



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

October 2020

Looking Outward

How to help students get out of their own heads

It can be easy for students to sometimes get stuck in their own internal worlds, especially as they struggle with issues like loneliness, stress, depression, pandemic limitations and more. And while there's no one solution, it's important for students who are struggling to seek assistance on campus from a counselor, coach, advisor or other trusted administrator. They are all here and glad to help!

You can help by prompting your student to look outward at times, too, so the external swirl doesn't become so all-encompassing. Here are a few suggestions to share...

Work on a Short Service Project. An all-day affair may seem like too much, so why not suggest that students start with a morning- or afternoon-long service project? Working with others, *for* others, can help them focus elsewhere while also feeling good about doing good.

If Your Student Needs Assistance

Reaching out in simple ways can help some students shift their internal focus. However, as always, if you're concerned that your student is experiencing a crisis and needs assistance, please encourage him to reach out to the many caring others on campus. We're all here to help!



Help Someone Else. Maybe there's a student in the community who is super shy or someone in class who seems overwhelmed. By reaching out to offer a cup of coffee and a chat, students can help someone else and get outside of themselves at the same time.

Read About Someone's Story. People's stories are everywhere – in magazines, online, in the newspaper and in books. Reading about what someone else is experiencing can help your student focus externally for a bit.

Join a Team Project. Digging in to work with others automatically requires a team mindset. This might involve joining an intramurals team, helping with a residence hall program or signing up for a weekend diversity training. These types of team-oriented activities can help students focus on their role as part of a whole community.



Helping Students Set Realistic Goals

Fall and football are now upon us! What does that have to do with student success? In football, there's a goal post. And in the collegiate world, you need to post some goals.

To help your student keep on track, you can share these 5 elements of a successful goal...

1. **Achievable.** Set goals that are realistic within the context of your life. Too often the reason any of us fail is that we set unachievable goals.
2. **Measurable.** Use quantifiable words in your goal lingo rather than fluffing them up with airy concepts. For instance, saying, "I'll spend two extra hours per week on writing assignments" is easier to measure than "I'll

put more effort into my writing assignments."

3. **Short.** Keep your goals to short sentences or paragraphs. That way, they're easier to commit to memory and always keep in mind.
4. **Positive.** State your goals in a positive manner that makes them appealing. It's a good way to motivate yourself mentally.
5. **Begin/End.** Determine when you will start working on each goal and when it should be achieved. This will help you focus... and succeed!

It's never too late for students to set some reasonable, attainable goals. At this point in the academic year,

"The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me."

– Ayn Rand

they know what lies ahead school-wise and where they need to extend extra effort. They also know what activities, jobs and other commitments go into their days.

Help them develop both short- and long-term goals – and then offer your support. It always helps students to have a fan waiting in the stands as they strive for their personal goal post!

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...

- First year students begin to realize college life is not as perfect as they were expecting it to be
- Diversity issues become very apparent as students begin interacting with others who are very different from them
- Conflicts between friends – both new and old – can occur as students settle into the rhythm of the new academic year
- Feeling behind in class work and wanting more contact with instructors
- Anticipating midterms and questioning their abilities
- People start to show their "true selves" as they feel more comfortable in their surroundings
- Job panic of mid-year graduates as the realization settles in that they will be graduating soon





The Midterm Check-in

As the middle of the term quickly approaches, here are some questions you can ask students to ensure they're on the right track...

- How do you like your classes? Which one is your favorite/least-favorite and why?
- Have you found a comfortable place to study and learn?
- What kinds of things distract you when studying? What can you do to limit these distractions?
- How are you keeping yourself motivated and inspired?
- Have you been able to get into a comfortable sleep routine?
- What study, writing and test-taking tips have you found to be helpful?
- Are you keeping track of

Midterm Encouragement

As students plunge into midterm exams this month, you can provide support and encouragement along the way...

Make care packages to ease the pain

Insert texts and notes to give them a boost

Don't weigh them down with troubles from home

Tell them you believe in them and are rooting for them

Encourage them to prepare and do their best

Realize they may not be in touch as much as usual

Mix in some fun by sending Halloween or harvest greetings

Support them through the process and the end results

important academic dates such as when assignments are due, major fairs, career events, mid-terms and finals?

Ask these questions and more from a loving place, so your student feels cared for instead of judged.

Halloween Happenings

In this month of black cats, witches brew and more candy than you can shake a toothbrush at, consider informally discussing some Halloween "stuff" with your student ahead of time, such as...

1. Being careful about alcohol consumption and keeping your wits about you during Halloween celebrations
2. Not creating a costume that portrays an offensive stereotype
3. Steering clear of vandalizing property, even if others are doing so
4. Not submitting to peer pressure, especially if an action doesn't feel right
5. Partaking of all the *positive* Halloween happenings on campus!





Why Voting Matters

We shape the outcome only if we provide input

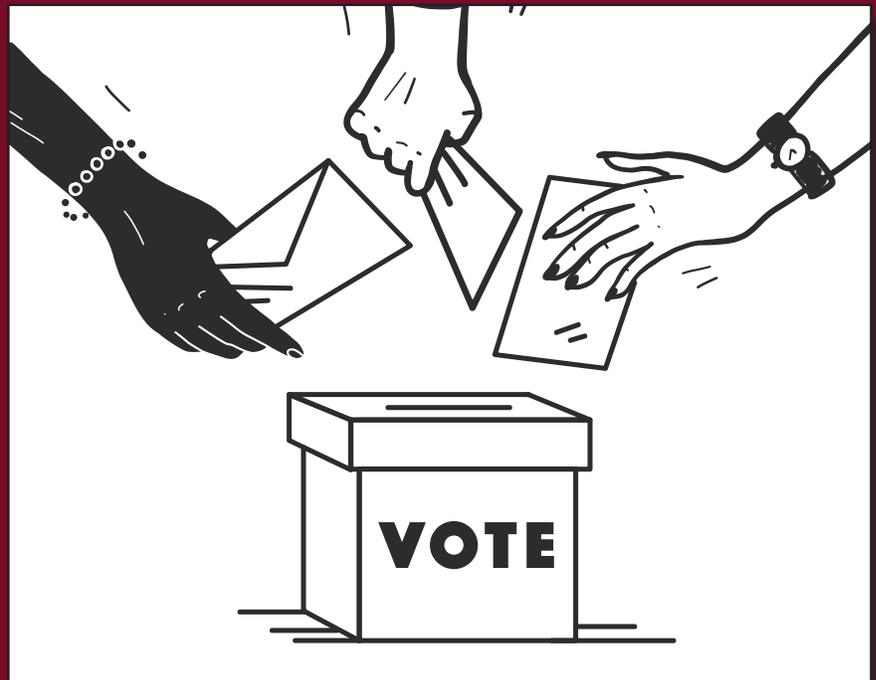
As the November elections loom large, students may be wondering why they should bother voting. Here are some key reasons why voting matters...

1. It enhances the chance that those in charge will speak for you
2. It reminds politicians who they serve
3. It sparks positive change and shifts the tide
4. It shows your commitment to the common good
5. It impacts important decisions about healthcare, education, the economy, jobs, infrastructure, the health of our communities and more
6. It doesn't make you a passive bystander, leaving the responsibility to others
7. It demonstrates that you're hopeful, positive and engaged
8. It's a way to make your voice matter

Sources: CBS News, 11/5/18; *TIME*, 10/25/18; Part of *The 2020 Elections Resource Kit* from PaperClip Communications

“Vote because it is the one absolutely necessary step toward any better place. It reminds public servants about the public they serve. It dilutes the power of big donors and narrow interests. It builds civic muscles we need all through the year to serve our neighbors and strengthen our communities.”

– Nancy Gibbs, Director of the Shorestein Center and Visiting Edward R. Murrow Professor at Harvard Kennedy School



The Key to Asking Questions

When your student is leading a discussion, asking questions is key! Some common mistakes to avoid in the process include...

- Asking a question and then answering it yourself before anyone has a chance to respond
- Asking “risky” questions too early
- Putting people on the spot; you just never know who may be holding back due to an anxiety disorder or other concern
- Only directing questions to those who have previously answered or who you like the most
- Asking just “yes” or “no” questions rather than open-ended questions

