

FIRST YEAR TRANSITION

The first year of college is an exciting time for new beginnings and finding your community. This excitement is often tempered by moments of stress, doubt, and critical reflection- so don't hesitate to connect with your Student Success advisor, faculty advisor or First-Year Fellow for support.

HOMESICKNESS AND FITTING IN

Many students leave home to attend Eugene Lang College. Although it is an exciting time, some students experience homesickness during the first semester in college, which might result in questions about whether it was the right decision to attend Lang (or sometimes, to attend college in general). Friends and families can feel far away and an important challenge for students is developing new friendships and support networks. Although this can be a natural process for some students, it represents more of a personal challenge for others. The groups formed through advising courses and peer advisor workshops often facilitate some of these connections. Involvement in the academic community and student organizational life of Lang represents another critical dimension in the undergraduate experience through which students derive a sense of belonging.

THE TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL

An important lesson for first-year students during the first few weeks is the structural difference between high school and college, including classes meeting twice weekly, the seminar format, academic workload, work/life balance, residence hall life, course selection, and deadlines. The curriculum here also affords students more academic freedom than high school. For many students, the transition proves difficult, though it helps cultivate important decision-making skills. Likewise, some students are unaccustomed to speaking with teachers, counselors/advisors, and other figures of "authority" in the school. The seminar approach requires students to participate routinely in class, which is unfamiliar and uncomfortable to some freshmen. Each student must therefore actively participate in their own education and devise methods to communicate with faculty, administrators, and peers. In developing these communication skills, students learn how to develop their voice and negotiate an organization; both critical skills for the future.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION AND MOTIVATION

The seminar style learning at Lang is for many a complete change from the high school learning environment. Some students feel inadequately prepared for the reading- and writing-intensive seminars in addition to the academic discussions of the seminar courses. We often hear students who report having perceptions of their classmates being more literate and "smarter" (although that's often nothing more than perception). In addition, a lack of motivation often surfaces sometime during the middle of the semester, especially if the student has struggled with other aspects of the college transition. These motivational problems could be manifested as absenteeism, fatigue, dissatisfaction with courses, and perhaps quick frustration with the situations all college students naturally confront.

ACADEMIC

As freshmen, students embark on an important journey in their personal development; exploring their own identities, considering their own place in the world, and how they imagine their personal and professional future. It is not unusual for students to have anxiety over these questions and others. Lang students learn from their professors and peers in a seminar setting,

the format of which promotes the development of an individual “voice.” The seminar also provides an important space to discover affinities and find passion

THE FUTURE

Sometimes first-year students feel the expectation to have decided on an academic major, a professional career, and other life matters. Future planning leaves some freshmen feeling overwhelmed. Through faculty and peer advisement, we reinforce the concept of academic exploration, as well as the acquisition of the decision-making skills that can help you navigate your future. Because of these potential obstacles for all first-year students, we encourage you to meet with a Student Success advisor several times during the semester to ensure you have all the necessary support to navigate any problems you encounter.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR

As you consider the exciting academic and extracurricular opportunities offered at Lang, we have some helpful suggestions for you:

- Meet with both your faculty and Student Success advisor at least twice a semester outside of the classroom; the faculty advisors are valuable resources for you!
- Use the many services available to students at The New School, including health and counseling, Writing Center, libraries, and computer labs.
- Explore the student clubs and organizations available at Lang and the University. Involvement in activities outside the classroom provide important opportunities to connect with interesting people, build communities and maximize exposure to New York City and its neighborhoods.