Take the Institute one term at a time

Column/ Joseph L. Shipman

At this time of year it is traditional for columnists to give incoming freshmen advice. With the wisdom of accumulated wisdom. Much of the wisdom I was presented with when I was a freshman was good, much was wrong, and some was simply a waste of everyone’s time. This column consists of the advice I wish I’d received six years ago, but canted; not all of this may apply to you. It takes a long time to figure out how place works and how to use it. Therefore the good rule is: Don’t plan out your entire four-year course slate at once. During your first two years, avoid the rush to declare a major. It is useful to have some idea of what you’ll major in. Seriously, don’t spend too much time worrying about what classes to take, and only worry about one term at a time.

Lots of people will tell you to overload yourself. I say, on the other hand, take as many classes as you want, but don’t worry about grades. It’s possible to get straight A’s here, or nearly so, but only at the cost of making your life horrible. I was willing to accept B’s and C’s and you will avoid ulcers, nervous breakdowns, and other nasty stuff, and your parents will be pleased with your grades. The key is to get along with too. Of course, this does not apply to pre-meals, which is a shame, because it’s even harder to relax and enjoy the meal. During your first two years, try to avoid the rush to declare a major. It is useful to have some idea of what you’ll major in. Seriously, don’t spend too much time worrying about what classes to take, and only worry about one term at a time.

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