



a newsletter for parents & families

TROY

UNIVERSITY

January 2013

Seasonal Student Issues

There's a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- Feelings of happiness/restlessness from break
- Resolve to do better academically
- Renewed interest in classes and activities
- New leadership skills starting to emerge
- Unwanted weight gain from holidays
- Winter weather blues
- Not many social activities scheduled
- Possible roommate changes
- Wedding plans for those who got engaged over break
- Anxiety and uncertainty for those who just arrived at a new school
- Contentment being back with friends after a few weeks away

The Resolve to Do Better

Helping Your Student Set Goals in the New Year

The new year gives us all a new lease on life – a fresh start that can be invigorating! Your student may be feeling this as she looks toward areas where she'd like to improve and new challenges she'd like to take on. And you can help her form some of these "wants" and "needs" into tangible goals. For instance:

When she says, "I'd like to do better in school," what does that mean? Is she committing to a certain amount of study time each day? Does she want to challenge herself to try a new type of class? Will she make more of a point to talk with her instructors when she doesn't understand something? Help her list some measurable, realistic goals so she really can "do better in school."

When your student says, "I want to be smarter with my time," what does he mean? Does he want to join an organization that will help him explore some career possibilities? Is he going to make a concerted effort to spend less time in front of the TV or computer? Does he want to learn more about effective time

5 Elements of Successful Goals

1. Achievable
2. Measurable
3. To the Point
4. Positive
5. Have a Beginning and an Ending

management skills? Encourage him to explore what this really means and to put some ideas into action.

When she says, "I need to meet new people," what is she looking for? Are her current friends not meeting her needs? Is she looking for folks who will challenge her positively? Does she want people around who she has more in common with? Help her determine why this is a "need" for her so she can figure out the best places to seek new acquaintances.



Bouncing around ideas and exploring options with your student can help lead him to effective goal-setting behavior. And that's the start to a happy, productive new year.



The Scholarship Search

There is money to be found when your student digs into a scholarship search. Encourage him to keep an eye out for possibilities in places such as:

- The school paper
- The financial aid/scholarship office
- The local paper
- Campus bulletin boards
- Faculty offices
- The alumni office
- Websites (see box)
- Churches, credit unions and other community organizations (in your city/town)

Talent Scholarships

Talent scholarships given to students with special abilities may also be available within areas like science, leadership, music, community service, writing and more. That's why staying connected to faculty and staff is important for your student – so these people are looking out for him and the opportunities that might exist, too.

Update That Resume

One of the key things your student can do to best prepare for the scholarship search is to have an updated resume at the ready. That way, he can apply for a scholarship as soon as he becomes aware of it, rather than having to fumble through both the resume creation process and the actual scholarship application. Too many students lose out on free money by being unprepared!

Encourage your student to talk with trusted adults on campus about scholarships, too. He'll likely get invaluable direction – and assistance.

Source: CBS MoneyWatch, 4/1/10

Web Resources

- **Federal Student Aid**
<http://studentaid.ed.gov/types/grants-scholarships/finding-scholarships>
Here you'll find links to where to look for scholarships, how to apply and more.
- **CollegeScholarships.com**
www.collegescholarships.com
This site allows you to search for scholarships by type: by major, military, religious, disability-based and "unusual."
- **BigFuture by The College Board**
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/scholarships-grants>
Do a scholarship search and learn about topics such as how outside scholarships affect your financial aid package, and more.
- **101 College Grants You've Never Heard Of**
www.collegescholarships.org/grants/101-grants.htm
These listings include a wide array of grants that never have to be repaid.

So, You're New Here?

Students who start in January can help themselves feel at home with a few simple actions...

Talk to People in Class. There is always time to chitchat before class begins. Encourage your student to say hello and talk with the folks surrounding him.

Go to Interest Meetings. A lot of students are still trying to figure out what organizations to join. So, open meetings are a great chance to find out if they're going to fit with a certain student group.

Connect with Faculty & Staff. Finding trusted faculty and staff members to serve as mentors, listeners, challengers and supporters is key. Luckily, there are *plenty* of these good folks on campus! Go to office hours, ask questions, and become known to faculty and staff.

Check Out Campus Events. If a residence life staffer invites your student to dinner or an event, encourage him to go. Or he can ask someone else looking a bit lost. There's much going on here and it's a good way to feel connected.

Don't Over-Rely on Technology. Instead of always communicating via text and Facebook, encourage your student to walk down the hall for a face-to-face interaction. Don't always hole away with video games – invite others to play instead. And remember the world outside the techy walls.

Stick Around on Weekends. For those students living on campus, the temptation may be high to go home every weekend. Yet, sticking around and participating in all the great campus happenings is one of the best – and quickest – ways to start feeling at home.



Turning 21 in the New Year

A Rite That Doesn't Have to Go Wrong

Will your student turn 21 this year? If so, consider having some proactive conversations about birthday celebrations...

21 Shots. Many 21st birthdays include “21 shots” of alcohol. This is extremely dangerous and has led to alcohol poisoning and death in quite a few instances.

What YOU Want to Do. Friends and acquaintances may have ideas about how they think your student “should” spend a 21st birthday (i.e. going out, getting drunk, etc.). However, he knows himself best and it’s all about what *he* wants to do! Encourage him not to be swayed into doing something that’s uncomfortable.

Make Memories. A 21st birthday is a great opportunity to do something memorable! Being compromised by too much alcohol takes away those memories.

Trustworthy Folks. No matter how your student chooses to celebrate, encourage her to be with people she really trusts. This is the key to safety and having a good time.

A non-judgmental conversation that begins with “So, what are you thinking about for your 21st birthday?” can lead to some positive, thought-provoking planning. As a result, your student is less likely to fall into the dangerous “I’m going to go drink myself silly” cliché and to really think about a memorable way to mark this milestone.

What Would You Do If You Knew You Could Not Fail?

This popular question is showing up on everything from T-shirts to paperweights these days, and it can be a fascinating conversation starter to use with your student as you explore issues including:

- ▶ Career goals
- ▶ Interests
- ▶ Passions
- ▶ Things they’re participating in out of obligation rather than desire
- ▶ Confidence or a lack of confidence
- ▶ Taking risks
- ▶ Where they’d like to be in 5-7 years

As you ponder this question, consider sharing your answer(s), too. The process can help both you and your student think about what you’d like to accomplish in the year ahead.

Saving Money, Student-Style

Some money-saving tips for college students that you can pass along include:

- **Update The Resume.** Have an updated resume ready to apply for any scholarship/grant at any time. Being prepared can lead to free money!
- **Say No to Credit Come-ons.** Don’t sign up for “free” credit card offers – many credit companies prey on college students, leading to deep debt that can take a *long* time to undo.
- **Maximize Meal Money.** Maximize your campus dining plan rather than opting for costly takeout. Learn about initiatives in place to meet scheduling needs without shelling out additional money.
- **Do Free Stuff.** Check out free and low-cost programs on campus sponsored by the student activities office, academic departments and many others. There’s a wealth of great affordable stuff right here!
- **Track Texts & Calls.** Watch your cell and text minutes. Determine if you’re on the smartest plan.
- **Print Twice.** Use both sides of paper when printing, whenever possible, to conserve money – and resources!
- **Save Some Ink.** Print on the fast draft or black & white setting so you’re not using up ink so quickly.
- **Be Closet Conscious.** Take good care of clothes so they don’t have to be replaced as often. Don’t scald them in the dryer. Hang up delicate items to air dry. And try to steer clear of dry clean-only items when possible – caring for them can get costly!
- **Cut Restaurant Bills.** Don’t order drinks and dessert when you go out to eat. It’ll likely cut costs almost in half.

Being smart about money choices is an important habit for students to get into now. Help them look for options and determine wants vs. needs as they head down the road to a positive financial future.



Where to Live? Weighing the Options

Deciding where to live next year is a process that begins today! You can help your student explore the options...

“I Like It Here – I’m Staying.”

Perhaps your student enjoys living on campus and is planning to stay in the same residence hall. If so, he needs to make sure that he learns about the housing lottery process so he can make this happen – nothing is automatic! Encourage him to ask the residence life staff about the process, to go to informational meetings and to follow through. The responsibility is in his hands to make this happen.

“I’d Like to Move Elsewhere on Campus.” Perhaps a learning community or campus apartment appeals to your student. She’ll need to learn more about the application process and how to go about requesting these spaces through the housing lottery. Again, asking friendly residence life staffers is a great place to start!

“Some Friends and I Want to Move Off Campus.” The lure of off-campus living is undeniable for many students. Before committing to a lease with a group of friends, however, it’s a good idea to help your student see the big picture. For instance:

Off-Campus Costs to Consider

- Transportation/gas
- Parking fees
- Rent/room fees
- Meal plan/groceries
- Cleaning supplies
- Special fees (i.e. for some Greek communities)
- Time
- Deposits

- Is there really going to be a cost savings once you consider transportation, food, rent and other costs?
- Is living with this group of people a positive or a potential negative thing?
- Will your student be less likely to get involved in campus organizations and events if she has to trudge back and forth from her house/apartment and campus?
- How will the weather impact his class attendance (i.e. if it’s snowing, will he be less likely to clear his car off, shovel, find campus parking and get to class?)?
- Will her studies benefit from having a potentially quiet place of her own or will she miss having easy library access?
- Will he only hang out with the people he’s living with, instead of having access to a variety of folks on campus?
- And is cooking for herself *really* going to happen or will her nutritional needs suffer without the variety offered in the campus dining halls?

Only you and your student can answer these questions truthfully. The end result is different for everyone.

So, where will your student hang her hat in the coming year? It’s time to start talking turkey and figuring things out. Encourage your student to tap into campus

Questions to Ask

- Is campus housing available for non-first-year students?
- What will your student’s living situation mean in terms of his job, campus involvements, community service obligations, study time, athletic team participation and more?
- Is living in Greek housing an option? What are the pros and cons?
- What types of learning communities are available on campus?
- What costs are associated with both on and off campus options?
- How does transportation and parking figure into the equation?

resources such as off-campus liaisons, advisors, residence hall directors and others as she makes the decision that is best for her.

