

Academic Programs in the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources

Some programs offer both majors and minors and permit you to specialize in science, business or production.

Agribusiness*
 Agribusiness and Applied Economics**
 Agricultural Economics*
 Agricultural Systems Management*
 Animal Sciences
 Biotechnology*
 Cellular and Molecular Biology**
 Cereal Science**
 Crop and Weed Sciences*
 Economics*
 Entomology**
 Equine Studies*
 Food Safety
 Food Science*
 General Agriculture*
 Genomics**
 Horticulture
 International Agribusiness**
 Microbiology
 Molecular Pathogenesis**
 Natural Resources Management
 Plant Pathology**
 Plant Sciences**
 Pre-Veterinary Medicine*
 Range Science
 Soil Science
 Sports and Urban Turfgrass Management*
 Veterinary Technology*

*undergraduate programs only
 **graduate programs only

Additional opportunities

A major in agricultural and biosystems engineering is available through the NDSU College of Engineering and Architecture.

A major in agricultural communication is available through the NDSU College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

A major in agricultural education is available through the NDSU College of Human Development and Education.

NDSU is an equal opportunity institution.

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A Family Guide to Student Success

in the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources



NDSU

North Dakota State University
 Fargo



www.ag.ndsu.edu/academics

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College experiences exert a strong influence on students. They will have educational experiences entirely different from those they encountered previously, and will find the competition and stimulation to be far more intense. It is important that families and students understand the expectations of this new learning environment.

Families should be aware that attending college is an important lifetime event for their student; an opportunity to continue the “growing up” process of a maturing adolescent. In our campus newspaper, a student described what she thought the college experience should be:

“College is a time for a person to find out who they really are. College is a time that’s meant to be for establishing your priorities and values. It’s a time to test and try these values.”

Post-secondary education requires a major commitment — not only by students, but also by their families. The first task is selecting the “right” university that “fits” the student academically, socially and financially. The second critical task is for family and friends to provide emotional support from the freshman year through the process of graduating and finding employment in his or her chosen field.

The faculty and staff in the NDSU College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources believe that the more family members know about higher education, the better the quality of the student support system.

This pamphlet was prepared by the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources Advising Committee to help families of students enrolling in the College to prepare for their student’s adventure into post-secondary education.

We believe that the assistance of knowledgeable and supportive families, combined with a helpful and caring campus environment, can increase the probability of student success.

Enhancing Academic Success

Evidence indicates that the transition from high school to college is easier when everyone involved freely expresses the expectations and concerns they may have for the future. Families vary greatly, and so do the emotions experienced during this major event in life.

The list of topics that follows may be helpful for you and your student to discuss as he or she prepares for college. The discussions may serve to clarify some emotional and practical considerations, and they set the stage for ongoing discussions especially during the first year.

- Student goals (what do you want to become and how do you plan to get there?)
- Family expectations of the student and the student expectations of the family
- Getting the most from the college experience
 - Attending NDSU orientation activities prior to the start of classes
 - Setting academics as a top priority
 - Attending and participating in classes
 - Dedicating time and energy to studying
 - Completing course requirements on time
- Becoming connected
 - Making friends
 - Getting to know professors and advisers
 - Joining course (subject) study groups
 - Joining fraternities, sororities or campus clubs
- Where to get help
 - Feeling free to ask for academic and personal assistance
 - Taking advantage of campus resources (student services, library, computer clusters, wellness center, emergency facilities, etc.)

■ Lifestyle

- Budgeting time, money and health activities to meet needs
- Balancing employment and study commitments
If the student has extensive work commitments, reducing the number of credits is appropriate. (Note: This may extend the graduation date.)
- Living in a residence hall
- Attending university-sponsored forums, lectures, athletic events, etc.
- Participating in co-curricular activities
- Continuing family customs, traditions or faith-based activities

During family discussions, other topics will certainly surface. Depending on the family's experience with college, they may (or may not) feel comfortable in providing advice. This may be a good time to reinforce core values and provide reassurances. Many students arrive at NDSU with only hazy views of their upcoming challenges, and even less well-defined plans for their futures. Most learn how to adapt to the college life rapidly, explore opportunities in their beginning year, and graduate as confident, competent, self-reliant individuals. Core values of commitment, integrity, fairness, respect, best-efforts and trustworthiness serve students well.

Faculty are aware of the skills, knowledge and behaviors needed for successful careers, and they will challenge students to meet expectations. This may result in difficult situations and student frustrations. Families can help students prepare for difficult situations by acknowledging that they will occur, that many can be prevented if the student fulfills obligations well (and on time), that difficulties are opportunities to learn and perhaps adjust priorities, and that single blemishes (like a failed course) will not normally cripple a career. If you perceive that your student is pursuing drastic action (quitting school, self-harm, self-medication) to relieve frustrations, please contact us immediately.

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Selecting a Major

Students may ask others for advice, but the final decision about which major to pursue rests with the student. Do not be surprised or discouraged if your student changes majors one or more times or if it takes more than four years to graduate. It is not uncommon for students to change majors. Before making the change, the student should consult with resource people available on campus, including counselors and academic advisers, and gather accurate information about the newly selected field.

Student/Parent Contact

Communication between student and family is often smoother if they share expectations on the nature and frequency of interaction. Should contact be regular or sporadic? How often? By phone, e-mail or letter? What about visits? Will the family visit during the semester? Is the student expected home regularly? For special events, holidays? What about summer breaks and family vacations? As in all areas of discussion, flexibility is important. Situations and opportunities may change, but feelings are less likely to be hurt if some agreement has been reached before the student leaves for college.

Personal Possessions

Basic requirements include clothing for the first semester (August-December), personal items, electronic devices and items to personalize the room. A personal computer may be convenient, but the university has a large number of computer clusters available for student use. It is a good idea to check with the future roommate before finalizing plans for what to bring to college. Many students do not try to take everything to campus the first week. They wait to see how much they will need. Remember, space in a residence hall room is limited.

Arrival on Campus/Visits

Will family members and friends assist the student in his or her move to campus? How involved should family members be in the move? This is a family decision; however, the wishes of the student are very important to the final decision.

First Year Academic Credit Load

Most full-time students enroll for 12 to 16 academic credits in their first semester of college. The number of credits is balanced by the requirements of the major, the capability of the student and the student's employment needs. It is important to be sure that the combination of classes and work does not create an overload. Academic advisers can be helpful sources of information in this regard. The credit load can be adjusted following the first semester.

Monitoring Academic Progress

Federal law (FERPA) prevents the university from openly providing grades or financial information to families. If students wish to share this information, they need to sign release forms. Discussing this issue in advance may help to reduce possible tensions.

Academic Advising

Each student entering the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources is assigned a faculty academic adviser. The adviser will help guide the student to achieve intellectual, educational and professional goals. For a student to receive full benefit of the student/adviser relationship, early and frequent contact with the adviser is recommended.

Faculty Expectations of Students in the Classroom

While North Dakota State University and the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources encompass many types of teaching and learning opportunities and styles, most NDSU instructors share similar expectations of students that are important for improving learning:

- investing the necessary time and effort to prepare for class;
- participating in all class activities;
- being courteous and supportive to fellow students and teachers;
- meeting time deadlines for completing all class assignments;
- applying what they learn in class to their outside lives, and bringing their experiences to class.

Full-time students must realize that mastering their education is a full-time job.



Summary

Graduation from the university requires several significant responsibilities:

- active communication between the student and family, friends and faculty;
- a sound financial plan;
- a sincere desire and sustained efforts by the student to graduate;
- selection of a college and major (career path) that are appropriate for the student;
- an understanding by the student that although the faculty, administrators and staff are available and willing to provide assistance to students who need support, the student must ask for that assistance.

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College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources

For More Information

If you have questions or seek additional information to help make your student's academic experience in the NDSU College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources a successful one, you are encouraged to contact us.

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