Coffee with the Principal
Freshmen On-Track
Background Knowledge

Credits

- 1 year of class = 1 credit
- 1 semester = 0.5 credit

- At end of 1st semester, freshmen students should have 3.5 credits
- At end of one year, freshmen students should have 7.0 credits
- Need a minimum of 5.0 credits to be promoted to sophomore status
Graduation Requirements

- English – 4 credits
- Math – 3 credits
- Science – 3 credits
- Social Studies – 3 credits
  - 0.5 credit must be from a Civics or AP Government course
- Foreign Language – 2 credits
  - Must be from the same language
- Fine Arts – 2 credits
  - Can be from the same arts discipline or multiple arts disciplines
- Computer Science – 1 credit
- P.E. – 4 credits
- Electives – 2 credits
Other Requirements

● Service Learning Hours
  ○ 2 classroom-based Service Projects (1 will be through Civics)
    ■ PE I - Freshmen
    ■ World Language II - Sophomore/Junior
    ■ All Fine Arts (Drama, Music, Art) - Junior/Senior
  ○ Scholars need an additional 40 individual hours

● Driver’s Education Classroom - Pass

● Constitution - Pass

● Consumer Education – Pass

● SAT – Junior Year
Freshmen On Track Overview

- Based on research from the University of Chicago on Chicago Public School students
- Freshmen are “on track” if they earn at least 5 full-year credits and have no more than 1 semester F in a core course
  - At Von, we consider freshmen to be on track if they have no Ds and Fs in ANY course
- Freshmen who are on track are 3.5 times more likely to graduate from high school on time
- Freshman year performance is a more accurate predictor of graduation than test scores or any other background factors
Freshman Year Performance

Grades:
- Freshman year lays the foundation for a student’s grade point average (GPA)
  - At Von, we encourage every student to aim for at least a 3.0 unweighted GPA (B average)
- It is much harder to raise your GPA than students realize
- Freshmen who have 2 semester course failures have only a 55% graduation rate

Attendance:
- High absence rates are strong predictors of dropping out
- Freshmen who miss about 1 week of school (five to nine days) have a 63% chance of graduating on time
Four-Year Graduation Rates by Freshman Course Failures

- Percentage that Graduated in Four Years
  - 0 failures: 85%
  - 1 failure: 70%
  - 2 failures: 55%
  - 3 failures: 42%
  - 4 failures: 33%
  - 5 failures: 25%
  - 6 failures: 13%
  - 7 failures: 11%
  - 8 failures: 7%
  - 9+ failures: 2%

- Semester Course Failures
Four-Year Graduation Rates by Freshman Absence Rates

Percentage that Graduated in Four Years

Days Absent per Semester

Course cutting counted as partial days
Why worry about attendance and GPA now?
GPA & College Acceptances

- Maintaining a strong GPA puts you on track for college acceptances
- Aim for at least a 3.0 unweighted GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Avg. Unweighted GPA (Von)</th>
<th>Avg. Weighted GPA (Von)</th>
<th>Selectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Very Selective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois - Urbana</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Very Selective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin - Madison</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Very Selective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Forest College</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Selective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knox College</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Selective</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Illinois - Chicago</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Somewhat Selective/Selective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Illinois University</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Somewhat Selective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GPA & Scholarships

- Maintaining a strong GPA puts you on track for merit-based aid from colleges and private scholarship opportunities, such as:
  - **Jack Kent Cooke** – 3.5 unweighted to apply – up to $40,000 per year
  - **Pullman** – 3.0 unweighted to apply – up to $10,000 per year scholarship
  - **Wentcher** – 3.0 unweighted to apply – up to $10,000 per year scholarship
Monitoring Grades & Attendance

● Parents should carefully monitor student grades and attendance during freshman year to help students remain on track
● Ensure students come to school every day, on time
● Set up your Parent Portal
● Set up triggers for attendance and grades
  ○ Example: get an email or text if your child’s grade drops below an 80 (B) or a 70 (C) in a class
● Pay attention to attendance robocalls
● Communicate with teachers
● Promote strong study habits:
  ○ Provide a quiet space
  ○ Limit phone use
  ○ Encourage students to write down assignments and deadlines in their agenda book and plan out time for homework and studying
Supports at Von

- Classroom lessons on Freshman On Track & high school requirements
- Individual counseling meetings with off-track freshmen
- Homework help/tutoring PAWS Program

**POSITIVE ACADEMIC WORK SESSION**

PAWS will be held from 3-4pm Monday-Thursday each week.

Students are encouraged to bring a friend, do homework, and get support in academic areas!

- **English** - Room 420
- **History** - Room 316
- **Math** - Room 104
- **Computer Science** - 212
- **Fine Arts** - Various
  - *Drama* - Tuesday (Room 224)
  - *Chorus* - Wednesday (Room 303)
  - *Art* - Wednesday (Room 324)
  - *Band* - Thursday (Room 305)
- **Foreign Language** - 220
  - *Spanish* - Monday and Wednesday
  - *French* - Tuesday and Wednesday
  - *Chinese* - Wednesday
- **Science** - Various
  - *Chemistry* - Monday, Wednesday, Thursday (Room 413)
  - *Biology* - Tuesday and Thursday (Room 315)
  - *Physics* - Wednesday (Room 215)