

College Q and A 1

Q. Freshman Orientation class is offered at my school, but it isn't required. Since it may not count toward my degree, should I still take it? A. Yes you should take it. It is widely agreed by professionals who work with college students that freshman orientation courses help students be more successful in college. For that reason alone, you should take it. You will most likely do some or all of the following in an orientation class; learn how your new campus “does things’, find out about important resources on campus and where they are available, discuss time and stress management, interact regularly with a college employee who can be a resource to you throughout college, and meet other students (maybe in your major). Based on the research of a couple of men named Vincent Tinto and Alexander Astin (among others), colleges do what’s called “frontloading” resources for new students (making them available to you when you first get to school and during the first year). In my opinion, freshman orientation class is one of the best means of delivering those resources. Take the class, and have them contact me if someone doesn’t think you should.

Q. I'm still undecided between two colleges (university of tulsa and st. gregory's university) and I just received a scholarship offer from one of them. Is it wrong to accept the scholarship if I'm not certain I'm going to school there? A. No, it’s not! It may not serve that institution very well if you end up going to school somewhere else, but that’s not your concern. Until and unless you decide NOT to go to a particular school, you should accept any financial offer they make you. I don’t mean to suggest you be dishonest at all, and you are very unlikely to receive offers of federal financial aid from more than one school – either way, DON’T accept more than one of those! But you did the hard work to earn the scholarships, right? And you want the money if you go to that school, right? Then let the college worry about finding somebody else to use the scholarship at the last minute, if you cancel out on them. It’s not like there aren’t dozens of people who would gladly accept the money at the last minute, if offered… But you MUST notify the college(s) you don’t choose, AS SOON AS you make a decision – REALLY, as soon as you make a decision! Otherwise you’re not being honest.

Q. Are fraternities and sororities really just for the rich, snobby kids? It seems like joining one might be kind of fun... A. No. And the Greek system (as we like to call it) isn’t really that interested in the snobs either. My experience with the Greek system includes a wide variety of family income levels, GPA’s, interests, attitudes, and academic abilities – everywhere on the spectrum, actually. People more often choose to “go Greek” for the leadership opportunities, sports, social activities or friendship than they do for status. It’s not for everyone, though. Submit questions to the College Answer Guy at lance@collegeanswerguy.com and visit <http://www.collegeanswerguy.com> as well as <http://www.collegeprep101.com>.