

PACE WELCOME GUIDE

A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE ON NAVIGATING THE PACE PROGRAM

**By Josh Perez
UF PaCE Student, Class of 2019**

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Congratulations! You've Just Been Admitted.

On behalf of myself, and everyone here at the University of Florida, congratulations and welcome! UF has a ton of options and opportunities for you to pursue your education, and PaCE is one path that I am excited to share with you.

My name is Josh Perez, and I was a PaCE student at the University of Florida. You've worked hard throughout high school, and the faculty and staff are pleased that you've considered the University of Florida as the path to realize your future success.

There are a few questions you may possibly have regarding PaCE, including (but not limited to) how classes work, where you'll live, how you'll get around (if living in Gainesville), where you'll eat, how you plan to get involved, and what extra stuff you have access to here. I understand that certain aspects of your admission may be unclear or confusing to you, and that is why I've created this guide.

PaCE is a relatively new program to the University, and certainly not a program fit for every student. There are certain characteristics of a student who can do well in PaCE, and this welcome guide is meant to help you make your decision, and ease any qualms or confusion. I hope you find some clarity from my experience having been in PaCE during its inaugural year. The goal is to help you make an educated decision best fit for you: the student.

Again, congratulations on your admission to the University of Florida, and Go Gators!

Sincerely,

Josh Perez

UF PaCE Student, Class of 2019

Important Contact Information & Social Media

Business Academic Advisors & Career Coaches

In the Heavener School of Business, you are welcome to meet with any of the Academic Advisors & Career Coaches.

- **Email:** undergraduate.business@ufl.edu
- **Appointment Scheduling:** (352) 273-0165

*Phone appointments are available for PaCE students

- [Walk-In Advising Schedule](#)

General Contacts

For general, non-academic questions:

- [New Student & Family Programs Staff](#)
- Email: studentsuccess@ufonline.edu

UF OneStop

For questions about financial aid or admissions processing, contact the [UF OneStop](#).

- Email: ufonlineonestop@mail.ufl.edu
- Phone: (352) 294-3290

Facebook Pages

Are you on Facebook? Parents, check out the group “PaCE Parents,” and student’s, stay tuned for a “UF PaCE Class of 2024” group.

Why Am I in PaCE?

I know that a very significant question both you and your family may have: “**Why am I in PaCE?**” This is a very legitimate inquiry to have, and it’s the same one I asked as soon as I’d finished reading my admissions letter. The straightforward answer is: there isn’t enough space on campus.

UF is not able to accommodate every capable student who applies to UF, but the PaCE program was created because they identified you as having demonstrated potential. Instead of getting an Associate’s Degree from another institution and then applying to transfer, taking online classes at UF and meeting the transition requirements is an alternative path to campus.

If you are one of the admitted PaCE students who may feel as if they received the short end of the stick – challenge that thinking! PaCE is exactly what you make of it. You can be as connected or disconnected from it as you choose. At the end of the day, it’s up to you to make your impact AS a PaCE student, not despite it!

This program was created for students, and I am here to tell you as your peer that it has been a very rewarding experience so far. My best advice to you is to learn how to adapt. To tie this into your major, business is about evolving and adapting. These evolutions occur with changes in markets, consumer preferences, and global culture. Take this opportunity by the horns and use it to your advantage.

Is PaCE Right For Me?

One of your first questions when you received your admission was probably, “What’s PaCE?” You may have learned a bit about it when you were applying in the Fall, or you may have heard about it when your senior friends from last year received their admissions letters to UF. All in all, I’ll say that the admissions letter we received last year didn’t tell much. Most of us were disappointed because we thought we hadn’t gotten in. Some of us were frustrated because PaCE seemed like a “half-admission.”

What I can tell you is that PaCE is not half-admission. The moment you sign your contract for the program, you are a University of Florida Gator. You do get a choice of where you want to take your classes from, though. How PaCE works, you spend your first 60 credits in the online format. Your classes will all be online, and once you complete the critical tracking courses for Business Administration, your classes will transition to on-campus lectures, discussions, labs (if you’re taking a science class), etc.

***There are certain characteristics required to be a student fit for PaCE.**

Time Management

If you have a track record of badly procrastinating, PaCE is probably not an option you want to pursue. Everyone procrastinates every now and then, but be honest with yourself about how often and to what extent you procrastinate.

This is not to say PaCE students are perfect time managers. In fact, I had to readjust the way I approached my classes. Time management is a key skill required to succeed in the program. You either use it, or get it quickly. All of your classes will be online, and with that comes a certain freedom not necessarily available to traditional students.

You choose when to take your class. The due dates remain the same, but you ultimately choose when to learn the material and watch the lectures. Every student at UF takes an online class at some point. Some people have schedules that are mostly online. However, you have to be able to manage your time appropriately. There’s a lot you can get involved with on campus, but remember you probably won’t have a 9:35am lecture you need to get to in the morning.

Set time aside to work on your classes. Structure your own lecture times to sit down and get work done. College is a very independent

experience, and you have even *more* freedom with your education than everyone else. It's very easy to shut your alarm off at 9am to wake up at noon. My suggestion: don't do it often.

Responsibility/Accountability

All college students are held responsible for their own performance in a class, but you arguably have a bit more of a responsibility. You choose your class time in PaCE, so depending on the student, it's easy to forget about a class altogether. Maybe you have three classes with a lot of coursework, and your fourth class could be described as an "easy A".

That "easy A" could easily become a B or lower if you get too comfortable with it. My advice is to treat every class with the same intensity, but realize that you may not have to spend as much time on that easier course. It is easy after all, so try not to make it harder than it has to be. Be responsible with your time.

Honesty

Be honest with yourself and with your family. They want to see you succeed. Hopefully, you want to succeed. If you know you won't be able to handle not having a structured class time, maybe reconsider accepting your admission to UF PaCE. There are lots of aspects to enjoy about your admission to this program, but if you don't see yourself doing as well as you'd prefer, know that the decision you make should be the one best for you!

Patience

An important characteristic required for the PaCE program is patience. In my case, my transition is projected to happen in Spring 2017, meaning I'll have had online classes for four semesters (I'm taking classes this summer). PaCE requires patience because you may get anxious to transition sometimes. This is normal. Just realize this is a process for all of us, and soon you'll be in lectures on campus!

Optimism

This characteristic isn't just important for a PaCE student, but for a college student in general. Online classes may seem hard at first because you aren't in a classroom. Stay optimistic though; it goes by quickly! College can be really tough, whether your courses are online or not. I know a few friends of mine who did really well in high school, and are finding college to be a lot tougher. You have to adapt to the way these courses are taught and how you'll be tested on the material. Speaking from the viewpoint of

someone who took dual enrollment courses at my local community college: UF courses are a bit tougher.

This is in no way meant to deter you. In fact, welcome it as a challenge! Some material will come easier to you as you take classes, but there will be the occasional obstacle that you have to spend a longer period of time trying to understand. Stay positive, and if you ever want someone to talk to, I can be there to talk one-on-one as a friend. In addition, Leigh is a great resource, as is the UF Counseling and Wellness Center!

***There are certain majors you can choose with PaCE.**

This is an aspect of PaCE that some students don't enjoy. When you enter the program, the agreement is that you are able to change majors, but you are limited to certain majors. This sounds really bad.

This is the straightforward fact of PaCE: you have a certain list of majors you can choose from and switch between. In the Heavener School of Business, this rule does still apply even after you transition onto campus classes, although other college's policies may vary. Therefore, the most important thing for you to do is research what the General Studies major is all about, and browse the Areas of Specialization options. If you see something that interests you and are okay with not being able to major in Finance, Information Systems, Marketing, or Management, then you have nothing to worry about!

Classes

Your classes are the most important part of your enrollment at UF. PaCE students obviously have a very unique course environment, but it isn't as obscure as you might think. Most students at UF take online classes, especially in the Heavener School of Business. For most business courses, you will be watching the same exact lecture online as the students who are watching it live in class because each lecture is recorded and published online.

It is important that you take your classes seriously. You cannot use the same studying habits you may have had in high school, unless you were an avid study-bug. You will have to re-invent your ability to study, and figure out which methods of comprehension and learning work best for you. This rule doesn't just apply for PaCE students – this is a philosophy all college students must apply.

Living

At Home

In PaCE, you have a multitude of options for your living situation. If you want to live at home, you have that option. This is a good choice to make if you'd like to save money. You won't have to pay for rent, unless your parents decide to charge you for your childhood room! The only downfall to this decision is that you may feel more isolated from campus activities. If you'd like to get involved on campus (which I really suggest) then this would be a reason not to stay home during your time in PaCE!

Apartment/Townhouse

You also have the option to live in one of the many apartment complexes or townhomes around campus! There are great places to live within a 20-minute bus ride from UF. Some examples of these places are included on the following website, which I encourage you to use to find a roommate and a great place to live off-campus!

<https://housing.offcampus.ufl.edu>

This website is a great option to consider when looking into your admission. Living close to campus is great because you can get involved on campus in different ways. You can get a part-time job, join an organization, and even do your homework in the library (something I do really often). This gives you a sense of inclusion that you may not feel otherwise. The downfall is that you will be paying for rent, but rent for an apartment is typically cheaper than dorms. You are such an important component to the Gator Nation, it would be great to have you join us on campus. But I may just be biased!

PaCE Abroad

If you are a student with the opportunity to travel during your time in PaCE, it would be a great time to take advantage of that! Whether you do it through the business school or on your own, travel is such a great way to expand your education beyond the classroom. Something you'll learn quickly at UF, and specifically in the business school, is that we endorse studying abroad – a lot. In fact, we have an entire advising office in Heavener set aside just for studying abroad. If you have the option, travel!

Transportation

Getting around in Gainesville is a lot easier than you might think. You have three main options for getting around: driving, public transportation, and walking.

Driving/Parking

You're more than welcome to bring your car to Gainesville. No one can control that, and it's a lot easier to make visits home this way. If you do bring your car, be aware that the University of Florida DOES have parking restrictions on campus. The overall restriction is that students without a parking decal cannot park on campus between 7:30am-4:30pm. Here is the website to refer to for parking restrictions: <http://parking.ufl.edu/parking-at-uf/campus-parking-restrictions/>

Public Transportation (Buses)

More than likely, the way you will be going to and from campus is via public transportation. This is the RTS bus system. RTS is not directly affiliated with the University of Florida, however, the traditional students do not have to pay for the bus since it is already integrated into their Tuition & Fees. So technically, they are paying for the bus. If you want to use the bus system, PaCE students will have to purchase a semester pass from the Rosa Parks RTS Downtown Station in order to use the bus. The price of a semester pass is \$60 per semester. This will last you the entirety of your Fall semester, and when you come back in the Spring you will have to purchase a new one.

This is the method I've used to get around Gainesville the entire time I've been here so far, and the \$60 semester pass is a really great option. Here is the RTS website to refer to for fare and passes: <http://go-rtts.com/fares-and-passes/> (Go to Student Passes)

Walking

Walking is the way to get around UF. It's a simple, and free mode of transportation, but also the way you may get around if you choose to live across the street from campus. If you can get to and from campus safely by walking, go right ahead! We want you to be efficient, but safe when navigating around UF.

Food

If you've never been to Gainesville, you may have questions about the food situation here. As a PaCE student, you will probably not want to purchase a meal plan because you will either be living at home or in an off-campus apartment with a kitchen. However, purchasing a meal plan is an option to you. There are also commuter meal plans that off-campus students may be interested in. Here is more information about meal plans:

<http://www.gatordining.com/mealplans/meal-plan-sign-up>

If you decide not to purchase a meal plan, you can still get food at any of the restaurants on campus. Some examples include:

- Chick-Fil-A
- Moe's
- Starbucks
- Einstein Bros

In addition to the restaurants ON campus, there are others across the street from campus, on University Avenue.

- Chipotle
- Dunkin Donuts
- Sushi Chao
- Mochi
- Tijuana Flats
- Leonardo's Pizza

There are plenty of options for you in Gainesville, so if food is a worry for either you or your parents (which I know it probably is) just know that I've mentioned about 5% of the places where you can indulge. You will not starve here!

Involvement

Involvement is a huge deal here at the University of Florida because it really adds to your college experience. You can get involved in a number of ways, and each avenue you take can teach you something different. There may be a notion you have that PaCE students are at a disadvantage with involvement. This isn't true at all! You can join almost every organization at UF (I've heard there are some that don't take online students, but I have yet to find those organizations). You can also get a part-time job. The key is to find where you can make your mark and enjoy yourself the most.

UF Organizations

One option you have with involvement is joining an organization. UF has over 1,000 student organizations that you can join, so the chance you can find your fit and make a great group of friends is really high. I can tell you firsthand that you have no limitations. As a PaCE student, I've been able to get involved as often as I want.

I served as a Heavener PaCE Ambassador, a Campus Diplomat, as well as an active member in the UF Virology Club and a volunteer organization. You have a world of options. If you ever have questions about the specific organizations that I'm a part of, you can always contact me!

I encourage you to pursue the organizations that require applications and interviews to be accepted into, but I also want you to enjoy searching for the more relaxed clubs that cater to your interests. You may be a Business major, but every individual has interests different from their education track. Here is a link to the Student Involvement website:

<https://www.studentinvolvement.ufl.edu>

Heavener Business Organizations

Besides the UF clubs and organizations you can choose from, there are also organizations within the business school. Many of these organizations promote service and leadership, and usually require an application and interview. Don't let that stop you at all.

You can be a part of a co-ed business fraternity (e.g. Alpha Kappa Psi), be active in an entrepreneurship club, finance club, or go for competitive positions like the Warrington Diplomats and CAP mentors, to name a few. When you meet with an Academic Advisor, you can ask them about those organizations. There is a website below for you to look at all of your opportunities.

<https://warrington.ufl.edu/undergraduate-current-students/student-organizations/>

Part-Time Job

A common theme among college students is a lack of money. That doesn't have to be the case for you, though! There are hundreds of positions on campus that you can apply to work in. This is a great way to meet new people each time you work, and also keep the bank account from drying out!

Research

This may not be something you think of as involvement as a business major, but research positions are great ways to expand your knowledge and build up your resume! There are always professors looking for student research assistants, and if you are interested in scientific fields, this is a great option for you. I understand that not many business majors may be interested in this, but for those of you incoming PaCE students who are like me, I wanted to include this! You CAN find research positions. I've placed the website for the UF Center of Undergraduate Research below, just so you have a resource. <http://cur.aa.ufl.edu>

Additional Expenses

Residential students at the University of Florida pay full tuition and fees. PaCE students only have to pay 75% tuition and do not have to pay comprehensive fees. Therefore, PaCE students do not have automatic access to certain UF “extras”. The only reason I call this section “additional expenses” is because these are extra expenses that you as a PaCE student have the OPTION to pay. These fees are already collected from all residential students.

Southwest Recreation Center - \$100

Southwest Rec is the gym. You have the opportunity to use the weight room, indoor track, basketball courts, etc. once you've paid the Non-Fee-Paying Student cost. This “extra” costs you \$100 per semester, and \$50 for Summer semester. If you plan on going to the gym or even participating in the other recreational activities at UF, this will be a must-have. I've included both Southwest's main website link, as well as the membership fee page.

<http://recsports.ufl.edu/locations/southwest-recreation-center>

<https://recsports.ufl.edu/about/memberships-join-uf-recsports/>

Student Tickets

All UF Online students including PaCE students are eligible to purchase tickets for football and basketball in the student sections. Since PaCE students do not currently pay the athletic fee, they will pay a different amount for these tickets, and they may not be eligible for season football tickets. PRO-TIP: If you want to sit with your friends, all of you go to the ticket office together and pick up your tickets.

Final Thoughts

I want to tell you again that I congratulate you on being admitted to the University of Florida. The decision you make in the coming days and weeks about where you will be pursuing higher education is very important. At UF, we would be elated to have you join us in the Gator Nation, and at the Heavener School of Business. We also want you to make the right choice for YOU. I'm excited to have you as a potential peer in the PaCE program, and I do hope you accept your admission. There is something special about being a Gator.

I hope you take advantage of your opportunities, and I hope that this welcome guide has provided you with some more knowledge on the program. Use this as a tool to make an educated decision. Speak with your family, your friends, current UF students, and most importantly, listen to yourself. I congratulate you on your high school achievements, and look forward to the ones you choose to make on the University of Florida campus! We pride ourselves on creating a culture of care and extending it to every student in the Gator Nation.

I know you are looking forward to your high school graduation, and wish you the very best on the rest of your semester. It will all go by very quickly. Have a healthy, safe, and enjoyable senior year! Go PaCE, and Go Gators!

Sincerely,

Josh Perez
UF Class of 2019