providing intentional discussion opportunities to help students clarify their sense of vocation and to explore a wide range of postgraduation possibilities. Advisors also help clarify the full potential of a liberal arts education so that students recognize the flexibility, value, and far-reaching possibilities of their Concordia education.

Fourth-year students begin the transition to graduate school, career, or some other calling. Advisors guide advisees to an understanding of how their experience as liberal arts graduates prepares them for responsible participation in the world. Advisors help students reflect on their education and growth in self-understanding, and then how to articulate these ideas to others as thoughtful and informed people, who are well-prepared to influence the affairs of the world.

While your advisor is there to assist you, you are responsible for knowing the regulations and policies as listed in the catalog, and for meeting the requirements for your chosen degree.