

Incoming Gators! Welcome to the next chapter of your life. You clearly worked hard enough in high school to make it to the next level. Now it is time to spread your wings, just make sure you pay attention to the turbulence. As independent human beings, there's a lot that will happen that will challenge you, either physically, intellectually and even academically. The key is to take these challenges with a mind as open as possible and make sure to learn from everything you do. Now, you're probably thinking to yourself, duh... so let me tell you a story to give you some perspective.

As the beginning of the Spring semester approached, I was wrapping up a personal challenge I had set for myself. A run across the state of Florida, ranging 180 miles in total. The challenge wasn't only physical, but also mental since I had to convince myself I was able to run a marathon every day for 7 days in a row. Wonder what the downside to that is? Well, I had no energy to do homework or classwork during my off time. Luckily, I was at a community college, so the classes were far easier, the homework was minimal and the tests were unrealistically curved, so I passed my classes with good grades. Job well done, right?

Truthfully, that misconception cost me an entire academic year. In retrospect, my time at the community college was not taken advantage and now I have to retake Chemistry. Not, because I failed, but because its a class I am genuinely interested in learning about, and I learned nothing in the class. Also, my Spring semester at UF consisted of an endless game of catchup, that resulted in me learning the true feeling of stress for the first time in my life. I would be weeks behind in my classes and get minimal assignments done every day. The funny thing is that I wasn't going out at all, I would just prioritize my daily routine in a terrible manner, leaving me no time to do what I was supposed to do, study.

My favorite places to study are the fine arts library and Marson Library since there are no impressive nature places to study at. Considering the minimal time I spent there, I would

probably enjoy it more if I made some friends and did some group studying with them. Bringing me to the next topic, involvement. When I was absent in the library, I was often at the gym, in the pool or at some club meetings. I tried my best to get some benefit from the school while I inefficiently wandered its campus, taking time to observe all the signage posted around campus and attending what interested me. It was during these events that I was able to find friends and socialize with people that I would probably never see on a normal day. I was all about finding exposure to new experiences.

On the topic of new experiences, we are ultimately in college to prepare for the next chapter, the one after college: a new-er experience. I have found that the number one place to set yourself ahead and figure out where you want to go would be the Career Connections Center. If your FYF class mentions this, please do yourself a favor and listen attentively. Any interaction with that department will be nothing but beneficial to you and your future.

Now get out there, have a bunch of fun, make dumb mistakes and learn from them. Live the rest of your life like someone is watching. The last thing I ask is to remember to stay sustainable if it's not sustainable, it's not gonna last long. So what's the point in doing it?