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Students Log In

by Dave Gorsline

Taking either of Wharton's pre-fall course offerings, BA 814 (APL) and BA 815 (Analysis and Calculus), has plusses and minuses. On the assumption that a little information is less dangerous than none, the **Journal** has some suggestions for those considering the prospect of Philadelphia in mid-August.

First, investigate waivers fully. You may waive a course by credentials or by examination. That is, before deciding when to take the course, find out whether you need to take it at all. Include **all** relevant details in any application for waiver by credentials. What Wharton doesn't know can hurt you, in this case.

If credentials fail, give the exams a try. For the computer exam, remember that you can use other languages besides APL, like BASIC and FORTRAN to fulfill the requirement.

On the favorable side, taking a course in the summer is an opportunity to meet fellow students. For those new to the campus and/or the city, this is a good opportunity to get to know the area because classes do not demand too much time. Temporary on-campus housing should be available in August, or you can start looking early for off-campus digs. Finally, if you get the calculus or APL course out of the way in the summer, you will have more time during the semester for study or other

activities.

On the other hand, forgoing income from summer or full-time jobs and incurring extra living expenses may not make taking a course worth the time and money. And while there will be other people on campus, Wharton's social juggernaut does not really get rolling until the bulk of the class arrives in September.

Students should keep in mind that calculus (BA815) is not designed to be a brush-up course, but a full fledged introduction. For anyone with previous exposure to calculus, the courses should be elementary. Differentiation appears only late in the six weeks. But Wharton professors do speak calculus occasionally. If you don't have a math background, the sooner you see the material, the better.

The three-week APL (BA814) course is a good chance to meet the DEC-10 and the computer center staff. Nominal computer work is required for Core courses BA807 and BA808, so it is helpful to know ahead of time how to get on the system. Beyond that, you can have as little or as much to do with computing as you like. The received wisdom is, however, that some computer output always sweetens an Advanced Study Project.

For all its idiosyncrasies, APL is a powerful and concise language. For this writer, the course was A PiLe of fun.