



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

January 2018

Transferring Positive Break Moments into the New Year Ahead

Chances are that your student may be on a bit of a high after the holiday break. Rather than lamenting the arrival of a new term, there are ways to help students transfer the good feelings from break into their new academic season. And you can help!

For instance:

- **Energy.** They can take the energy they felt being around friends and family, and put that into their relationships at school. Remind them that all connections take time and effort – and being positive around their school acquaintances and friends will likely make others want to spend time with them.
- **Good Health.** Did your student catch up on sleep during break? Take walks with family members? Eat healthy food? Transferring this type of self-care into the new term can be a very positive move for students, who will learn and function more effectively if they're sleeping, moving and getting good nutrition. Provide a healthy nudge.
- **Conversations.** Students likely engaged in various conversations with various people during the holiday break. Doing so back at



school – both in *and* out of class – is a key function of learning. By learning to better articulate a thought, listen to others, and exhibit give and take, your student will be primed for thoughtful discussions in the term to come.

- **Connections.** Having good conversations and spending time with a variety of people, as your student may have done during break, is all about making connections. This tendency can serve students well this year as they learn to network for internships,

meet possible employers and make connections that could lead to summer work. Help them make that connection about connections!

Having the change of pace during winter break can help students plunge into the new term, ready to learn, connect and take better care of themselves.

Encourage this type of positive thinking and sense of new beginnings to help your student get the most out of this school year ahead.

Back to School!

If your student is excited to get back to school, encourage that! This enthusiasm can serve students well as they prepare to dig back into their academic and social lives.



Start Thinking about Summer Possibilities Now

Many students will be talking with advisors, professors and peers throughout the term about how to get the most out of their summer break. Some will choose to take classes, while others will choose to get academic credit via an internship or to volunteer through a specific organization. If your student is interested in spending his summer in an academic-related internship, job or volunteer position, there are plenty of resources available to help him find a good fit.

The Career Office. The first stop your student can make is in the campus career office. Typically, the office will have access to internship listings in every academic field. The staff can also offer students guidance on what types of experiences will help them gain the best professional experience and where to go to get more information.



Faculty and Staff. Talking with trusted faculty and staff members is another good idea. When students show initiative and express an interest, these professionals may be able to help identify good possibilities.

The Community Service Office. Discussing volunteer options with the community service or service learning staff can help bring those

opportunities to the forefront. What would your student like to do? What causes are important to him? What limits are there (e.g. financial, geographical, etc.)?

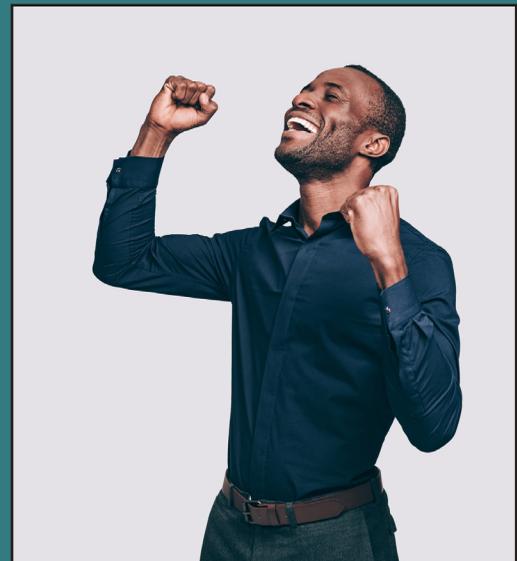
Alumni Affairs. If your student has a specific interest, the alumni office may be able to help identify an alum who would be glad to talk with her. This might lead to a job shadowing possibility or invaluable career connection. It's certainly worth a try!

The process for deciding what to do during the summer can overwhelm some students initially. Sometimes, they end up so overwhelmed with the possibilities that they procrastinate. Oftentimes, this results in missed deadlines and opportunities. So, encourage your student to start the decision process early to keep it manageable and to embrace the wide variety of summer possibilities!

Seasonal 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 (in some areas)
- Not many social activities scheduled
- Possible roommate changes
- Anxiety and uncertainty for those who just transferred in
- Enthusiasm to get the new term underway!





An Academic Approach for the New Year

Now that grades have been distributed and your student is preparing for a new term ahead, there may be some academic concerns to face.

Shaken Confidence. Not doing particularly well academically can shake students' confidence. Hard work and *smart* work will help her get back on track. The learning center and campus counselors can help with a confidence crisis, too. She doesn't have to do it all on her own.

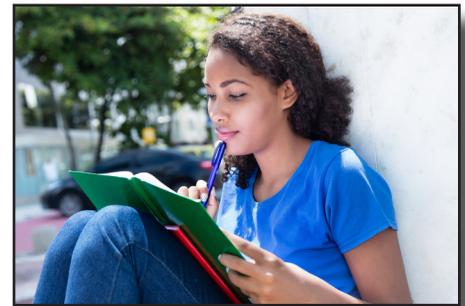
Failing a Class. Does your student need to retake a course? If so, encourage him to be attentive from day one and to engage the professor should he need assistance. The faculty member will appreciate his efforts!

Reconsidering a Major/Minor. As your student rethinks her major or minor, some questions may arise. Talk through the pros and cons with her, while also suggesting that she discuss it with her academic advisor or another trusted faculty/staff member before making a final decision.

Needing More Study Time. Lower grades often mean that students need to study more – and to learn how to maximize their study time. Folks in the learning center can provide tips. Help your student reconsider *where* he studies, too. If he sits on his bed, the temptation to nap can be great. If he studies in a noisy lounge, the distractions can be great. Brainstorm other options, from library cubicles to the laundry room, as your student takes a good look at his study mode of operation.

Focusing Too Much on Grades. If your student is only focusing on grades, rather than what she is learning, she's not getting the most out of her academics. So, ask her about classes from a "What are you learning?" perspective now and then. Sometimes having to verbalize it can help students really look at what they're getting out of a particular class.

Not Approaching Professors. Most faculty members have office hours and stick around after class



because they want to be available to students. Encourage your student to seek clarification in person if he has questions. Face-to-face encounters are often much more valuable than emailing professors because students become *known* that way, in a positive light.

Academics don't have to be a taboo subject between students and family members. Reserve judgment when possible so that you can be open to helping your student examine her current approach, from both the perspective of what's working and what's not. With your assistance, she can dig into a more positive academic year!

Turning 21: A Rite That Doesn't Have to Go Wrong

In the year ahead, your student may be turning 21. If so, consider having some proactive conversations about birthday celebrations that may include the following points...

- Some 21st birthday celebrations include "21 shots" of alcohol. This is extremely dangerous and has led to alcohol poisoning and death in some instances.
- 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.
- A 21st birthday is a great opportunity to do something memorable! Being compromised by too much alcohol takes away those memories.
- 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 birthday this year?" can lead to some positive, thought-provoking planning. As a result, your student is less likely to fall into the "I'm going to go drink myself silly" cliché and to really think about a memorable way to mark this milestone.



Successful Goal-Setting

Quite a few students tend to set goals as a fresh year spreads before them. It's easy to "go big" with renewed enthusiasm! Yet, successful goals aren't necessarily the broad sweeping kind. Instead, they tend to have the following simple traits, which you can share with your student...

They're 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.

They're Measurable. Use quantifiable words in your goal lingo rather than fluffing them up with concepts that are too general. ("I'll walk for 30 minutes three times a week.")

They're Short. Keep your goals to short paragraphs. That way, they're easier to commit to memory and always keep in mind.

They're Positive. State those goals in a positive manner that makes them appealing. It's a good way to motivate yourself mentally.



They Begin and End. Determine when you will start working on each goal and when it should be achieved. This will help you focus... and succeed!

By discussing goal setting now, you'll be helping your student create a self-guide. Here's to 2018 and a fresh start!

Levels of Leadership

With a new term, new leadership interests may emerge. It's important that students not assume that leadership is just one kind of thing, however. Leadership comes in all shapes and sizes!

The following can help students focus on the variety of leadership possibilities.

Leadership is...

- Learning how much you still have to learn
- Encouraging others to take risks and be their best selves
- Admitting when you make mistakes
- Deciding what to do next, especially in tough situations
- Envisioning how your group can best meet its goals
- Role modeling positive behaviors and a positive attitude
- Supporting others' thoughts, ideas and dreams while also challenging them to do their best
- Helping participants see the big picture
- Involving others in the process so learning is active rather than passive
- Persevering, even when things are difficult, because you see a group's potential

Making Resolutions Stick

Creating realistic resolutions – or goals – is one key step in making them stick. In addition, the National Institute of Health suggests...

- Set smaller goals on the way to your larger goal
- Develop an action plan with specific steps
- Think about how the change will enhance your life
- Set up a supportive environment
- Have a plan in place if you start to slip
- Make sure the goal is something meaningful to *you*, rather than doing it for other people



Source: newsinhealth.nih.gov