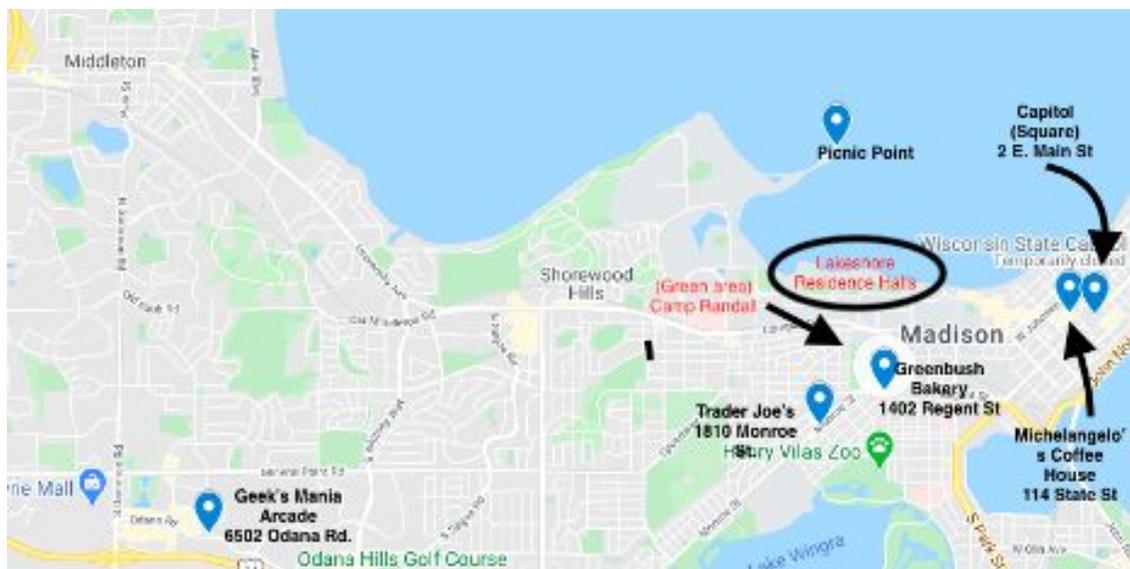


**WHAT I WISH  
I KNEW AS A  
FRESHMAN:  
TIPS FOR  
INCOMING  
STUDENTS**

### **Favorite off campus spot to visit:**

- Michelangelo's Coffee House (114 State St) is my new favorite spot to be. The art and atmosphere combined with the endless coffee choices is wonderful.
- Picnic Point at Lakeshore Nature Preserve
- Geeks Mania Arcade (6502 Odana Rd) – pay a flat rate, play as many arcade games as you want for free
- Capitol Square and the farmer's market (x3)
- Mini golf
- Greenbush Bakery (1402 Regent St)
- Trader Joe's (1810 Monroe St)
- Southwest Bike Path



### **Favorite new activity you tried in Madison:**

- Skiing, or walking out on the frozen lake in winter
- Dungeons & Dragons – get into something nerdy, who's going to judge you now?
- Sledding on Bascom
- Rollerblading
- Painting at Wheelhouse Studios
- Yoga classes
- Birdwatching at Willow Creek
- Sitting in a hammock down at Lakeshore in the fall/spring. Super, super relaxing
- Terrace Karaoke nights
- The Capitol and State Street

**Favorite class(es) you have taken and why they were your favorite:**

THEATRE 160 Technical Theatre Fundamentals	This was a really fun class that not only was an easy A but taught me some genuine life skills. A great mix of in-person and hand-on learning.
MUSIC 103 Intro. To Music Cultures of the World	It was a really interesting introduction to non-Western music, covered a lot of cultures, and explored how music is tied to other aspects of culture.
DANCE 21 Ballet 1	Even with no ballet experience it was great to have a break from sitting in class and get moving!
ENTOM 201 Insects and Human Culture	Raise a bug for a semester. Really awesome class to learn a lot. Not too hard either.
GEN&WS 103 Women's Bodies-Health and Disease	1) super interesting, learned a lot, and got some new perspectives 2) This course has information that everyone should know (basically the health and sex education you never got in high school). Highly recommend to anyone and everyone!
PHILOS 241 Introductory Ethics	This intro to ethics course was enlightening and made me think about the way my actions affect others.
BIO 152 Introductory Biology (2nd semester)	I know this is a required course for most biology majors but it was actually one of my favorite classes! The professors and my TA's made it really fun, and the independent project was a pretty cool experience.
Forest & Wildlife Ecology 401 Physiological Animal Ecology	The professor was fantastic, and I learned so much about how animals meet their needs, often in surprising ways!
BOTANY 123 (Prof. Andrew Bent) Plants, Parasites, & People	Even though it wasn't a topic I was super interested in, the professor was super enthusiastic and made it a super enjoyable class.
CLASSICS 322 The Romans	I had a love-hate relationship with this class because there was a lot of reading but the topic of Roman history and culture was so

	captivating to me
Any GEN&WS course and PSYCH 460 Child Development	They teach you a lot about life, growth, development, and how to present yourself and treat others throughout your life/beyond the class

**Favorite place to eat and the food you order there:**

Restaurant	Location	Food to Order
A8 China	608 University Ave.	Anything, the portions they give could easily be 3 meals
Dar Rathskeller	Memorial Union	Caprese Sandwich with fries and Rath sauce
Paul's Pel'meni	414 W. Gilman St.	Dumplings
Poke (Bowl) Plus	615 State St.	Anything
Strada	Memorial Union	Build your own pasta
Mooyah	571 State St.	Little pricey, but really good food!
Sushi Express	610 University Ave.	Anything
Sunroom Cafe	638 State St.	Chicken pesto pasta
Glass Nickel Pizza	2916 Atwood Ave. (East) 5003 University Ave. (West)	Anything is good!
Mediterranean Cafe	625 State St.	Falafel sandwich
QQ Express (QQ's)	1401 University Ave.	General Tso's Chicken, or anything that sounds good
Ramen Kid	461 W. Gilman St.	Literally everything is good

### **What is something that you wish you had brought with you to campus that you didn't?**

- A box fan (or five)
- Dishes—microwavable bowl, some silverware and a couple of mugs for snacks like ramen noodles or hot chocolate
- An umbrella
- Shoes that can get wet (that aren't snow boots)
- Water bottles
- A bike or scooter
- A pitcher to make Kool Aid or something like that, cheap enough that I didn't feel like I had to drink water all the time
- Family photos/things to think of home
- I didn't bring my umbrella/rain gear and winter coat for the first couple of month because I didn't think I'd need them. I severely underestimated the chaos that is Wisconsin weather.
- A doorstop
- Twice as many socks—saves time/money on laundry
- A hot water kettle
- Window/room fan
- Snow and rain boots (but I'm also from the west coast so I just didn't own those before coming to campus)

### **What was something you brought to campus that you really didn't need?**

- I smuggled in a toaster and then literally never used it
- I brought too many shoes, which took up a little too much space
- Too many writing utensils and whiteboards
- An electric tea kettle (if you have a microwave)
- Things for my desk. I had a desk lamp that I think I may have used once, but most of the time I needed that space for something else.
- An extra set of sheets
- Anything that I didn't use at least once a week, I never ended up using (including extra notebooks/pens, a lot of my clothing, makeup, etc.)
- Lots of dishes/kitchen supplies
- Ice cube tray – cold water was not worth the effort
- So many clothes
- I brought a lot of blankets because I tend to get cold, but my dorm room was typically warm so I didn't use them very much
- Night light—thought it would be pitch black in my room, but it really wasn't

### **What advice do you have for living in the dorms?**

- Loft your bed! It gives you SO much extra living space. Also, decorate; it will make it feel more unique and like a home.
- Try really hard to socialize! I wish I had spent more time getting to know my floor, but I was really nervous. What I didn't know is everyone is nervous!
- Make sure any space you use is clean for the next person, get to know people on your floor in the first month, and take advantage of any opportunities your dorm gives you (events, trips, etc.)
- Wear shower shoes. Even with COVID those floors are disgusting.
- Be nice to your roommates; it gets to be hard to live with another person, but you're both (hopefully) trying to do your best. Also, be direct if there's anything bothering you.
- Buy ear plugs.
- Go hand out in the lounges and try to make friends with other people in your dorm early on.
- Refrain from buying excessive quantities of fruit or milk, they expire faster than you think
- Don't be afraid to meet the people living around you
- Attend floor/dorm activities when you can
- Make sure you engage; sit out in your common lounge space and just say hi to people/wave. A little goes a long way and just being there does a lot

### **What advice do you have on dealing with/getting to know roommates?**

- Your roommate might be feeling just as lonely or out of place as you. Maybe order out from the same place and eat a meal together to get to know one another
- Communicate regularly with your roommate on how things are going, especially on what you're comfortable sharing (with them), etc. Set up boundaries early!
- Don't do everything with your roommate. You'll see each other enough, don't take all the same classes and stuff. You'll get sick of each other really quick.
- Be respectful of their stuff and have open communication about people being over, any conflict, etc.
- Try to find a way to spend time with your roommate and just do something fun. You will see them a lot so it's good to try to have a relationship with them
- Don't be afraid to voice any concerns/issues you may have with them. I would spend weeks or months upset about something my roommate always did and as soon as I brought it up to her, she said it wasn't a huge deal to her and she accommodated. Also, try asking your roommate if you're doing anything that's bothering them because they might just be too shy/scared to mention it.
- Try to be friendly and open-minded, have good communication
- Be open to small changes in your lifestyle – if you can't compromise, they have no reason to
- Deal with disagreements before they become real problems
- Be open and honest about your expectations of each other and what you plan to do in the room. You share it and it is yours equally; don't forget that

## What advice do you have on planning where to live/who to live with for the following year?

- You do not need to figure out your living situation immediately. Take your time to make sure you find the right people to live with. Plenty of apartments are still available in the spring!
- Random is sometimes just as good as living with people you know. If in an apartment, get to know how your future roommates live now. Even if you're good friends, you won't always make good roommates if your lifestyles/schedules are different.
- Don't freak out that people start signing leases in October, you don't need to.
- Take your time signing a lease. Make sure the people you choose to live with are people you will actually be spending time with a year or two from now
- Don't stress too much about finding the perfect roommate for your second year. I made plans to live with someone in October and those ended up falling through because she transferred to another school. I found some roommate/sublet board on Facebook and everything turned out alright with them. It wasn't perfect, but it was only for a year anyway.
- Make the best decision you can for yourself and make sure you're going to be comfortable with the situation
- If classes are COVID-canceled again, would you rather live in your hometown or on campus? Dorms will refund you if you're sent home, but will you be more- Look at all your options before deciding on one place- really think about the advantages and disadvantages of the locations/amenities/price
- Start thinking about it, but don't cement anything too quickly. The people who may be your friends first semester may prove to not be your friends or the best roommates second semester.
- If you're nervous about signing a group lease, try to find somewhere that offers individual leases (examples: Pres House Apartments, The Hub). If you're moving in with people you don't know super well, it's great because you aren't on the hook if one of your roommates doesn't pay their rent.
- Pay close attention to location of potential apartments if you decide to live off-campus. Look into walking distance from class buildings/places you will spend a lot of time, and look at which buses are nearby if any (if you plan to be on campus late at night, but it's a 30 minute walk or bus routes end at 9pm, that is something important to consider)

## What are some places/resources on campus that you wish you had known about sooner? Why?

- UHS offers 10 free therapy sessions (virtually right now, but usually in person)
- You can download Microsoft Office 365 and Adobe Creative Cloud for free with your NET ID from DoIT's website:  
<https://it.wisc.edu/services-by-audience/#students>

- Memorial Union's study spaces on the higher floors provide really pretty places to be productive and has food downstairs if you need a break. Also, in the basement of Memorial Union is Wheelhouse Studios, an art space free to students, and materials are cheap.
- Picnic Point is a beautiful, natural area with a great view of the city, great for a nature break or hanging with friends
- Any/all libraries offer great study spots and people willing to help you find what you need
- I love studying at the Student Activity Center (SAC) on East Campus Mall
- The Microbiology building. It's a great study spot with cool architecture and it's close to the Lakeshore dorms
- Badger SPILL is a great resource to vent or ask for advice if you're struggling with something, whether it be grades, relationships, mental health, or anything else. It's completely anonymous, and you'll get responses from a few fellow Badgers with support.
- Pres House
- The advisor for my major
- Geology and Geophysics Library
- 13<sup>th</sup> floor lounge of Educational Sciences (if it isn't closed) – best spot on campus to see both lakes
- Study lounge at Pres House – got me through a lot of exams
- If you live in Lakeshore, Steenbock Library is a really great study space that usually isn't crowded
- Academic/Major advising – there are many places on campus to receive advising, you can go to any advising office with questions and they will help you and then refer you to another advising office that better fits your needs

### **What advice do you have for handling stress, studying and grades?**

- Things will not always be perfect. When something goes wrong or is too much, reach out to someone to talk to or for help and remember, from failure you learn, success not so much.
- Plan, plan, plan! If homework is keeping you up all night, sometimes sleeping and getting up early to finish it is better than an all-nighter. Also, don't stress alone! Really schedule in time to connect with and make friends. Bonus points if you have friends in your same classes you can study with! If you struggle with procrastination, try the five-minute trick: promise yourself you'll study for five minutes. Set a timer. If at the end of the five minutes you really can't do it, then take a break and try in a bit. But chances are after five minutes you'll have the motivation to keep going! And lastly make sure you have a balance of school, social life, and rest time!
- Your professors are there to help. Go to their office hours. Set up a studying schedule. Study at places other than your room.
- Don't let school be your only activity. Join clubs, workout, volunteer, work...

- Make a schedule that you can stick to but give yourself a bit of extra space if you need it.
- Please sleep. Whatever is the right amount for you, please do it. There's plenty of evidence out there that you're more productive, efficient, and retain information better if you're well-rested, so you will do better in school if you make sure you're getting enough sleep. You'll feel better too. Ask anyone who's tried living both ways.
- Don't be afraid to reach out for help from TA's or professors, make sure your schedule is manageable and drop classes or rearrange if needed
- Find places on campus that are explicitly for studying and explicitly for relaxing, so you can get in the right mindset by changing your location.
- Work through things one at a time and use some sort of planner to keep everything organized. Don't wait too long to finish anything and make sure you don't forget anything.
- I made sure to have a balance of work-play. So, I would not allow myself to study/do work after 8pm (unless I had something due the next day) to ensure that I had time to de-stress before bed by watching TV, reading, playing games, etc. I also found that I am most productive during the daytime and more motivated when the sun is out—it's more important to find a study schedule that suits you best and to allow yourself time to relax
- It is okay to stay up. It is okay to go to sleep. Different techniques work for different people, do what works for you. If you are too stressed, take a small break with supportive peers and then get back to it

**Do you have any other advice? (On finances, relationships, being homesick, professors, finding friends...anything you wish you would have known when you were a freshman)**

- If you have in person classes, find a way to cut through buildings in the winter. Warmer buildings are better than cold outside.
- Be open to new things! Try hard not to judge anyone or thing without getting to know them/it first.
- Go to office hours even if you don't need immediate help, especially in big lectures. Then the professor will put a name to a face and you can ask them anything you want! Professors love to talk with students whether your visit is academically related or just to say hello!
- If you make a friend who's not in one of your classes, be sure to get their phone number right away so you can ensure you stay connected!
- Talk to your professors and go to office hours – build relationships and possible letters of recommendation
- The world doesn't end when you mess up. Barely anybody has a linear path to success. If you plans change, lean into it!
- Don't be afraid to try new things, meet new people or join new groups. That's what your freshman year is all about and you'll seriously thank yourself afterwards
- Take it easy on yourself, you're learning and everyone around you is as well. You've got this

"Dealing with family emergencies while being on campus - talk to your professors/TA's and let them know what's happening, mine were supportive of what I needed"

"Feeling lonely and out of place at times-coming to Pres House helped, also staying in touch with family and friends back home"

"Wanting to believe I wouldn't be homesick, got homesick. What helped was setting aside some time to just catch up. Just a simple FaceTime goes a long way."

"I didn't expect to be as lonely as I was and for my relationships with my friends from home to become so strained. There were times when I thought the only person loving and supporting me was my mom. I tried a bunch of different orgs/groups/communities and met new people, and eventually I found a place where I felt I fit, and that helped ease some of the loneliness and made Madison feel more like a home. My friendships from home got better with time, and I ended up with even more friends than I thought I'd ever have."

"I had trouble finding time to hang out with friends on the other end of campus, but planning in advance and getting used to the bus helped a lot. Also, don't over commit to clubs; find out your homework load before committing to too much. If you're nervous about trying or going to something new, don't go alone! Chances are someone else would want to go with you and you might make a new friend! Connecting with people in the dorms can be daunting, but having a group chat helps a lot to find people to eat or study with"

## What were some unexpected challenges you faced during your freshman year, and what helped?

***"Deciding what clubs to be in, don't think you're obligated to join/stay in any club or group. If you enjoy it, stay but if not don't stick with it"***

"DURING SPRING SEMESTER I HAD A HARD TIME GETTING MYSELF TO GO TO LECTURES THAT DIDN'T TAKE ATTENDANCE AND THAT WERE POSTED ONLINE BECAUSE I FELT LIKE IT WAS BETTER TO JUST LISTEN TO THE LECTURES ON MY OWN TIME. WHAT HELPED ME START GOING TO LECTURE AGAIN WAS THE FACT THAT I WOULD PUT OFF TAKING NOTES FROM THE RECORDED LECTURES AND WOULD HAVE TO DO 3 LECTURES WORTH OF LEARNING OVER THE WEEKEND. I CAME TO TERMS WITH THE FACT THAT I WAS PROCRASTINATING REALLLY BAD AND THAT IT WOULD BE SO MUCH BETTER IF I WOULD JUST ATTEND LECTURES AND TAKE THE NOTES WHEN I WAS SUPPOSED TO."

"I felt incredibly lonely for most of first semester. This ended up affecting a lot in my academic and social life. Setting aside time to call my mama or someone I trusted helped immensely. Set a routine to keep in touch with family or friends!"

"It's a lot harder to keep up with assignments, since due dates are more spaced out. When in doubt, do homework sooner rather than later."

"It's hard to accept the difficulty of courses in Madison Even if you get a bad grade on a test or at the end of a course, it won't destroy your GPA if you keep working hard. It also helps to find a way to enjoy the material and appreciate the complexity of things you can understand"