

# TIPS I WISH I KNEW: HOW TO APPROACH OFFICE HOURS

Going to office hours can feel intimidating, especially during your first year of college. However, attending office hours can help you master the material, build connections with your professors, and can help you make sure you stay on top of your academic work. Taking that first step to attend office hours can help you feel more confident in doing so in the future. Here are some tips to help you approach office hours!

## **You don't have to have a question specific to the course material**

You can use office hours as a way to get to know your professors. Ask them about their research, how they got to the position they are in, or even for career advice! You will find that your professors are passionate about what they do and love to share their knowledge with students. You can also ask them to delve deeper on a topic you learned about in class if you are interested in learning more.

## **Come prepared**

Know what you want to talk about before going in. This will ensure that you get the most out of your time. Do you have a specific question about a topic covered in a lecture? Do you want to know more about their research? Do you want to go over a question you missed on a quiz? Coming prepared can help you feel more confident and will also show your professor that you are a dedicated student. I suggest reviewing what it is you want to clarify before. Say, for example, you are working through a math problem that you don't fully understand. Start by attempting the problem to help you narrow down what it is that is confusing to you. Are you confused about how to use the equation? Are you confused about what comes after the first step? Attempting it and going over your attempt with your professor will help them see your thinking process which can better help them help you. This same logic applies to a quiz question, a confusing reading, or lecture topic. Explain to them what you do understand or how you understand it so they can help you figure out where in your train of thought you are getting lost.

**Go in a group**

Some professors will host drop-in office hours, allowing more than one student to be there at a time. If you feel that having other people there would help you feel less intimidated, find a friend from the class and go to office hours together! Many students may join alone initially, but if you attend office hours consistently, you may find yourself making friends with the other regulars. Not only will this make attending less intimidating, it will also help you find new study partners!

**Go early in the semester**

Visiting office hours later in the semester may feel more intimidating. You may also find that office hours will be busier the closer you get to the final exam. Going early on in the semester and establishing that relationship with your professor ahead of time may make it easier for you to continue going or make you feel more comfortable going later in the semester. However, it is never too late to go to office hours!