



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

June 2019

Setting Summer Goals

As students settle into the summer swing of things, they'll be able to maximize their time by setting some concrete goals. There's a lot that can be accomplished in the next few months!

Some possible goals might include...

- Learning a new career-related skill, such as managing a new computer program, public speaking or backwards planning (to plan events from the ground up)
- Meeting with two people doing jobs that your student finds interesting, to find out more about their career paths, day-to-day responsibilities and more
- Creating a comprehensive resume and getting feedback on it
- Asking trusted mentors and employers for letters of reference, when needed
- Practicing an old skill to regain competence and confidence



- Learning to speak another language through participation in an in-person or online class
- Working to enhance connections with certain friends or family members
- Volunteering for a cause where there is great need and an opportunity to make a difference
- Engaging in creative pursuits to stretch those right-brain muscles and gain a sense of accomplishment
- Adding stress relief skills such as meditation, yoga or nature walking to their repertoire

There are so many possibilities, based on your student's wants and needs. You can encourage students to set a personal and a career/academic goal this summer, including particular action steps to help them get there. By doing so, your student will be making the most of these summer months and preparing for a successful term this fall!

Creating a Habit

During the school year, when multiple priorities are swirling around, it can be hard to commit to a positive habit. The summer is often a different story. That habit may be walking every day, meditating, journaling or something else that makes a positive difference in your student's life.





Encouraging Self-Responsibility

Chances are that you've been encouraging your student to take responsibility for her actions for quite some time. This character trait will serve her well in college, too. Here are some summertime strategies that can help prepare your student for the self-responsibility required during the academic year – and beyond...

- **Questions.** If there's a question about financial aid, a housing issue or some other campus concern, encourage your student to call that office directly to straighten things out. You can help by role-playing the conversation ahead of time to help him prepare what to say.
- **Planning.** What will your student need to prepare for her living space next year? What paperwork needs to be filled out? What medical appointments need to be squeezed in this summer? Make lists with your student to help her plan ahead – and then let her take care of the details.

“It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves, that will make them successful human beings.”

– Ann Landers

self
responsibility

- **Follow-Through.** Although your instinct may be to check in with your student about every detail, it's important to give him some independence. Perhaps you can check in every other week, to see where important issues stand and hold him accountable, without holding his hand every step of the way.

This type of approach allows you to support and coach students from the sidelines by teaching them to take responsibility in incremental steps. By doing so, you'll be preparing them for self-directed action in the year ahead and a lifetime of positive, empowering self-responsibility!

Seasonal Student Issues

Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month...

- Missing friends at school and feeling like it'll be a long time until they see them again
- Transitioning back to life at home after being away all year (for students who go away to school)
- Adjusting to a new routine
- Working full-time instead of going to school full-time
- Anxiety about academics – feeling like they have a lot of ground to make up if they did poorly last term
- Reestablishing relationships with siblings, parents and friends
- Budgeting their money and saving for fall





Making the Most of Orientation

We welcome you to orientation and have a few tips about how to make the most of this time...

- Think about questions ahead of time so you can get answers to your most pressing queries
- Don't hesitate to ask questions during presentations – there's no such thing as a "dumb" question in our book!
- Let students navigate things on their own, while being there to help when they ask for it
- Stay hydrated, especially during the hot weather
- Meet other parents and family members who are going through a similar experience
- Take tours and explore campus so you can envision where your student will be spending time
- Work with your student to have paperwork ready ahead of time
- Process through the orientation experience with your student afterward so you can compare notes and share what was learned

Please know we're here to make your orientation experience a positive one, so ask any questions you have!



Managing Test Anxiety

During orientation, your student may need to take some tests. If he/she is prone to test anxiety, here are some anxiety control tips from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Counseling Center that can help...

- Distract yourself by reading a magazine or newspaper if waiting for the test to begin causes anxiety.
- Avoid coffee if you're prone to "caffeine jitters." It can make you feel light-headed and anxious.
- At the beginning of the exam, tell yourself, "I can be anxious later, now is the time to take the exam."
- Just focus on answering the questions, not on your grade or others' performances.
- Counter negative thoughts with other, more valid thoughts like, "I don't have to be perfect."
- Tense and relax muscles throughout your body; take a couple of slow deep breaths and try to maintain a positive attitude.
- If allowed, get a drink or go to the bathroom.
- Ask the instructor a question.
- Break your pencil lead – then go sharpen it.
- Think for a moment about the post-exam reward you promised yourself.
- Remember to breathe and quiet your mind.

Source: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Counseling Center

Possible Questions

Academics. What services are available to students with learning disabilities? How do professors' office hours work? If a student is feeling behind, what can he/she do?

Commuter Concerns. What meal plans are available for commuters? How can they get involved in campus life, even though they don't live there? What is the parking situation like?

Residence Hall Life. What are students allowed to bring and what is against policy? Do the mattresses require extra-long sheets? What staff members are available in the halls?

These are just a few examples. Determine what is important to you – and then please ask!



Developing Trust & Respect Between You & Your Student

Some of the most important cornerstones of your relationship with your student are trust and respect. In order to enhance these traits, here are a few strategies to try...

- Engage in open, honest dialogue rather than keeping secrets from one another
- Agree to disagree at times rather than equating disagreements with defiance
- Listen to one another without interruption – there are lots of things to learn from one another!
- Talk about how things will be when your student comes home and make it a two-way conversation rather than a mandate
- Meet some of her campus friends, if at all possible, so you can better know who she's talking about
- Don't always "check in" with your student – it's okay to go some time without being in constant communication and it allows your student to develop his own sense of self
- Put money conversations out in the open so your student knows where things stand and what she must do, and so she doesn't have



to always wonder if the other shoe is going to drop

- Treat your student like an adult, in conversations, in making decisions and more
- Let your student know that he has your trust upfront and that you hope and expect he'll maintain it

Summer Conversation Topics

Here are some ways to connect with your student – through good, meaningful conversation! Topics might include...

- What classes your student is most looking forward to next term – and why
- How he's thinking about arranging his living space to make it more fun and effective
- The thing(s) she's glad she got involved in this year – and why
- Goals for next term, from applying for a campus job to an academic goal to trying out for a leadership position
- Ways you can both be more environmentally conscious
- What classes *you* would like to take if you were in college – and why
- The faculty or staff member your student was most inspired by – and why
- How his friends are spending the summer
- What she'd suggest to family or friends going to college, now that she has some experience under her belt
- Places around school that he'd like to explore, from hiking trails to surrounding towns
- What she's really looking forward to in the coming year

By tapping into these types of intentional discussion topics, you'll help your student reflect on his or her experiences while also connecting on a deeper level.