Introduction to the Robert and Patricia Gussin Spiritan Division of Academic Programs
The Robert and Patricia Gussin Spiritan Division of Academic Programs provides you with an opportunity to grow and develop at your own pace during your freshman year at Duquesne.

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"From the moment I began looking into what the Spiritan Division has to offer, I knew I had a chance. They have given me a wide array of opportunities and experiences that have helped me grow in many aspects—both academically and socially. It is a great portion of my success."

Hannah Scipio, Class of 2016

Robert and Patricia Gussin Spiritan Division of Academic Programs

Introduction
Duquesne University is dedicated to education for the mind, heart and spirit, and the Gussin Spiritan Division stands as a hallmark of that dedication. Named for the religious congregation of priests and brothers that founded the University in 1878, and a distinguished alumnus and his wife who endowed the department in 2004, the Gussin Spiritan Division specializes in helping students of varying backgrounds develop their full potential as students and citizens of the world. The Division’s well-developed and performance-tested system of personal guidance and learning assistance supports the student’s transition from high school diploma to college degree.

Your admission to the University confirms that you have the wherewithal to meet our academic standards. There are, of course, academic goals that you must achieve in order to continue enrollment, and your academic average—known at Duquesne as the Quality (Grade) Point Average (QPA/GPA)—is a driving force.

Transitions
The Gussin Spiritan Division is dedicated to helping you maximize your chances of college success. While there are many factors that will impact that success, chief among them is a solid transition to college life:

1. You will make successful college transitions when you learn to adapt to new environments and new situations—like having a different schedule each weekday, having a roommate for the first time, balancing social, personal and academic responsibilities, and taking care of such things as your own checking account or making and keeping your own appointments. The Gussin Spiritan Division is here to help you as you learn to make these and other transitions.

2. Solid college transitions require solid academic skills, too. There are many academic skills necessary for college success with reading, studying, writing, editing and critical thinking as the most important ones.

3. Your success is the Division’s goal, and to that end, you will have high quality academic support should problems arise.

4. The Gussin Spiritan Division faculty and staff will support you through successful completion of our first-year 33-credit curriculum and help you successfully transition to your sophomore year. The Division holds various transfer relationships with the College and the schools that will be discussed with you during the spring semester of your freshman year.
• Your school of choice may have specific academic requirements that you must meet to be admitted. Familiarize yourself with those requirements and work to achieve them so you can make a successful transfer.

5. The credits you earn in the Division will apply to your degree program in whatever school you enroll, either as core or as elective courses. Core courses are those that all students, regardless of school or major, must complete.

6. The solid transitions you make while in the Division will be the foundation for your success.

Success
Division students are highly successful and competitive. Their freshmen academic performance is often superior to that of other Duquesne freshmen. For instance, 34.5 percent of a recent cohort attained QPAs of 3.0 and above, with 13.5 percent of them achieving Dean’s List (3.5 and above).

The Gussin Spiritan Division has served students for more than 30 years through a series of programs designed to promote and support success. We are here to help you achieve success, too.

Commonly Asked Questions about the Gussin Spiritan Division and the Summer Semester

1. Why was I accepted into the Gussin Spiritan Division instead of the School to which I applied (Liberal Arts, Natural and Environmental Sciences, Business, Education, Health Sciences, Pharmacy, Nursing, Music)?
Applications are reviewed individually, and the decision to admit you into the Division is based on your admissions application. Admitting you to the Spiritan Division will enable you, like others before you, to thrive as a first-year student. Should you have any questions about the admission decision, you should contact Debra Zugates, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, at 412.396.5211.

2. My letter says that I have to participate in a summer residential semester. What is that and why do I have to attend?
The Summer Semester is an early start program designed to help you make a successful transition from high school to college. Over the five-week period, you will take credit courses and develop your academic and social skills.

You will have the opportunity to integrate into a learning community with your fellow students, and you will be introduced into the culture of the University and the Division.

You’ll start the fall semester with a QPA, progress toward your degree and a network of more than 50 students.

3. Will I earn college credit for my work in the Summer Semester?
Yes, you will earn a maximum of six college credits, assuming that you complete all course and program requirements at a satisfactory level.

A. The English course, Thinking and Writing Across the Curriculum, is a core requirement for all freshmen, and your final grade will be on your permanent transcript. If you pass this course, you will be enrolled in the English course, Imaginative Literature and Critical Writing, also a core requirement, for the fall semester.

B. In addition to your core English course, your summer semester will include three one-credit courses, and your final grade for each one will be on your permanent transcript:
   • Introduction to University Success, a Division core requirement, is an introduction to college in general and Duquesne in particular.
   • Strategies for Academic Success, another Division core requirement, will focus on developing the study skills—class note taking, critical reading, etc.—that you will need to be a successful college student.
   • Research and Information Skills is a University core course that will introduce you to the use of multi-media tools to examine subjects and issues relevant to your curriculum.

4. Are there other Division requirements I must complete before I can declare my major?
Yes, there are other Division requirements that you must meet:

A. The Division curriculum includes several University core requirements that are “cohort anchor” courses, i.e., courses taken with other Division students and taught by Division faculty.

B. In addition to the credit courses you will take in the summer and the two-semester academic year, you will be enrolled in labs and seminars that complete the Division curriculum.

C. You will be required to participate in the social and team-building events built into the Summer Semester.

D. It is expected that you will attend all Division social and cultural events during your first year at Duquesne, including but not limited to the reception held spring semester of your freshman year.

You can apply to your intended school and declare your major once you have met all Division requirements; usually by the end of your first year.

5. When does the Summer Semester start? End?
The Summer Semester begins the third or fourth weekend of June with a student and parent orientation and luncheon and ends with the last class on the last Friday of July.

6. I live in Pittsburgh/the Pittsburgh area. Why do I have to live on campus for the Summer Semester?
Successful college transitions begin with adaptations to new environments and new situations. Living away from home for an extended period may be a new experience, and the residence hall (we call them living-learning centers) itself will present a new environment. Add to that the fact that you will be managing your own time, perhaps for the first time in your life, and it is easy to see why campus residence is a requirement of the Summer Semester.
7. I have medical appointments scheduled for weekdays, and my family has important evening events during the summer. Will I be allowed to keep my appointments during class time and go home to my family on weekday evenings?

Requests for special permission to leave campus during the week are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. It is generally best to schedule medical appointments for weekends or before or after the Summer Semester. While we recognize the importance of family events, sometimes these events interfere with your need to write a paper or prepare for an exam. It is best to reserve these events for weekends or schedule them before the Summer Semester begins in June or after its end in July.

8. Am I able to go home over weekends, or do I have to stay on campus the whole time?

You may leave campus for home after your last class on any Friday during the Summer Semester, and you must be back in the residence hall by Sunday night.

9. Will I be permitted to leave the Summer Semester before the end of summer classes?

Students who want to earn the six course credits must remain on campus until the end of the Summer Semester in July. There are no exceptions to this policy.

10. Will there be a curfew?

Yes, there will be a curfew. It and all residence hall regulations will be fully explained to you on the first evening of the Summer Semester.

11. Can my parents visit me during the Summer Semester? How long can they stay?

Your parents may visit you at any time, but not while you’re in class or while you’re involved in scheduled activities. They are free to stay as long as they want.

12. Besides clothes, what should I bring with me for the Summer Semester?

You may bring a TV or microwave, but these are not necessary. When deciding to bring such equipment to the Summer Semester, remember that it cannot be stored on campus between the end of the Summer Semester and the beginning of the fall semester without approval from Residence Life at 412.396.6655.

13. Will I need a computer for the Summer Semester?

Yes, bring your computer. Many computer labs around campus will also be open for your use; their hours can vary.

14. Are there any special events that I should consider when packing my clothes for the Summer Semester?

There will be outings calling for casual clothes and shoes and one or two special evening events calling for you to wear a shirt and tie or dress.

15. Will I have a roommate? Can I have a private room?

You will have a roommate for the Summer Semester. Having a roommate will help you build a new relationship, one that may last a lifetime. Having a private room would deny you the opportunity to form such a relationship.

16. How many different courses will I have to take during the Summer Semester?

In addition to the three-credit English course and the three one-credit courses, you will be taking non-credit courses that will introduce you to the demands of the college experience. The number of courses varies from summer to summer.

17. Is there a fee for the Summer Semester? Is it the same as my enrollment deposit?

The enrollment deposit you return to the Office of Admissions is to hold your place in class and the residence hall (if applicable) at Duquesne for the fall semester. The Summer Semester fee is assessed by and should be returned to the Gussin Spiritan Division. The fee covers costs for meals and materials. The Division pays the cost of your housing.

Please refer to the insert for this year’s Summer Semester fee. Keep in mind that the Summer Semester fee is in addition to the tuition for the six credits you will be taking during the Summer Semester.

18. What is the cost of the tuition for the six credits I will be taking in the Summer Semester and will I be eligible for Summer Semester financial aid?

There is a special reduced tuition rate for your six Summer Semester credits. For this reason, financial aid does not apply to your Summer Semester tuition bill. Please refer to the insert for this year’s Summer Semester tuition rate. There will also be a cost for books for your courses, which, depending on whether you buy used or new text books, can run between $100 and $300.

19. Can I work during the Summer Semester?

You may use your weekend free time to work. The hours you are scheduled to work cannot conflict with required Summer Semester activities.

20. Will the courses I take in the Gussin Spiritan Division during my freshman year count toward my degree?

Division courses absolutely will count toward your degree program, starting with the English 101 and Research and Information Skills courses you will take during the Summer Semester. In fact, most of the courses you will be taking as a Division freshman are UCOR (University core) courses, i.e., courses that all freshmen at Duquesne must complete. Those that are not UCOR courses will count as electives in your intended school’s curriculum. Every school at Duquesne provides opportunities for students to take elective courses.

21. Will I be able to graduate within the time frame established by the College or the Duquesne school to which I wish to transfer?

Duquesne University has much higher than average retention and graduation rates and offers academic support services to assist you in reaching your goals. Assuming that you pass all of your courses, you do not change your major once you have declared it, and you take a regular course load, you can graduate within the established time frame.

22. How will being a Division student affect my financial aid?

Generally, there will be no effect on your financial aid after the Summer Semester. Because the per credit tuition rate for your summer courses is already discounted, financial aid does not apply. If you are a scholarship recipient or want to qualify for a particular scholarship program for your sophomore year, you should investigate eligibility requirements during the fall semester of your freshman year to make sure you will qualify. You will, of course, benefit financially from the reduced tuition rate for the Summer Semester courses you will be taking.

23. What do former Spiritan students say about their experience?

“Support,” “preparation” and “personal attention” are terms often used by Spiritan students. They also indicate that the Summer Semester provides a smooth transition to college. Students appreciate that when the fall semester begins, they already know their way around campus and have made connections with other students. Many students say that the program gives them an instant network of more than 50 other people and that is beneficial during their time at Duquesne, and beyond.
Duquesne University Notice of Nondiscrimination and Nonharassment Policy

Duquesne University is motivated by its Catholic identity and values equality of opportunity, human dignity, racial, cultural and ethnic diversity, both as an educational institution and as an employer.

Accordingly, the University prohibits and does not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability or status as a veteran or disabled veteran.

Duquesne University will continue to take affirmative action steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University mission statement.

This policy applies to all programs and activities of the University, including, but not limited to, admission and employment practices, educational policies, scholarship and loan programs and athletic or other University-sponsored programs.

This is a commitment by the University in accordance with its religious values and applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Nothing herein, however, should be interpreted as a waiver by the University of its own Constitutional and legal rights based upon its religious affiliation.