



The Daily Deac

1 message

Parents & Families <noreply+feedproxy@google.com>
Reply-To: Parents & Families <parents@wfu.edu>
To:

Mon, May 4, 2020 at 4:29 PM

The Daily Deac



Some academic advice for our P'24s

Posted: 04 May 2020 05:22 AM PDT

Straight out of the gate this week, a couple of news items: 1) most of our resident students received a [message](#) today about scheduling appointments for move-out (or to indicate pack-and-store); and 2) I need to ask our P'20s for some help: we are looking for seniors to submit their memories at our [Memory Lane](#) page:

As you prepare to write your next chapter, we invite you to share your greatest memories from your time in the Forest. We are collecting reflections from the Class of 2020 for all to enjoy.

Please upload a video sharing your reflections, or upload photo of yourself and write out your reflections below.

[Need some inspiration? Check out what's been posted so far!](#)

It's May 4th, which means our [New Students website](#) is now live, and new students and families alike will be able to see all the various bits of info we have for our new Class of 2024. Straight up from the beginning, I want to offer some advice for our new Deacs and their families about academic course selection, coming from the perspective of an academic adviser (my own experience, and the crowdsourced wisdom of some other advisers I know). Am offering this topic early in the matriculation process because many of our '24 students will begin thinking about course selection now, even though they won't register until July.

Would note upfront that this is *our* conventional wisdom, not official Wake policies. Advising takes a village, and incoming students can/should research our [requirements](#), get [advice](#) from our excellent Office of Academic Advising, and/or seek the perspectives of faculty and students on [majors](#), etc.

Observation over many years of advising suggests that Wake tends to have three large-ish clumps of interests around majors with incoming students: pre-business, pre-health, pre-law. Often that is because 'doctor,' 'lawyer,' and 'businessperson' are the three careers students have had the most exposure to or can bring to mind easily. Students often have not been exposed to the vast number of job opportunities that are possible with a degree from Wake Forest, so they tend to migrate toward the familiar.

But one of the best things about a liberal arts education is that you DON'T have to migrate to the familiar right off the bat – students have three full semesters of classes to take before they have to choose a major. So not being single-minded in their drive for a major can often give students an advantage as they are open

to classes in areas they might not have considered – and may just fall in love with.

Having said that, pre-health (i.e., pre-med, pre-vet, pre-dentistry, etc.) and pre-business do have some prerequisites that students can/must take in their first year. And we have a lot of students who want to ‘keep their options open’ and attempt the prerequisites even if they are not fully committed to a major (those prereqs still help because they fulfill [divisional requirements](#)). The ‘keep their options open’ strategy can work very well for some students, less so for others. To help your ’24 Deac think through the decision points, here are some thoughts.

For potential business students:

The students who fare best (in our experience) in taking the business prerequisites tend to be those for whom: 1) math was among their strongest high school subjects, 2) they took calculus in high school, understood it, and got a good grade, 3) if they took econ in high school, understood it, and got a good grade, and 4) math and econ were classes they were really excited about.

The warning lights that flash in our heads when students are trying to keep the business school option open are those who: 1) don’t enjoy math, 2) struggled in math, 3) never took calc in high school, or took it and did not understand it or get a good grade, 4) took an econ class but did not understand it or do well, and/or 5) are not interested in a business major but they feel pressure (real or imagined) from their family to apply to the business school.

[Aside: there are alternative pathways to a business job that don’t require a business major via the [MS in Mgmt, Summer Management Program](#); those are really well suited for more traditional liberal arts students and could be excellent options for students to land in business jobs without being a business major. In addition, some employers are specifically looking for *non*-business majors to fill jobs in areas where the humanities or social science perspectives are valued and needed. There is also an Entrepreneurship minor that is very popular.]

For potential pre-health students:

Those who fare best with pre-health prerequisites (in our experience) tend to be those for whom: 1) chemistry was one of their strongest high school subjects, 2) they took bio and/or physics in high school, understood them, and got good grades, and 3) the sciences (and math) were the classes that interested them the most.

Warning lights start to flash for those students trying to keep the pre-health option open are those who: 1) don’t enjoy chemistry +/-or struggled in it, 2) liked bio or physics in high school but did not like chem, 3) are not interested in being a doctor/dentist/vet, etc. but they feel pressure (real or imagined) from their family to go that route.

This is not to say that your Deac can’t attempt the business school or pre-health prerequisites if any of those warning lights above apply to them. *Of course they can.* A highly-motivated student with good time management skills and the savvy to avail themselves of free [Learning Assistance Center](#) tutoring, faculty office hours, etc. can absolutely succeed. All we’re suggesting is for students to think realistically about their strengths and abilities before going down any particular path. Loved ones can be strong influencers with students, so it may help for you to reflect on your student’s abilities and interests before encouraging them to try any particular academic path.

No one wants to have their student struggling to push a rock up a hill in a course that they are not well suited for (or dislike). First-year students already have so many other adjustments: living in a new city, having a roommate, finding friends, etc. If your Deac is pursuing a course of study that is really tough for them (or that they don’t enjoy) can drag down their GPA and their confidence. There can be potential

downstream effects (is there a GPA requirement for any scholarships they have? would their GPA impact their ability to go Greek if they want to? or do they have to spend so much more time studying that their life becomes imbalanced and they miss out on valuable extracurriculars?) Are you ready for the frantic phone calls/texts you might get about how they are stressed out because of a prereq class?

Every summer I have conversations with incoming students and parents/family members about how they/their student wants to try these prereqs. My first question is usually “what subject did your student like best in high school?” If the answer is math or chem and they are thinking of business or pre-health, respectively, that is a good sign. If the answer is English or history or art or [name any other subject], then I ask what their student’s *least* favorite class was. If they say math or chem, that is a potential red flag to me. If they say ‘well, they did not like math/chem, but they had a really terrible teacher’ or something similar – that still feels like a red flag to me (even with bad teaching, if that is your area of greatest academic strength, you can potentially overcome a not great high school teacher).

Over my many years at Wake, I have seen students gloss over the red flags and persist with prereqs that might be ill-advised and later regret it. And I have seen some incredibly disciplined students that make an informed decision about how hard a potential major would be and go for it anyway, armed with strategies to help them (tutoring, etc.)

Your Deacs will have the autonomy to choose their own path, but if my adviser friends and I were to give one piece of advice to P’24s when asked about majors, it would be this: *give your Deac the gift of freedom to choose a major they like and where they have a strong aptitude*. You and your students already know if your student is great at math or chem, and whether they really like it. Listen to that inner truth.

— by **Betsy Chapman, Ph.D. (’92, MA ’94)** – with a mighty assist from some great advisers

The post [Some academic advice for our P’24s](#) appeared first on [Parents & Families](#).

You are subscribed to email updates from [Parents & Families](#).

Email delivery powered by Google

To stop receiving these emails, you may [unsubscribe now](#).

Google, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, United States