AN INTRODUCTION TO FRANKLIN & MARSHALL COLLEGE

Franklin & Marshall College Mission

Franklin & Marshall College is a residential college dedicated to excellence in undergraduate liberal education. Its aims are to inspire in young people of high promise and diverse backgrounds a genuine and enduring love for learning, to teach them to read, write and think critically, to instill in them the capacity for both independent and collaborative action, and to educate them to explore and understand the natural, social and cultural worlds in which they live. In so doing, the College seeks to foster in its students qualities of intellect, creativity and character, that they may live fulfilling lives and contribute meaningfully to their occupations, their communities, and their world.

Today, with approximately 2,400 students, Franklin & Marshall College proudly continues its dedication to intellectual freedom and critical learning as fundamental to a democratic society. As its mission statement affirms, this means that it expects students to see connections, to discover community and to understand the centrality of service to the human endeavor.

What this means for you - The focus at F&M will not be of a vocational nature. You will be prepared for your future in a broad way with a variety of skills.

The Franklin & Marshall Curriculum

The Franklin & Marshall curriculum combines a spirit of innovation with a strong sense of tradition. It encompasses elements that prepare students for the cross-disciplinary nature of knowledge in the twenty-first century while preserving the depth offered by disciplinary majors and the breadth associated with distributional requirements (a Natural Sciences course and one course in each of the following: the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and Non-Western Cultures). The graduation requirements provide sufficient structure to ensure that students receive a general education in the liberal arts while offering enough choice to allow the construction of an individualized educational experience.

Students construct their education by selecting courses in each of the three parts that compose the Franklin & Marshall curriculum: General Education, the Major and Electives. General education requirements consist of Foundations, Distribution requirements, a Language Studies requirement, and the First-Year Writing requirement.

Electives can be chosen at will. Electives enable a student to pursue interests outside the major, to gain additional depth of knowledge in the major or a related field and to explore unfamiliar areas of learning. During the final two years, students may choose to complete a number of special educational opportunities including collaborations, off-campus study, internships for academic credit and independent study projects.

What this means for you - You will take a wide variety of courses, and you will also focus on at least one area of study through your major. There will be a lot of opportunities for you to explore subject areas along the way both inside and outside of the classroom.
An academic advisor will assist you to navigate some of these opportunities as well as the curriculum and registration process. You will have a general advisor for your first year, and a new advisor from your major department once you declare your major. This will occur during your second year of study.

The Integration of Academic and Residential Learning

Franklin & Marshall College offers an integrated learning environment where students engage the values of the liberal arts both through the curriculum and in their lives outside the formal classroom. Consistent with the Mission Statement of the College, faculty and administrative offices place student learning at the center of their work. Programs and activities guide and support students as they explore a love of learning, the skills of critical thinking, the role of citizenship in their lives and the values of civility. The College challenges students to make the most of the academic program and other educational opportunities offered by this residential campus, to practice mental and physical wellness and to develop their talents and interests as part of an educated and socially responsible community.

The faculty-led College House system is the keystone of Franklin & Marshall’s vision for integrating academic and residential life. While a College House is in a literal sense a student residence, it is more than this. College Houses are led by senior members of the Faculty, the Dons, and by their colleagues, the Prefects, experienced academic and student life professionals. The Houses foster an environment that infuses student life with thoughtful deliberation and intellectual exploration, habits of thought and analysis that will serve students throughout their personal and professional lives. The Houses are the meeting ground where students can interact and network among the extended College family. Together, Faculty Dons, Prefects and students create events that bring faculty, students, alumni/ae, distinguished visitors and professional staff together in formal and informal settings to engage in lively discussions and social interactions that break the barrier between classroom and student residence.

Upon matriculation, all students are assigned to membership in a College House. Although students are not required to live in the House for all four years, this affiliation continues through the entire Franklin & Marshall experience and extends beyond graduation. Most students enter the House System as a member of a residential First-Year Seminar. These seminars introduce students to skills of critical reading, critical thinking, oral communication and information literacy. At the same time, the students live together in the same area of the College House making it possible for discussions of substance about ideas to move easily between the classroom and the residential environment.

What this means for you – Your living environment will also be a learning environment. You will have a relationship with this house throughout your four years of study and it will shape your experience at F&M.