



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

July 2016

Seasonal Student Issues

There's a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things new students may be experiencing this summer...

New Student Issues

Students preparing to dive into college for the first time may have a lot of things on their minds, such as:

- ▶ Excitement coupled with anxiety about making a fresh start
- ▶ Thinking about what type of first impression they'll make
- ▶ Feeling sad about leaving established friends and family at home
- ▶ Concern about issues of "belonging" and finding a comfortable place on campus
- ▶ Worry about academics being "hard" and beyond their abilities
- ▶ Concern about roommates and housing (if living on campus)
- ▶ Wondering what to pack and what to leave at home since space will be limited
- ▶ Possibly transitioning into a long-distance relationship or deciding to end a current relationship
- ▶ Financial worries – wondering if they'll be able to make enough during the summer and also how much they'll need to work once school begins
- ▶ What to expect during orientation and what questions to ask so they'll be prepared for the fall semester

Making a Fresh Start

Thinking ahead to the beginning of the term, your student may be very excited about starting fresh in a new place with new people. This can allow her to be her true self, try new things and not have any pre-conceived expectations or judgments imposed upon her. That can be quite freeing!

A fresh start can also produce some anxiety, however. Should she reinvent herself? If so, what does that mean? Will people like who she is? Will she be able to navigate all the "new stuff" adequately? There's an awful lot to think about.

What Does It Mean?

As your student looks toward a fresh start, you can help by talking with her about what that means. For instance, consider asking questions such as...

- What are you hoping to do differently when you get to college?
- What are the key pieces of yourself that you plan to take with you?
- What do you hope to do once you get there?
- What kinds of people do you want to spend time with?

"Say yes and you'll figure it out afterwards."

— Tina Fey

- What are some of the main things you want to spend your time on?
- What are you most looking forward to?

With your help, your student can examine some of her more specific goals, rather than just focusing on the generalized "fresh start." As a result, she is more likely to hit the ground running when she gets to school and make a good place for herself.



Designing on a Dime

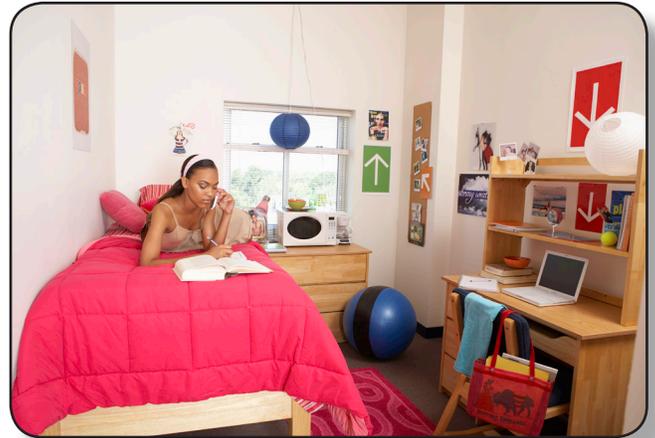
As your family prepares to send a student off to school, it's quite likely that money is on your mind. And if your student is living away from home, a cost to consider is furnishing a living space. Luckily, however, you don't have to break the bank in order to design a comfortable living space for your student.

Here are some tricks for making the process a lot less expensive...

- **Take Stock of What You Already Have on Hand.** Have an extra desk lamp lying around? There's no need to buy a new one if so! Everything in your student's living space doesn't have to be brand new. In fact, it's almost better if it's not. Stuff will get

banged around during the packing process anyway.

- **Make Sure to Coordinate with Your Student's Roommate(s).** You don't want to end up with duplicates of everything in a small living space! Plus, coordinating could help you split the cost for big-ticket items.
- **Visit Flea Markets, Thrift Stores and Garage Sales.** This is the season for outdoor sales! You can find so many great bargains – small pieces of furniture, lamps, crates – and all at



low, low prices. Make it like a treasure hunt!

- **Take Advantage of Holiday and Back-to-School Sales.** There will be so many to choose from, there's no reason to buy anything at full cost!
- **Avoid Buying a Lot of Things in Bulk.** Finding space to store it will be tough and it might end up being more than is needed anyway.
- **Talk with Other College Students.** Find out from them what they took to school that wasn't needed. You can definitely learn from others' mistakes, and then pass on your newfound knowledge to others.
- **Take Just the Essentials to Start Out.** Of course your student will want to have everything he needs from the get go. But sometimes it's best to wait it out until after he gets into a groove to see what he *truly* needs.

If all of the reality TV home improvement shows can “design on a dime,” why can't you? With some thought and planning, you can save lots of money – and still design a living space that your student will enjoy and be proud to call home.

Just the Essentials

It's so easy to purchase more than is needed. Don't get carried away, though. Instead, gather just the essentials. After a few weeks, your student will have a much better idea of what she *actually* needs to have on hand.

- Bedding
- Sneakers
- Binders or notebooks
- Towels
- Pens and pencils
- Bathrobe
- Laundry basket or bag
- Flip flops
- Detergent
- Plastic dishes and utensils
- Toiletries
- Desk lamp
- Backpack
- Batteries
- Raincoat
- Small vacuum
- Alarm clock
- Day planner
- Clothing and delicates

Focusing on one season at a time will help, too. There's no need to bring heavy winter clothing when it's only September. There will be plenty of time to get these types of things at a later date.



Preparing for the Fall Transition

How to help when your student starts getting overwhelmed

As your student prepares to transition to college, chances are that the emotions can get overwhelming at times. She may be a bit anxious about making a fresh start in a new place. Or he may be excited to reinvent himself, but not sure how to go about it. And the issue of finding that sense of “belonging,” with people and a place that feel comfortable, is likely on everyone’s minds.

You can help with this transition by preparing your student well. Some ways to do so include:

- **Look at Club/Organization Options.** Investigate the possibilities for involvement online and during orientation. Encourage your student to make a list of everything that

sounds good to him, without censoring himself whatsoever. Just that action can make coming to campus an exciting prospect! Then you can talk through options, support him in his quest to try new things and he’ll be ready to see what awaits when he joins us in the fall.

- **Reminisce about Past Risk-Taking.** Maybe your student once joined a high school club, even though she didn’t know anyone, and wound up making great new friends. Or maybe she joined an organization to challenge herself and discovered new skills and interests in the meantime. Help your student think back to these scary risks that resulted in good things

so she has more confidence to do the same once she gets to campus.

- **Talk Intentionally about Goals.** What does your student hope to accomplish in her first month on campus? Starting with short-term goals like this can help her get in the college mindset. Assist her in creating realistic goals for the first month, from academics to involvement to making connections, and putting a few action steps in place to help her reach those goals.

As your student looks to the fall term, preparing herself for the transition will involve focusing on her strengths, her past successes and all the possibilities that lie ahead!

Planning Your Goodbyes

It may still feel like a long time until your student heads to school, yet the time will go quickly. And it’s easy for your students’ dwindling time to be eaten up with work, getting ready for school, seeing friends and more.

So, plan your goodbyes now in order to carve out precious time with your student. If you’d like to have a family dinner before he leaves, schedule it now. Thinking about going away for a weekend? Put it on the calendar. Want to go shopping for school essentials or spend some time hiking with your student? Don’t let too much time slip away before making a plan.

All of these things – and more – are important ways for you to spend time and say your goodbyes. Don’t leave them happening to chance... plan ahead and you’ll feel better about making the most of these summer moments with your student.

Starting a Healthy Habit – Now!

Conventional wisdom says it takes about 21 days for something to become a habit. That’s why now could be the perfect time for your student to embark upon a healthy practice so it becomes a habit by the time he heads to school, such as:

- Drinking 8 glasses of water each day
- Getting at least 7 hours of sleep each night
- Eating more veggies
- Doing 10 minutes of stretching each morning
- Keeping a gratitude journal
- Only checking Facebook 1-2 times per day
- Having an organized desk
- Putting the phone away when talking with someone
- Creating a soothing before bed ritual
- Taking a walk 4-5 times per week
- Reaching out to someone each day, in person, via phone, text, Facetime or mail



With a healthy new habit in tow, your student’s confidence and well-being will grow as he embarks upon a new school year!



Emotional Intelligence: A Key to Lifetime Success

You may have heard about “Emotional Intelligence” and how important it is for students to develop this quality. Higher levels of “EI” can help them build solid relationships, develop leadership skills and become more successful in life.

According to Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence*, EI is “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.” Goleman states that EI drives two-thirds of an individual’s performance and that it is four times more important than IQ in terms of overall success. In other words, book smarts aren’t the only thing that will lead your student to a positive, productive life.

EI Capabilities

Emotionally intelligent people demonstrate the ability to:

Know themselves

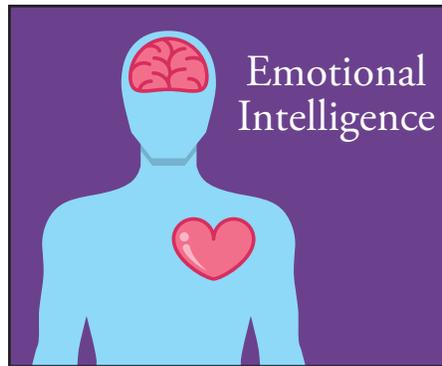
- Able to assess themselves realistically
- Have deep understanding of their own strengths, weaknesses, needs and drives
- Recognize how their feelings affect themselves and others

Manage their feelings and impulses

- Control bad moods and emotional impulses
- Choose their words carefully
- Avoid hasty judgments
- Create an environment of trust and fairness

Understand social dynamics

- Understand how an organization/group works



- Able to sense how people are feeling
- Understand various viewpoints
- Bring conflict out into the open
- Willingly collaborate across boundaries

Be socially advanced

- Have a talent for finding common ground with people of all kinds

- Have a network of people in place when the time for action comes
- Committed to helping people improve
- Friendly with a purpose: moving people in the direction they desire
- Excellent persuader and collaborator

And emotionally intelligent people are able to be self confident, with a firm grasp of their own capabilities.

As your student develops these capacities, she’ll have the ability to change and grow, and to be flexible and responsive while engaging others. These are the building blocks of leadership and managing relationships that will lead your student to a lifetime of success all the way around.

Developing Emotional Intelligence

Students can work to develop Emotional Intelligence through activities such as:

- Learning to really listen to others instead of always thinking about what they’re going to say next
- Collaborating on programs and projects
- Getting to know people in a variety of groups instead of just sticking to their comfort zones
- Engaging in community service, especially when it involves interacting with others
- Taking on a leadership position within a club, team, work or organizational setting
- Working with others whenever possible, whether it’s getting a hall volleyball team together or creating a study group
- Mentoring others and focusing on how to help *them* succeed
- Taking personality and skills inventories through the career services office
- Talking through issues and emotions with someone from the counseling center in an effort to know themselves better