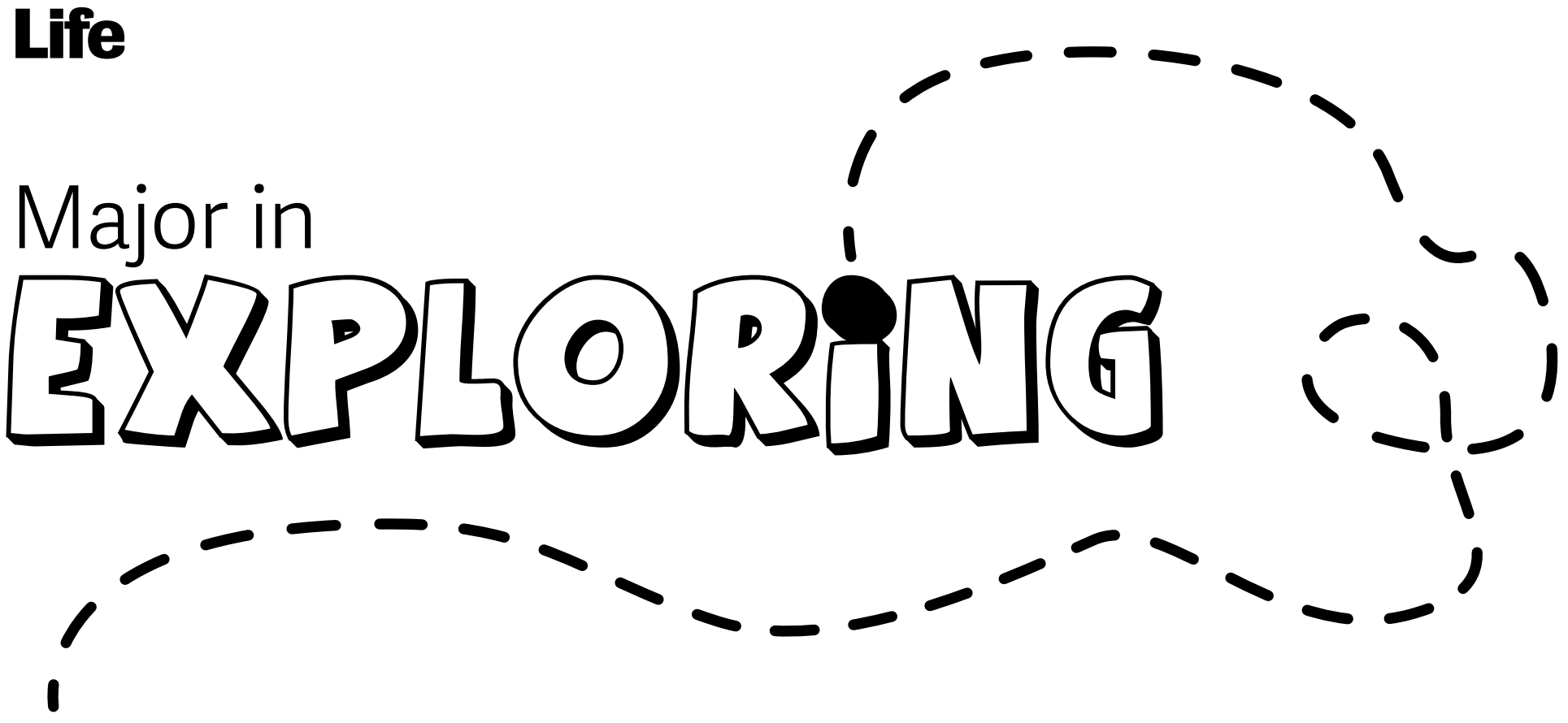
Life



by Ky'Lynn Monts

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Somewhere along the way, people picked up the idea that you should stay in your lane; if you're a writer, you should stick to writing or if you're an athlete you should stick to sports. I understand that there are advantages to specializing in one's craft and dedicating more time to mastering something, but college is the perfect time to try something, or even everything, new.

The saying, "jack of all trades, master of none," discourages branching out too much, even in your field. So, as you start your freshman year of college, here are my tips on how to become a "jack of all trades, master of some" and not be boxed in by your own niche.

Identify your core strengths and interests

Before branching out, you have to figure out what you already enjoy and what you're naturally good at. Now this doesn't mean choosing one thing and sticking to it, but instead looking internally at the skills and interests that you could build on. Say you're a strong writer but are also interested in photography. Maybe sit in at a Daily Campus Photo meeting on a Sunday night at 9 pm. and cover a couple of events, or if you're a finance bro but you love sports maybe go join the UCTV sports section.

Your interests don't have to compete with each other. They can be different, which in turn can make you a more well-rounded and balanced individual, which helps you discover combinations of skills that make you stand out in the future.

Don't be afraid to be a beginner

As I write this, I admit it's even hard for me to try some things that I'm not already good at. Luckily as a freshman, you're surrounded by people who are also figuring things out, so use that to your advantage. Join a club even if the only thing that interested you was the cool name; if you're trying to fill credit requirements, take that class you know nothing about; or pick up a hobby you've always wanted to try.

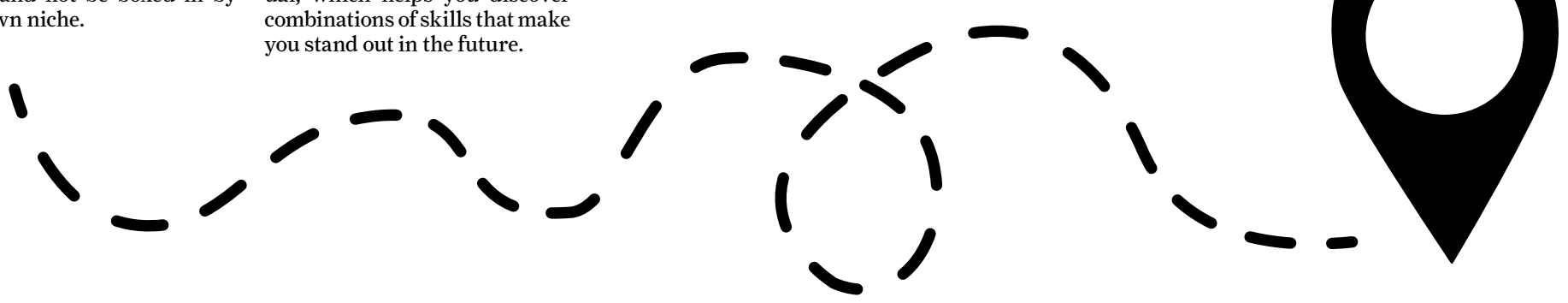
You don't have to immediately be talented in something that you're pursuing. In light of the saying, "Rome wasn't built in a day," being a beginner is a part of finding out what you might eventually become good at.

Say "yes" to unexpected opportunities

College is full of opportunities that you won't know about unless you put yourself out there. And I know I sound like every orientation leader, but go to that meeting, attend that event, talk to someone in a different major or apply for something even if you're not sure you're qualified. I mean, hey, I worked at The Daily Campus as an incoming freshman and couldn't (still couldn't) tell you the first thing about running a paper, but I did meet my best friends here, so a win is a win. What I'm saying is you don't have to say "yes" to everything, but being open to new experiences can introduce you to new interests, people and opportunities you would've never found otherwise.

Don't let your major define you

Choosing a major doesn't mean you have to limit your learning to that one subject. Your major is only one part of your college experience, not a box you have to stay inside of. Join clubs that have nothing to do with your degree and continue pursuing the interests you had before college. You can be an engineering student who dances, a film student who loves poetry or a biology student who loves filmmaking. The goal shouldn't be to have one perfect niche, but rather to build a combination of skills and intrigues that make you uniquely you.



Five tips on how to excel at UConn

by Jaylyn Davis

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Welcome, Class of 2030! As you all move in, say goodbye to your families, and immerse yourselves into WOW Weekend's ecstatic events, you may be feeling a mixture of emotions. You may be thrilled to start this new chapter of your life, you might be anxious about getting adapted to it or you may be feeling something in between.

Regardless of how you are all feeling, college can be a vastly different experience. Sometimes, that experience can become overwhelming. However, these five tips will help you flourish in your first semester at the University of Connecticut and beyond!

#1: Don't rush yourself

If you are overly ambitious, you might assume that you need to obtain an on-campus job, a leadership position, a research grant, or some other colossal achievement by the end of your first year. That is not true!

Your first year is all about exploring your interests, making new friends and getting adjusted to college life. Your undergraduate career consists of four years. That gives you plenty of time to find an internship, do research and accomplish your other goals. There is no need to stress over having all the items on your goal list checked off by the end of your first year.

#2: Prioritize self-care

It's crucial to take care of yourself, especially as you progress into your first semester. Getting perfect grades on essays and exams requires eight or more hours of sleep each night. It also involves being active and having a proper diet. It's not to say that you should eat nothing but fruit and vegetables. However, adding those things to your meals is critical to having a healthy mind for classes, midterms, projects and finals.

Besides consuming decent meals, make sure to shower a few times a week to stay clean. It's also essential to use deodorant, brush your hair, wash your clothes and drink lots of water to maintain good personal hygiene.

#3: Take advantage of UConn's extracurricular opportunities

UConn has so much to offer. From student organizations to club sports, the campus has something for everybody.

One of the best ways to enrich your college experience is getting involved in extracurricular activities. Not only will it prevent you from getting bored between classes, but it will allow you to make new friends, acquire new skills and hone your resume.

There are a lot of different resources you can use to get involved on campus. UConntact is a great place to start! There is also the Involvement Fair taking place on Sept. 9 from 2 to 6 p.m. on Fairfield Way. Attending that will give you a chance to connect with UConn's many student organizations.

#4: Don't be afraid to ask for help

We all have those days when we struggle on something, whether it's a class or a project. As you begin your college journey, one important thing to remember is that you're not alone. If you are ever in need of assistance, do not hesitate to utilize UConn's resources. The Quantitative Center and Writing Center are here if you need help with science and writing endeavors. Your professors and teaching assistants are available for guidance as well. You can visit their office hours whenever you have questions or concerns for them.

Asking for help may be intimidating. However, it is well worth it since it will boost your chances for success and help you learn from your mistakes.

#5: Believe in yourself

Right now, you may have doubts about thriving at UConn. You might be tense about whether you'll find your community, pass your midterms, etc. But just remember that you got this! You've already overcome a major hurdle by getting into UConn; what lies ahead are much smaller hurdles. As you initiate your first year at UConn, keep your head up high and maintain a positive attitude because being optimistic can go a long way in creating triumphs.

Once again, welcome to UConn. Whether you are feeling apprehensive or joyful, following one or more of these tips will help you make the best out of your UConn life. Good luck on your college journeys!



Students watching UConn Smash club's display. The Spring Involvement Fair took place in Gampel Pavillion on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026.
PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS