

The First Class Meeting

The first meeting of the class often sets a tone for the remainder of the semester. Instructors should be prepared to explain course objectives and expectations. In addition, faculty should take the following steps:

- Take attendance - For the purposes of financial aid, it is very important that the college keeps accurate records of student attendance. Instructors should take attendance at each class meeting and record the attendance in Canvas. Any students in class who are not on the course roster should be sent to the registrar's office.
- Review the course syllabus with students – It is imperative that students have a good understanding of course policies and procedures. Instructors should be certain that students are fully aware of policies regarding grading, late submissions, make-up exams, and any other policy that may affect student success.
- Encourage students to purchase textbooks or other learning materials as soon as possible – Instructors should stress the importance of “keeping up” with the class and encourage students to quickly obtain the proper learning materials. In addition, Professors should make certain that students access the correct title/edition of required textbooks.
- Let students know how to contact the instructor – Proper communication is critical to student success. Faculty should stress that communication is important and make certain that students are aware of instructor contact information.
- Let the students know that the instructor is there to help them – This is remarkably important. Studies have shown that students who feel that their instructors are “on their side” are far more likely to succeed than those with the opposite impression.

Other suggestions for the first class include:

- Have a lesson prepared for the first day - Even if only a small portion of the content is covered, having a “taste” of the curriculum will help students settle into the course more quickly.
- Assign homework – this could be a textbook reading, a syllabus “quiz,” or a writing assignment. Assigning work will help students understand the expectations of the class.
- Have fun - If students see that the instructor is engaged and excited about the course, they will quickly catch that enthusiasm.
- Get to know students through informational activities and icebreakers.