

It's great ... to be ... a BLA Bulldog! – Chloe Weigle

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This summer, I have had the privilege of talking to parents and students about the BLA at freshman orientation. My favorite part about being a student ambassador has been talking with prospective students about the field of landscape architecture, and I knew this opportunity would be rewarding. On the first day of every orientation, the academic fair gives students exposure to most of the UGA colleges at once. It is one of the most convenient ways for students to ask questions about majors they are curious about. While some people only go to their intended major's booth, I'm always excited to meet the freshman that browse and explore what UGA has to offer. And let me tell you, UGA has A LOT to offer! It is definitely overwhelming, and I honestly don't even remember if I was one to browse the different majors at orientation. I personally found my way to the BLA by my second semester at UGA, but why not start out in something you love right away? From my experiences this summer, I have developed a few tips for all you students thinking about switching to a different program. As for my first tip....

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#1. Explore! If you're an interested student and reading this, props to already branching out by visiting the blog! Exploring this great university is so essential to understanding what you really want. Maybe you didn't know you appreciated design so much even though you have been a math/science lover all your life... well I can relate to that! But the only way you can know something like this is if you explore the options you thought IMPOSSIBLE. So many students I talked to automatically think this major isn't for them because they have no art experience. Well fortunately, that is what your first year is for! You'll learn how to think creatively, use drawing techniques, and incorporate principles and elements of design. This is why talking to someone involved whether they are an advisor, current student, alumni, or even a career consultant is the best thing you can do. Never dismiss something because of assumptions! It is always beneficial to talk to someone who has first-hand experience. If you are interested in other ways to learn about this field, I suggest reading up on it (Landscape Architecture Magazine is great!), go to a lecture (worked for me!) or take an odyssey class first. I can't emphasize enough, EXPLORE!

#2. Get excited! Whatever major you decide to choose, make sure you're excited about it! I met several people at orientation who would say something similar to, "Yea, I'm in __ major but I don't know....it sounds alright". To me, that doesn't seem like you're excited to be starting your college career! Your time in college will be fun, but your academics and the job you earn should also be enjoyable. Make sure you are looking at the breadth of classes you will be taking. Even the titles might have you intrigued or excited! That is the way it should be. UGA is the finest school in the land AND has a top nationally ranked landscape architecture program. GET PUMPED!!!

#3. Go with your gut! I think it's hard for anyone to know 100% of what they should do, but using the first two tips will get you closer. If you know all your options and what really interests you, the only other thing you have to consider are your goals/dreams! Maybe the new information will inspire a dream you didn't know about, or maybe you'll realize that your passions would best be suited for those of a BLA student. Whatever it is you discover, make sure that you go with your gut! Never dismiss something because you doubt your abilities and definitely do it if you know you'll enjoy it!!

For any of you still trying to figure out what you want to do, and what we're about at the BLA, I hope this has helped gather your thoughts and encourage further exploration into the field of Landscape Architecture. There are so many great things happening with this program and in this world of sustainable design! We want you artists, you critical thinkers....anyone who thinks they are meant to be in this hybrid world of environment and design! I have had a blast all summer, talking about this program that I enjoy so much, and I can't wait to learn even more this fall!

Go BLA! Go freshman! And GOOOOOOOO DAWGS!