



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

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Practicing Good Follow-Through

We all know people who make promises that make people feel good, in the moment. Yet, those individuals' intent to follow-through may rarely be met with action. Hmm... How do you think folks feel about them *now*?

To avoid being known for empty promises and lousy follow-through, here are a few practices you can discuss with your student...

Don't Overpromise. Keep your promises in check by only promising things you are absolutely sure you can follow through on in a timely manner.

Refer When You're Unsure. Instead of giving people information that you're unsure about, refer them to the appropriate source. This avoids the runaround.

Have a Cheat Sheet.

Every time you promise something, jot it down in your planner or phone. This will keep your promises front and center to make you aware of what you've already promised and what still needs doing.

Communicate.

Sometimes, you won't be able to follow through in time to meet an initial deadline. Instead of hoping people will give you the benefit of the doubt, communicate about what's going on and a new deadline that they can anticipate. They won't feel blown off that way and will know that you're still on the case!



By only promising what you know you can deliver and making timely, positive follow-through your mode of operation, you'll become a trusted student that others can count on.

Effective Follow-Through Looks Like...

- ▶ Putting important deadlines on your calendar so your supervisor, co-workers or members of a class group don't have to hound you for things that may be holding them up from doing their work, too
- ▶ Writing thank you notes within a week of an event
- ▶ Tackling those necessary tasks that you don't like but still need to get done, instead of pushing them to the side where they may quickly be forgotten
- ▶ People being able to trust that when you say you'll accomplish something, you'll do it!

When you promise to follow through on something, people then place their trust in you. And trust is a *very* valuable commodity that you don't want to mess with!



Spring Break Safety

Is your student heading out on a spring break adventure? If so, consider the following safety reminders...

- Stay with people he knows, rather than going off with people he just met
- Use the buddy system with friends she trusts
- Feel fine not engaging in drinking
- If he does drink, decline drinks from people he doesn't know (whether they're alcoholic or not – a colorless, flavorless drug could have been slipped in)
- Control her alcohol intake – she shouldn't let herself become so intoxicated that her judgment is impaired
- Watch out for friends
- Never get involved in illegal activity, especially in another country where penalties could be very high



- Keep his valuables locked away – and not bring too much valuable stuff with him in the first place
 - Remember the phrase: “it could happen to me”
- Although these seem like basic reminders, they are important tips for students traveling with friends.

And these warnings hold true for so many different types of spring break trips, from those that are purely recreational to those that involve service projects. What's most important is that students make positive, healthy decisions and keep themselves safe, no matter where they go.

Seasonal Student Issues

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

- Hidden conflicts between roommates and friends begin to arise
- Low energy levels and restlessness kick in
- The mid-semester slump and sickness often take hold
- Making plans for next year – housing, classes and financial aid – becomes critical
- Drug and alcohol use may increase
- Students get anxious about midterms
- Seniors are thinking about graduation
- There's excitement or depression about Spring Break plans/ lack of plans
- Pledging begins for Greek organizations
- Changing or deciding on a major needs to happen, particularly for sophomores





Getting Resume-Ready: It's Not Just for Seniors!

There's no need to put off the creation of a resume, no matter where your student is in his college career. Developing and then tweaking a resume annually, if not more frequently, is a smart approach because it allows students to explore their accomplishments and their goals. Plus, they'll be ready to apply as soon as that desirable job, leadership position or internship comes along!

Questions to Ask

You can help your student consider her resume by posing questions such as...

- What is your objective? (i.e. to gain an internship within a particular field, to gain a summer job, etc.)
- What jobs have you held thus far? (including summer and campus jobs)
- What leadership positions or involvements would you like to highlight to show various skills? (i.e. played soccer, publicity coordinator for hall council, volunteered with local arts group, etc.)
- What special skills might you spotlight? (i.e. speaking another language, creating webpages, etc.)
- Do you have samples of your work to get a portfolio started? (i.e. publications, lesson plans, posters for events, etc.)
- Who would you trust to serve as a reference, should you be asked for one? (consider supervisors, coaches, advisors, teachers, etc.)

Putting all this information, along with any samples for a possible portfolio and contact details, in one place can help your student stay organized, too.

Then, for help putting his resume together in a concise, professional manner, your student can visit the career services center. He doesn't need to be a senior to get help!

Gathering Details

Half the battle when creating a resume is remembering all the specifics. Encourage your student to jot down details now about...

- › Jobs/leadership positions held
- › Timeframes
- › Employer/advisor contacts

You can even help by brainstorming with her!

Digging up this info years after the fact can be frustrating. Having it all in one place makes the whole resume process much, much smoother.

Getting References in Place

If your student had a dream job or internship pop up today, would he know who to put down as references? If not, it's a good idea for him to get those folks lined up now, just in case.

Encourage him to think about...

- Coaches or mentors
- Former or current employers
- Work study supervisors
- Advisors for group or volunteer gigs
- Instructors
- Residence life staff

Having references at the ready can sometimes make all the difference when great opportunities arise!





Walking Through This World Together

“Diversity is about all of us, and about us having to figure out how to walk through this world together.”

~ Author Jacqueline Woodson



Take a look at the quote above. Diversity awareness, knowledge and action are all things that don't just come naturally – they need to be figured out and worked on in order for us to walk through this world together. There won't always be harmony or perfect understanding. Yet, making genuine efforts to learn and to know one another is a very good start.

An interesting conversation to have with students is how they can enhance

their diversity awareness, through things such as...

- Identifying an area of diversity they'd like to learn more about (maybe it's gender identity, the Hispanic culture, intersectionality, etc.)
- Seeking out a way to learn about this in the next few months (is there a campus program, speech, workshop, etc.?)

- Volunteering to help with a campus cultural event
- Thinking about a mistake they've made when it comes to diversity and what they learned from it
- Identifying one of their best diversity learning experiences

This type of awareness and action can lead students' worlds to expand, while also preparing them for an increasingly diverse workforce and society. Plus, it can lead to fascinating discussions between the two of you!

What Makes Me Me

Ask your student, “When you think about your personal diversity, what is it that makes you you?”

Becoming an Ally

An ally is “a person who is a member of the ‘dominant’ or ‘majority’ group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate with and for, the oppressed population,” according to Evans and Washington in *Beyond Tolerance* (1991).

Part of the process of becoming an ally is recognizing a few key things, including...

- Many oppressed people are survivors and have a long history of resistance
- You are good enough and smart enough to be an effective ally
- Your main purpose is not convincing target group members that you are “on their side;” it's more about simply being there
- Being an ally is a no strings attached proposition; nobody “owes” you anything
- Sometimes you'll receive thanks but gratitude shouldn't be an expectation
- Members of the target group are experts on their own experience; you have much to learn from them!
- You have a right to be concerned with other people's liberation issues
- With that right comes the responsibility to better understand the issues of concern to the target population
- Acknowledging and apologizing for mistakes is part of the learning curve – just don't retreat!

Sources: “Tips for Creating Allies” handout, Brenda L. Froisland, 1992; Human Rights Campaign site at www.hrc.org/ncop/allies/; “Working Assumptions & Guidelines for Alliance-Building,” R. Sherover-Marcuse, 1990; “Becoming an Ally” in *Beyond Tolerance* by Evans and Washington, 1991