Grads meeting grads? [1]

(1) Dear Alice,

I am 24 and just started a part time Masters' program. My last relationship was two years ago and I find it pretty difficult at my age to meet respectable guys. I enjoy the bar scene with friends, but don't find that it's very easy to meet good people there.

Anyway, do you have any suggestions as to where to meet decent men at my school and in my age group?

Signed,
Cupid's Missed Target

(2) Alice,

As an incoming grad student, I have a rather obvious question, which is something troubling lots of people here, I'm sure. Since we rarely have any academic contacts outside our own departments, where on campus are the best places and/or methods to meet women? It is a little too pretentious to just start talking to them out of nowhere....

Signed,
Anxious for an answer

Answer

Dear Cupid's Missed Target and Anxious for an answer,

Based on the number of Q&As in the Go Ask Alice! archives that are similar to your own, there are many grad students just like both of you, who are looking for friends, possible dates, and other meaningful connections. How and where to find a new friend or romantic partner depends a great deal on your own personal style and taste. Before you embark, though, consider your answers to these questions: What activities do I enjoy? How did I meet people during my undergraduate program? Would I feel more comfortable approaching someone in a bar/cafè/shop, or after a class? Sometimes approaching someone, organizing an activity, inviting people to a dinner party, or asking someone to be a study partner takes courage. Other students you see may feel the same way you do, even if it seems otherwise; there comes a point where someone is going to have to take initiative and make the first move? so why not consider giving it a try?
Here are a few ideas for taking the initiative to meet new folks on or around your campus:

- Is there a graduate student lounge or study area? If so, you could spend some downtime there studying, reading, and scoping for potential friends and dates.
- Your grad program or school may have a social media page specifically for students. You might spend some time perusing these tools to identify opportunities to meet new folks. Perhaps you could also use them to organize some happenings with fellow students.
- How about one of the many close-to-campus hang-outs? Try browsing local restaurants, coffee shops, gyms, and stores. Find a place where you can sit near others and strike up interesting discussions with "strangers" of any gender.
- Check out your campus’ events calendar for activities that interest you. This may increase your chances of running into others with similar interests.
- Like a certain sports team? Love knitting? Do you spend your free time gaming? Consider starting or joining a student group on campus about something that interests you because chances are, others are into it as well.
- Similarly, you could check out a few websites designed to provide opportunities connecting people who have similar interests living in the same area and beyond campus. You might find a group about something you love and if not, consider starting your own!
- How about striking up a conversation after class or when you bump into a classmate elsewhere? You could say something like, "Hey, I really liked your comment in class today. I'm (your name)." Most likely, people will offer their name, too, and be flattered that you took the time to acknowledge their input.

Finally, consider this: Even with the largest of bull's-eyes, waiting around for Cupid's arrow to hit you may be nothing more than an act in patience-building. Yes, patience is a virtue and can make you anxious; however, you may find your experience in grad school more enjoyable if you take an active role in meeting new people. For more ideas about how to meet people, and what to do once you've met that special someone, check out Go Ask Alice! Relationships [2] archive.

Here's hoping all of you seekers and seekees bump into one another!

Alice!
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