



a newsletter for parents & families



University Housing

January 2016

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
- A resolve to do better academically
- Renewed interest in classes
- New leadership skills starting to emerge
- Unwanted weight gain
- Cold weather blues
- Not many social activities scheduled
- Possible roommate changes
- Anxiety and uncertainty for those who just arrived at new school

Recommitting to Academic Success

Receiving grade reports over the holiday break can be a pleasant surprise for some students while serving as a wake-up call for others.

The resolve to do better academically, however, is likely on most students' minds. As they look to the term ahead, there are some simple strategies they can undertake to recommit to their academic success...

Use Those Office Hours. Talking with professors during their office hours is a sure way to become known as a student who cares. The information exchanged can be helpful, of course, while students' presence signals that they want to do their best.

Work in More Study Time. Chances are that your student may not be putting in enough devoted study time. Help him take a look at his schedule for the spring term and carve out good chunks of time when he can concentrate and prepare.



"The capacity to learn is a gift; the ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice."

— Brian Herbert

Get Enough Sleep. Concentration is impacted by poor sleep, as is recall and more. So, instead of leaving academics to the last minute and pulling all-nighters, your student will be *much* more effective by getting good, quality sleep.

Tap Into Campus Services. If your student gets anxious about taking tests, needs help writing papers, could use some tutoring assistance or isn't sure where to turn with her academic needs, the good folks in the counseling center, learning center and more can provide help.

Be Well-Rounded. Focusing on academics doesn't mean your student needs to sequester himself away, doing nothing but studying. The most successful students are those who are involved both in and out of the classroom.

Recommitting to academic success can be empowering for students, as they take their learning into their own hands.



Veterans on Campus

Your student may notice that more and more military-involved students are coming to campus. These students may be active military, who can be called up at any time, or they may be veterans who have served the U.S. and are now pursuing higher education.

The majority of student veterans on today's campuses served since 9/11 within three major conflicts:

- Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan
- Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in Iraq
- Operation New Dawn (OND) in Iraq

Volunteers Serving Their Country

No draft was imposed — these volunteers chose to serve their country. And not all were soldiers with “boots on the ground,” contrary to often-popular belief. For an example of the diversity of military positions, the U.S. Army offers training in over 150 different career paths within categories such as intelligence and combat support, arts and media, administrative support, legal and law enforcement, combat, mechanics, computers and technology, medical and emergency, construction and engineering, and transportation and aviation.

Student veterans serve in a variety of capacities, Dr. Sarah E. Minnis,

CEO/Consultant with Anthology Consulting LLC, reminded us during the “Soldier to Student” webinar (PaperClip Communications, 2/25/15). These roles include:

- **Active Duty** – which is a full-time job in the military
- **Reserves** – which requires one week-end per month and two weeks per year
- **National Guard** – which is each state's military force, called upon when needed
- **Enlisted Staff** – which includes junior enlisted, non-commissioned officers and staff non-commissioned officers
- **Officers** – which includes general officers and warrant officers

Rank names vary by service branch. And all have served “active duty deployment” at some point, Minnis said.

A Valued Population

There is *much* to value among our student veterans. They are so often capable, motivated, self-disciplined, resilient, resourceful individuals who bring a variety of skills, knowledge, experience and perspectives to campus.

“Student veterans are one of America's greatest untapped human resources,” wrote Alison Light-hall, RN, BSN, MSN, a military behavioral health

consultant, in *The NEA Higher Education Journal* (Fall 2012). “They are emotionally mature, goal-oriented, mission-driven, experienced leaders. They work tirelessly to achieve their objectives and look for ways to make meaningful contributions. They are self-sufficient; they will only ask questions when they cannot find the answers themselves. They not only understand the concept of sacrifice for the greater good, they've lived it. They are respectful and protective of those around them. They think globally and bypass most things trivial or trendy.”

“In short,” she continued, “they are the kind of role models we need on our campuses, and graduating to lives of fulfillment in our workplaces.”

Hopefully your student will make an opportunity to interact with the student veterans on campus, as a way to welcome them, thank them and learn from them.



Today's Student Veterans

- 85% are age 24 or older
- 47% have a family
- 27% are female

In addition, student veterans are more likely to be first generation college students, enrolled part-time, transfer students, distance learners and work full- or part-time than other students, according to the National Survey of Student Engagement (2010). Plus, about 20 percent have at least one service-related disability (iCasualties, 2012).

Sources: NSSE, 2010; iCasualties, April 2012; Student Veterans of America, <http://studentveterans.org>

Five Branches of Service

- Army
- Navy
- Air Force
- Marine Corps
- Coast Guard



Boosting Creativity

Did you know that you can train your brain to be creative? It's no surprise that encouraging creativity will make you more creative. So... start encouraging! In honor of International Creativity Month this month, encourages your student to think in different ways and to tap into new areas of her brain! Some tips you can offer include...

Remember that creativity comes in many forms, whether it's identifying a quicker route to take to class, figuring out how to combine foods in the dining hall to eat healthier or developing a new song on Garage Band. It's all creative thinking in action!

Pay attention to your creative thoughts. The subconscious mind tends to give you more of what you pay attention to. So, if you ignore the creative aspects of your life, you're actually telling your mind that you don't think they are important.

Consciously note when you are creative. Look for opportunities to be creative and you'll notice that you are more creative than you think you are.

Challenge assumptions. Who says things have to be a certain way? Find ways to come up with creative solutions and ideas when you can.

Use the "random presentation" technique, where you randomly

choose anything around you and ask yourself how it is connected to a problem you are trying to solve.

Come up with creative solutions by asking yourself and others, "What if it was...?" The "it" is the problem in this case. Insert any idea generating words (which are usually adjectives) into the "... " and see what you can come up with!

Emphasize process rather than product. When you do this, you often end up somewhere you didn't expect!

Post inspirational messages and images all around your workspace.



If you feel good, you'll be more likely to give your mind permission to think in new ways.

It's so much easier to be creative than most people think. Help to get your student's creative juices flowing with these tips — and more!

Staying Connected through Books

January is Book Blitz Month. Why not develop a "Top 12 List" with your student — a list of 12 books you'd both like to read (one per month) this year? Work together to compile your list — identifying books that aren't too lengthy or taxing during the academic months — and commit to reading the designated book each month. If you live close enough to your student, gather one day each month over coffee or tea to discuss the book. Or, schedule a FaceTime or Skype date to share that conversation and coffee virtually.

Reading for pleasure together can serve as a positive distraction from the stress of academic life for your student. Plus, it's a great way for you to learn more about how your student's thoughts and values are developing as she continues to grow into adulthood.

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

A popular query showing up on everything from T-shirts to paperweights these days is:

"What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?"

This 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 five to seven 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 — and how you can support one another in this pursuit.



Money-Saving Thoughts for College Students

A big part of the learning that happens during the college years is learning to be smart about money. To help your student down this financial road, here are some suggestions to share...

Update That Resume. Have an updated resume ready to apply for any scholarship at any time. Too many students lose out on free money by being unprepared!

Maximize Meal Money. Maximize your campus dining plan rather than opting for costly take-out. 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!

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.

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 expensive!

Scholarship Search. Keep an eye out for scholarship postings through the school newspaper, the financial aid and scholarship offices, and other campus communication sources. There's a lot of money to be found!

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.

Valentine's Day... It's Not Happy for All

The New Year has barely begun, yet stores are already dotted with red and pink cupids, lacy hearts and lovey paraphernalia aplenty. It can only mean one thing... Valentine's Day is nigh.

This can be a tough time of year for some students, as they choose to focus on not having a partner or the difficult times they're going through with a current partner, rather than the love that *is* in their life.

You can help by reminding them about the various "loves of their life," including:

- **Pets** – A photo of a student's favorite furry friend may be just

what he needs to get him out of a "woe with me" funk!

- **Friends** – Encourage her to spend time with good friends as a reminder of how lucky she is.
- **Siblings** – Drawings, phone calls or funny emails from brothers and sisters can be great distractions.
- **Grandparents** – Who doesn't love a Valentine's card from Grandma or Grandpa?
- **You** – In your own way, let your student know how much you love him. It can really make a difference, especially during this cupid-happy time of year!



And also realize that, despite your best efforts, your student may still feel lonely and depressed this Valentine's Day. If you sense that she isn't handling it well and that it's more than a "passing thing," encourage her to visit the campus counseling center, where she'll find good folks who love students and want to help them live happy, healthy lives.