



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

May 2019

Separating from a Family of Friends

As students grow into adulthood, a natural sign of independence is that they begin creating a second family made up of good friends. There may be the roommate who “I love like a sister” or the friend from intramural basketball who “has become like a brother to me.”

By developing these bonds, your student isn't saying that her primary family isn't important. She's simply surrounding herself with even more supportive, loving partners to help her get through life's ups and downs – while she helps them do the same. It's a sign of maturity and of positive relationship building.

Part of this friendship-making process is mourning the separation when summer comes. Being



separated from college friends during the summer hiatus can be troubling for students. Bonds develop quickly and strongly during the year, as students experience everything together, from classes to meals to deep 2 a.m. conversations in the laundry room.

So, when the end of the year rolls around and it's time to say goodbye,

it's natural that your student may have some trouble. Talk with him about it, work together to figure out ways he can stay connected with these friends from afar and applaud the fact that he has connected with others so well. It's a sign that he's developing genuine friendships at school filled with give and take.

A Tough Transition

Students may have a tough time saying goodbye to their campus friends. And you'll likely be privy to some of these emotional scenes, as they play out during graduation, the packing up process and more.

Try to be sensitive to this difficult transition, as your student may be wondering things like, “Will I ever have close friends like this again?” or “Will they forget about me?” The emotions involved with separating from those friends who feel like family can often color other aspects of your student's life, even if it is just temporary. And their feelings may be a bit too raw at the moment to take your “Oh, you'll make good friends again” pep talk well.

Instead, be understanding, reassuring, caring and just *listen*. Sometimes that's all your student needs and can provide great comfort.



The Perils of Pulling All-Nighters

There are so many things on students' To Do lists at this time of year, often making them think they need to pull all-nighters to get everything done. However, all-nighters are often counterproductive because...

- **Mistakes.** It's easy to make mistakes when we're exhausted – which show up in rushed papers, projects and during exams.
- **Compromised Focus.** Lack of sleep impacts concentration and retention – both of which are essential when it comes to taking final exams.
- **Health Concerns.** Our health is compromised without proper sleep – making us more susceptible to sickness.
- **Frustration.** We can get grumpy and easily frustrated – which can impact our relationships and get us off track from focusing on tasks that must get done.



Getting quality sleep during this busy time will help your student be more productive and focused. So, if he's talking with you about pulling all-nighters, consider discussing the impact it can have on his health, his relationships and his academics.

It's more effective for him to plan ahead, to study during regular hours and then get some good sleep each night. It'll help your student hit the books, take those exams and get those projects done without sacrificing his well-being.

Seasonal Student Issues

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

- Anxiety and tension due to realizations that the year is ending and final exams are about to occur
- Senior panic about jobs, finances, etc.
- First-year students are feeling somewhat confident because they feel that they have made it through the first year (almost!)
- Good feelings are evident as summer is near
- Lots of cramming, studying and wrapping things up academically
- End of the year socialization, sometimes involving high-risk drinking
- Packing and checking out of rooms/apartments
- Saying goodbye to important people and putting closure on the year

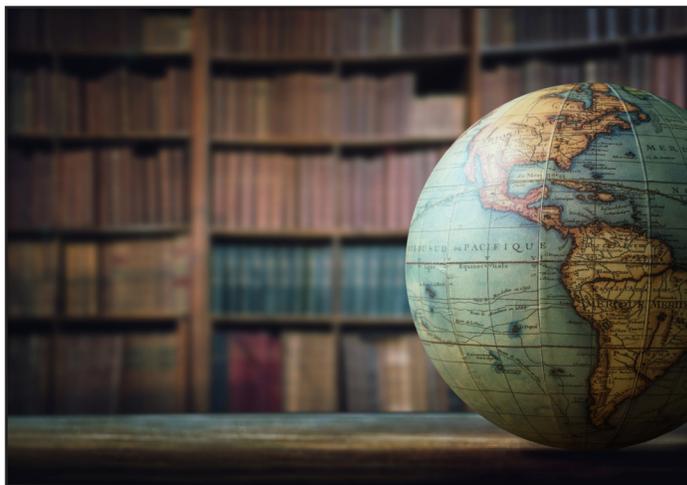




A Bigger World

A simple question can help you and your student communicate about some things that really matter: *“What is making your world bigger these days?”*

For some students, the answer may be meeting people from different cultures or attending diverse activities on campus. Others may have their worlds enhanced by performing community service or championing social justice causes. Or maybe it’s something your student learned in a class that makes him feel the world has opened and become a much more interesting place to explore.



Realize that your student may also have nothing to share when it comes to this topic. If so, that can be a good time to discuss options he can pursue, from study abroad possibilities to language classes

to starting a volunteer experience this summer. Even one action can make the world exponentially larger!

Consider sharing the types of things that make your world bigger, too. A conversation, a workshop, an experience... there are many things, big and small, that help us grow. By sharing this type of discussion with your student, both of you will have an opportunity to experience a bigger world, filled with infinite possibilities. And the upcoming summer break is a good time to dive in!

Preventing End-of-the-Year Thefts

As students get into the spirit of spring weather and the school year ending, they often pay less attention to their personal belongings. Unfortunately, thieves count on this mentality to make their move.

Remind your student that end of the year thefts can be easily prevented with a few simple precautions...

- **Textbooks.** By writing his name near the binding of a certain page in each textbook, a student can tell public safety what to look for if a book is stolen.
- **Locking Doors.** For both personal and property safety, encourage students to keep doors locked. Thieves become familiar with people’s patterns and take advantage.
- **Unattended Goods.** Leaving a backpack or purse on a study table or failing to lock it up during a workout increases the chances of it walking away.
- **Laptops and Tablets.** These are BIG targets. Does your student have a laptop/tablet safety device? Is the computer engraved with an ID number? These precautions can help track down thieves more easily.
- **Cash.** It’s never a good idea to have large amounts of cash on hand.

Remind students that the end of the year is one of the hottest times for thieves to strike. By taking simple precautions, they can avoid some complex headaches.





Reflection and Self-Assessment at the End of the Year

The end of the academic year is a good time for reflection and your student may be ripe for this type of self-awareness. Once she's done with classes and exams, you can help her examine where she is now that the term is over and where she'd like to be when it comes to becoming her genuine self.

For instance, how does she feel about herself when it comes to things such as...

- Serving others
- Being a learner
- Knowing what she values
- Embracing diversity
- Treatment of others
- Work ethic
- Being a leader
- Being a friend

Summer Goals

Consider asking your student:

- "What two areas would you like to intentionally work on throughout the summer?"
- "How will you go about doing this?"
- "And how can I support you along the way?"

- Being a sibling
- Being a son/daughter
- Being in a relationship
- Developing into someone who is interested in _____ (a hobby, interest, passion)
- Being an informed, engaged citizen

Add other topics that are important to your student, too. Examining these traits now allows your student

to set some summer goals involving particular areas of focus. Perhaps she's interested in serving others on a more regular basis by steadily volunteering for the same agency. Or maybe she wants to work on becoming a more informed citizen by listening to National Public Radio podcasts daily.

Whatever the case may be, taking an honest look at her progress can help your student set impactful goals for the summer.

Networking Tips for Students

Networking is a skill that students need to develop as they explore potential careers and lay the foundation for their job search. It's about making connections.

Here is an easy way for them to remember some of the basic concepts involved with networking...

Nurture relationships – once you make a connection, keep it going

Establish connections – find a mentor, attend events and become known

Talk with alums – they're often eager to help students succeed!

Write thank you notes – you'll remain positively in people's minds as a result

Offer assistance – it's not just about what you can "get" from people

Really be real – be genuine, show your interest and be *you!*

Keep at it – perseverance will get you far

