How to Get Involved at UChicago

Most incoming first years participated in a myriad of activities and extracurricular activities in high school. Even if you’re passionate and eager to continue these endeavors at UChicago, though, it can sometimes seem difficult to know where to begin or how to start. Here are a few ways to get involved with your interests or find a new passion entirely on campus!

1. Ask Around
When you first begin at UChicago, you will be greeted with a flurry of information and commotion that can be difficult to process. Many organizations and RSO’s (registered student organization) are eager to engage with the first year class from the beginning, however, so don’t be afraid to ask your new friends, an upperclassman you might know, your UCMP peer mentor, or your resident heads and assistants about activities in general or particular ones relating to your interests. Even if they don’t have an answer, chances are they will know someone who will. Your network in college can seem small at first, but you’ll be amazed how quickly it will grow when you start reaching out.

People are super willing to help, especially at the beginning of the year!

2. Reflect & Research
All this advice is great, but we still have a while to go before Autumn quarter. In the meantime, think about your own interests and what you want to be spending time doing outside of class. Is there something you’ve always thought was cool but never had the chance to explore and participate in before? College is a great place to engage with your curiosities, so don’t be afraid to branch out and try something new! Like I said, there is an incredible diversity of groups you can join, so there’s pretty much something for every interest. In the unlikely case that one does not exist, you can always found your own RSO!

All RSOs can be found on BluePrint (blueprint.uchicago.edu), the involvement management system through the Center for Leadership and Involvement. Here you can explore organizations, events, and connect to groups you’re interested in. Many RSOs can also be found across various social media platforms where you can further connect.
3. Attend SARF

During the first week of classes, also known as Welcome Week, there is an RSO (registered student organization) fair called Student Activities and Resource Fair (SARF). Most years* SARF takes place on the main quad with over 400+ RSOs participating. Registered student organizations range from dance crews to tutoring organizations to service groups to academic and industry themed clubs to cultural and affinity spaces and beyond. Whatever you are interested in; there is most likely an RSO for you! It can be intimidating to approach an RSO and talk with a stranger (social anxiety!) but just remember these organizations exist specifically for UChicago students. You can join an RSO any year of college, but your first year is a fantastic opportunity to establish your roots early.

*This year, SARF will take place via a virtual fair platform on Friday, October 2.

Written by Andy Eller: a third year in the College, majoring in Law, Letters, and Society who enjoys imagining his room is the Regenstein Library and thinking about all of the Shinju Sushi he will eat once he gets back to campus.