bridges to university

issue no.2

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Bridges

Course Selection!? I'm Not Afraid of You!

AUTHOR(S): Stephanie Huynh, Hussain Jan

Hello and welcome to the second issue of the official *bridges* newsletter!

In the previous issue, we have given you a glimpse into what course selection can be like. However in this issue, we will be showing you how to actually select your courses at different universities!

To begin, we would first go over the proper terminology and concept of the different types of courses in universities. Every course you will take in university will be unique in its own way, but some will be more relevant or essential to you then others. Understanding the reasoning and logic behind this is crucial to starting university. After having gone over these prospects, we will delve into how each university actually performs its course selection. We have organized a list of "how to" methods for each post-secondary school by individuals who have first hand experience. If you already know which university you're going to, feel free to jump to your respective university to get a better idea on how to handle selecting your courses!

The *bridges* team would like to give a warm thank you to the following guests who made this issue possible:
- Hassan Jan, a second-year Health Science major at McMaster University.
- Vicky Tran, a second-year Graphic Design major at OCAD University.
- Amina Saher, a second-year Applied Human Nutrition major at the University of Guelph.
- Ariana Ramkishur, a second-year Social Work major at the University of Guelph-Humber.

If you still have any questions about course enrolment after reading this issue of *bridges*, please don't hesitate to send us an email at bridgestouniversity@gmail.com!

These Courses - I Need Them!

AUTHOR(S): Stephanie Huynh

As you know, required courses are the set of courses that are necessary for you to take in your specified program. Though the number of required courses will vary from program to program, it is important to note *what* these courses are prior to course enrolment. Why, you may ask? It's because *you* are the one who is in charge of enrolling yourself into these courses. For most universities, you are expected to enrol yourself without aid starting first year. However there are some exceptions--Ryerson University, for example, does not require you to enrol into your required courses in first year (but it is required for all subsequent years).

In university, it should be known that the available spaces for required courses often fill up quickly. This is because these courses are open to all students at the university and are not limited to those in your program. Thus it is important to note what your required courses are and prepare for course enrolment early. You can learn how to prepare for course enrolment at your specified school by navigating through the newsletter and selecting the university you are attending!

(Not So) Bird Courses

AUTHOR(S): Stephanie Huynh

   "Bird courses" are elective courses that are known to be easy and provide you with an "easy 90%". As tempted as you may be, you shouldn't immediately hop onto your university's *subreddit* and hunt for these courses. There are many things you should actually consider prior to selecting your "bird courses". Two things to note are your personal interests and professors.

   As much as you may hate to hear it time and time again, you should always aim for a class that you actually have an interest in. You may wonder, "Why is this piece of advice repeated time and time again?" The answer to that is simple. It's because many students refuse to listen to this piece of advice. There's nothing wrong with this train of thought, but consider this: are you more likely to do well in a course that you are interested in or do well in a course that you dislike? It's probably the former, right? Your interest is what will motivate you to keep learning and stay up-to-date with both lectures and assignments. A lack of interest won't motivate you to learn. If anything, you're more likely to skip these classes!

   Of course, if you're intent on simply taking the first bird course you come across, no one can stop you! And that's where the second point comes in: professors. At times, professors are more important than the course itself! Each professor has a different teaching style, and they're often what determine what is a "bird course" and what isn't. A good resource to learn about any potential teachers is [RateMyProfessors](), which provides you with student reviews for various professors at your university.

Course Selection ─By University!

MCMASTER UNIVERSITY

AUTHOR(S): Hassan Jan (guest)

Located in Hamilton, McMaster University (Mac U) is a small knit community of some of the greatest minds out there. Although it may not be big, Mac U is the most research-intensive university in all of Canada. From having its own art gallery and a hiking trail, Mac U has surprises waiting for you to discover. In addition, Mac U also has a statue of an old man on a bench. If you like, you can put a toque on him in the wintertime!

General Steps to Enrolling:
1. **Find the right courses for you.** Depending on your program, you will have a variety of courses that you are required to take. Familiarize yourself with these courses and their course code so you know what to look out for when you go to make your timetable. Each department's website has a list of the mandatory courses, so you won't have to look far. Now comes the fun part: planning your electives. The number of electives you have will differ depending on what program you are in. It is smart to look over all the courses offered at Mac U on this [website](#) and see if anything catches your eye.
2. **Familiarize yourself with *Mosaic.*** As the enrollment date draws closer, it's smart to open Mosaic and familiarize yourself with the *Create Your Timetable* page. Experiment and see how the page works. Set up a mock timetable of what you would like your weekly schedule to look like. Each time you add a course, you can pick what section you want to enroll in. One section might have classes Monday and Thursday while the other section might have classes Tuesday and Friday. Pick the section that works best for you. In addition to this, different sections may have different teachers as well.
3. **Enrol.** Have your timetable ready. As soon as the time for your enrollment starts, click *Get This Schedule* and then *Enrol*. Around mid-August, you'll be able to transfer the timetable you made to your own Google Calendar. This will make life really easy. To do so, click *Copy Timetable to Google* on Mosaic and follow the instructions there.

Tips:
- If you're trying to minor in any department, you need a set number of credits from that department's programs completed prior to graduation. If you're planning on minoring, it's smart to pick electives that relate to the minor early so it doesn't affect your graduation date.
- Search your electives up on Reddit or any other type of online forum. You'll be surprised at how much you can learn. Not sure if "Problem Solving in Health" is the right elective for you? Someone on the internet probably took that same course and has a detailed review of it!

OCAD UNIVERSITY

AUTHOR(S): Vicky Tran (guest)

Located right next to the *Art Gallery of Ontario*, OCAD University (OCAD U) is the largest art, design, and media university in Canada. It was originally established by the Ontario Society of Artists to provide professional training to those who want to pursue art.

General Steps to Enrolling:
1. **Learn how to use the *OCAD U Self-Service*.** The OCAD U Self-Service is OCAD's portal and is what you'll be using to plan your courses. In general, the portal allows you to look over your finances, graduation overview, and tax information. To select your courses, you will be utilizing the *Student Planning* section. This section allows you to plan your schedule and check the progress you've made towards completing your degree.
2. **When choosing courses, make use of the program guide.** OCAD creates program guides for each program. It serves as a guideline for the courses you wish to enrol in. The program guides can be found [here](#).
3. **Plan your schedule.** Schedules are split up into sections for each professor. In the OCAD U Self-Service, you can select *View Other Sections* and you'll be able to see a preview of them in your calendar. After selecting your courses, all that's left to do is make sure that you don't have any conflicts in your schedule.
4. **Register your courses.** The date that you can begin registering your courses depends on which program you're in. The university will notify you of the date and time. This date is also available as an alert at the top of your calendar/planning page.

Tips:
- Plan your schedule early so that you're prepared to register as soon as it's available.
- Find first year support on various social media sites; *Discord* has groups for general students and first years that you can join.
- Double check your course codes--they can be confusing and difficult to keep track of.
- More in-depth information about course enrolment is available [here](#).

RYERSON UNIVERSITY
AUTHOR(S): Chiddhanya Alagesan, Leesa Panchal, Stephanie Huynh

Ryerson University (RU) is a research university located in the heart of Toronto. The first-year course enrollment period is from <u>August 11, 2020 at 6 am to September 18, 2020</u>. As a first-year you will get priority, meaning that you will be allowed to select their courses before any other year. To make things easier, first-years are automatically enrolled in their required courses.

General Steps to Enrolling:
1. **Do your research.** As a first-year, your electives should be chosen either from <u>Table A - Lower Level Liberal Studies</u> or, the <u>Open Elective Table</u>. Make sure that you look through the required table (via your Course Calendar) and select the courses you wish to take ahead of time. Also, ensure that you have back-up courses in case the class you want is full.
2. **Do a mock course selection.** You can select your courses through the *RAMSS* shopping cart or the *Visual Schedule Builder* (VSB). VSB is much easier to navigate, however it is prone to crashing with large traffic, so ensure you know how to use both. Add the courses that you need to take onto VSB, and create a mock schedule with all the times you want so that you have a clear idea of what to do during course selection.
   a. <u>Here is a tutorial on how to use VSB</u>. It is a great tool, so check it out!
   b. If you are planning to use RAMSS, add the courses to your shopping cart ahead of time so that you can simply press *Enrol* during course selection. To see a more in-depth tutorial on how to use RAMSS for course selection, <u>check out this video</u>!
      i. RAMSS has changed a little bit since the publishing of this video. To get to the page the video begins with, simply go on RAMSS from your my.ryerson portal, and click on *Student Center*!
3. **Enrol.** To ensure that you get the electives you want, ensure you select your courses and early as possible. This may mean waking up at an ungodly hour, but it's worth it!

Tips:
- If you're getting up first thing, do it with friends if possible! Course selection is *not easy* the first time around, even if you're just selecting electives!
- If you're doing it alone, *don't panic*! First-year is very general and there are so many electives to choose from! Ryerson makes it easy by pre-enrolling you into all your mandatory classes, after all!
- Consider using VSB to plan your schedule, and RAMSS to enrol! VSB might crash a lot on the first day of enrolment with all the traffic!
- Use the *Shopping Cart* on RAMSS. Go to your *Course Calendar* or search the name of the course you want to take and "ryerson" on Google to easily find your course codes ahead of time! This helps ease the panic during actual course selection.
- Once your schedule is complete, Ryerson will automatically place your schedule on *Google Calendar*. To access it during the year, simply login using your Ryerson information. Please note that this is not available until the school year begins.

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

AUTHOR(S): Amina Saher (guest)

The University of Guelph (UofG) is a comprehensive, research-intensive university well-known for its strengths in areas as diverse as agri-food, veterinary medicine, and human nutrition.

General Steps to Enrolling:
1. **Find your program.** Visit the [Program Information](#) page for your program. This page provides all the information you need to know about what courses you should take for your specific program, tips on creating your class schedule, and contact information for your Program Counsellors. If you are unsure of your program, check your offer letter.
2. **Make a mock class schedule.** Download and print the [Class Schedule Worksheet Grid](#), grab a pencil, and pick your courses using the course information provided on your Program Information page. A general rule of thumb would be to add your required courses onto the Class Schedule Worksheet first and then build the rest of your schedule around these courses.
3. **Enrol through *WebAdvisor*.** [WebAdvisor](#) is the University's online registration system which allows you to search for courses, read descriptions of the courses, and find out what day(s) and time(s) each course is offered. In order to enrol using WebAdvisor:
   a. Click *Log In* in the top right corner.
   b. Enter your Central Login ID and your Central Login Password. You will find your login ID and password in the letter that was mailed to you when you accepted your offer of admission. You may also have received it when you applied to UofG.
   c. Watch this [video tutorial](#) for step-by-step instructions on how to select your courses and enrol in them.

Tips:
- Pick your courses as soon as possible. The availability of popular courses and desired sections may fill up quickly.
- It is always a good idea to have a list of the courses you want in addition to back-up options in case you don't get your first choice prior to when your course enrolment period begins. This will save you time and make course enrolment less stressful.
- As you make your class schedule, you'll notice that many courses have several lecture/lab/seminar options. Pick the ones that best fit in your schedule to ensure that there are no conflicts in your timetable.
- Select courses that are more limiting (e.g., courses which have one lecture time) first and build the rest of your schedule around those times.
- Contact your program counsellor if you have any additional questions.

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH-HUMBER

AUTHOR(S): Ariana Ramkishur (guest)

The University of Guelph-Humber (UoGH) is a university that was established as a partnership between the University of Guelph and Humber College.

General Steps to Enrolling:

1. **Find your date of course enrolment**. Student registration periods are based on the number of credits already earned. As first-year students, you are most likely to have 0.00 credits. If this is the case, your course enrolment period for the Fall 2020 semester begins from <u>July 17th to August 11th, 2020 at 9 am</u>. For more information, refer to <u>this link</u> and navigate to the *course selection* subheading.
2. **Refer to the course schedule for your program**. This is emailed to you by the *Academic Advising staff*. You can find program plans <u>here</u> under the *course schedule* subheading. Select your ideal courses ahead of time. The course schedules tell you which time slots are available and the courses you will be encouraged to take in first year.
3. **Apply for courses on *WebAdvisor*.** It is wise to apply before the enrollment date and time. WebAdvisor is the internet-based tool used for course selection, paying fees and accessing services such as parking and lockers. To apply for courses on WebAdvisor, students are to:
   a. Log in.
   b. Look under the *registration* tab on the right side of the screen.
   c. Click on *search/register for sections*.
   d. Select the term for the courses they're applying for.
   e. Fill in their subject (the four-letter acronym) and the course number. These are found on the schedule that Academic Advising staff emailed.

   Once you input all your courses, you may submit the courses. When you do, a list of all the open sections of these courses will appear. When this happens, you can then select one time slot of each course and submit.
4. **Confirm**. On the day of registration, you will have to officially submit your timetable at <u>9 am during the course enrollment period.</u>

Tips:
- If there are any issues, you may contact your Academic Advisor. You may also contact the *Learning Support Peers*, which are a student extension of the Academic Advisors.
- Spots fill quickly, so make a back-up timetable!

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

AUTHOR(S): Vi Vo

The University of Toronto (UofT) sometimes dubbed as the "Harvard of the North" is known as one of Canada's top universities for research and innovation.

General Steps to Enrolling:
1. **Do your research.** Give yourself time and try not to cram on the day before selection. You should make sure that the courses you plan to take go towards your degree and will get you into a desired program of study (specialist/majors/minors). Remember that all courses are enrolled by you, including 'mandatory' ones and 'electives'.
2. **Make a mock timetable.** There is a website where you can create a mock timetable. This will help you choose courses, class times, and professors before course enrollment starts. Ensure there are no overlaps, you meet the prerequisite/exclusion criterias and remember to choose practicals and/or tutorials for applicable classes.
3. **Add courses to your enrolment course.** This will allow for faster enrolment when it actually starts. Note that courses will not automatically enrol, you must login to *ACORN* and enrol when the time starts. It is good to have some back-up courses in case you don't get into your first choice.
4. **Enrol.** Be sure to check your enrollment time beforehand and log on as early as you can after that time. If classes are full, you can waitlist yourself (you can also see your waitlist number).

Tips:
- You can find specific and **more accurate** details [here](#).
- Refresh ACORN and login exactly at your start time since classes tend to fill up fast.
- Have a strong internet connection. Many students ensure that they're the *only* one using the wifi at that time.
- If you're waitlisted, don't be too scared! If your waitlist number is within 5-10% of the class size, it is *likely* you will get into a course (but not guaranteed).

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

AUTHOR(S): Avi Patel

The University of Waterloo (UW) is widely recognized as Canada's most innovative university. It takes pride in its competitive cooperative education programs, and pushes its students to go [Beyond Ideas](#). That said, your courses and study terms are equally important so here are some tips when it comes to Waterloo's course selection!

Engineering students do not have a course selection process for their first two years of undergrad. They are automatically given schedules with all of the courses they have to take as requirements for their upper years.

General Steps to Enrolling:
1. **Do your research.** Give yourself some time to plan ahead. Make sure you have a general idea of your graduation requirements which can be found on [Waterloo's Undergraduate Calendar](#). You should also be aware of the requirements for other [minors](#) and specializations you might be trying to pursue. You will usually have a mixture of mandatory courses you have to take and electives, and the entire enrolling process will be completed on *QUEST*. For information regarding a particular course (course content, lecture timings, class sizes or course reviews), check out [UwFlow](#)!
2. **Set up a mock schedule.** Using UwFlow, you can get a rough estimate when it comes to the lecture timings for each of your potential courses. Try to use that information to plan out a mock schedule to ensure there are no time conflicts between any of your courses.
3. **Add your courses.** The entirety of the enrolling process occurs within QUEST's enrol section (if you are on your desktop, it will be the item with the shopping cart illustration). The enrolling process simply requires you to enter the *Class Nbr* (four digit number) of the course you are trying to enrol in and confirming your choice. You can obtain this *Class Nbr* from UwFlow or [adm.uwaterloo](#)! If you want to be prepared and avoid much of the stress during the course selection period, you can add some of your courses to your *Shopping Cart* in the enrol section so they will already be there for you to add once the period starts.
4. **Enrol.** Due to COVID-19, the original course selection dates for the upcoming Fall 2020 term were postponed. It is now confirmed that the Course Selection Period for the incoming students will be from Tuesday, June 30, 2020 to Thursday, July 09, 2020.

Tips:
- If you want more information regarding [Adding Courses](#), [Dropping Courses](#), or [Swapping Courses](#), click on the respective links for a step-by-step guide!
- After this initial course selection period, you will get a confirmed copy of your schedule on Wednesday, July 29, 2020. After this, the course [Add/Drop period](#) begins from Thursday, July 30, 2020 to Wednesday, August 5, 2020 where you can once again add, drop, or swap around classes as you please!
    - If you are curious about some of the other important dates, check out Waterloo's [Registrar Office](#) which has a calendar with information regarding course selection periods, tuition deadlines, and many more!

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

AUTHOR(S): Hussain Jan

Western University (UWO) is located in London, Ontario and was established in 1878. Today, UWO is known for its scenic campus and a wide ranging selection of different courses and fields. Recently, UWO was named North America's Leading Undergraduate University by *The Undergraduate Awards.*

General Steps to Enrolling

1. **Do your research.** Once you're enrolled into your respective program, the first thing you should do is check which courses are mandatory for your degree. To do this, every incoming student should visit Western's Academic Calendar (this will be your homebase for all things academic). Here, information about program requirements, course description, and elective choices can be found. Every Western student must also fulfill certain course requirements regardless of their field. These requirements can be found here.

2. **Set up a mock schedule.** Western University has a great site where you can plan and draft your schedule to get a better understanding of your following year. On Draft My Schedule, you can find all the courses available for the following year and what time slots are available for each class. Additionally, you would also get to see if any of your classes are full so you can consider alternate options. When picking your schedules, make sure you have fulfilled all of your programs requirements.

3. **Add your courses.** Once you have figured out the best schedule, don't wait too long! If you do end up taking a while, there is a chance that your class could get full and you would have to pick another time slot at an inconvenient time. Additionally, it is important to understand that picking courses in Draft My Schedule does not automatically enrol you into them. After picking, you must go to Western's Student Center and officially enrol into them. (Login > Enrol in Classes > Add Class). To add a class, it would be helpful to have the class number on hand (different then course code), this can be found on Draft My Schedule!

4. **Enrol.** When adding classes, remember that you may have to pick a lab/tutorial sections for that class. If your class/lab/tutorial has space and does not cause any time conflicts, Student Center will automatically enrol you! If there is a problem, it will let you know and you can work around it by changing your time slot or class. For the year of 2020, first year course selections have already begun, so if you haven't already begun picking courses, now is the time to do so!

Tips:
- If you've decided you don't like the course or time slot you are in currently later on, no worries! Student Center also allows you to delete and swap classes during the rest of summer.
- It recommended that you *swap* your classes (dropping a course and adding the new one simultaneously), instead of deleting then adding. This way, you can ensure that you won't end up with no enrolled class!

YORK UNIVERSITY

AUTHOR(S): Harjot Suri

York University is Canada's third largest university with a wide variety of cross-disciplinary programming and unique opportunities. It also has an associating college known as Glendon College.

General Steps to Enrolling:
1. **Do your research.** Every York student has an assigned access date and time where they can begin to access the registration and enrolment system to enrol in courses. The enrolment window was given around mid May for new students (this year it was May 18th, 2020). This date differs for continuing students. To find out your specific enrolment date, you want to go to your Student Web Services which is accessible via your Passport York login. Once logged in, your enrolment access time will be found under the *My Enrolment Access Times* tab.
2. **Setting up a mock schedule.** With your date in mind, you can plan ahead and figure out exactly what you want to take with the Visual Schedule Builder. Here you will be able to enter the course codes (which are referred to as *Cat#*) for all the courses you want to take and it will build your schedule based on the courses. If it fails to build, it likely means there is a conflict with two courses.
3. **Choosing courses.** You can find exactly what courses you want to try and build into your schedule by going to the York Courses Website, which will again require you to login via your York Passport login. Here you will have a wide variety of filters, and can search by term, subject, or instructor. <u>You are responsible for finding out what courses are required for your degree each year.</u>
4. **Enrol.** The Cat#'s from the mock schedule can be thought of as the "identity" of the particular course you have chosen. Using these Cat#'s, you are going to login to the *Registration and Enrolment Module* where you will be officially enrolling in courses. The Registration and Enrolment Module is also where you are able to drop, transfer, and exchange a course.

Tips:
- Plan in advance! It will save you a lot of time and stress!
- Courses needed for your degree will always have seats available, top priority should be courses outside your faculty.
- Courses you would like to enrol in from other departments often have a specific number of seats for students outside of the degree.
- If you don't get the spot you'll get a message along the lines of "seats are reserved, contact the faculty for more information". All you will be told is to keep trying to enrol until courses start, as that is when students tend to make changes to their schedule.
- Don't feel disheartened if you don't get it initially. Keep trying and be sure to contact faculty to see if there are any updates.
- It is better to decide on "last minute" changes (dropping, transferring, or exchanging courses) early on in the semester, as there is a limited amount of time to perform these actions.
- Contact academic advising of the specific faculty via email or phone call.