



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

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The Benefits of Campus Involvement

The out-of-class learning environment here on campus is vibrant and vital! And students who are engaged in this co-curricular life can benefit greatly.

How is your student doing when it comes to campus involvement? Now's a good time to check in to see if he's taking advantage of what college life offers. There's *plenty* to choose from, including academic, athletic, service and social options.

Asking Questions

You can tap into your student's level of campus involvement by

asking about certain things like the following...

- What are some of the events that have been happening on campus lately?
- What fun things have you done in the last week?
- What kinds of activities are being sponsored within your residence hall?
- Are there any major speakers or performances on campus this term?
- How are the athletic teams doing?

- Where are your favorite places to hang out on campus?
- What's the best way to find out about campus happenings?

By chatting about this topic, you'll let your student know that you care about more than just how he does academically. Participating in things outside of class will enrich him in multiple ways. So, encourage him to read flyers, the campus newspaper and websites, while also attending events. College is all about trying new things! Your student will reap the benefits as a result.

The Value of Involvement

Students who are involved on campus tend to...

- Feel more connected to campus
- Do better academically
- Learn leadership skills that can make them more confident and competent when job searching
- Graduate at higher rates
- Graduate on time
- Have an overall better collegiate experience

So, if your student comes home this break, talking about her involvement with the campus play, desire to apply as an orientation guide or extra work with a professor she admires, consider celebrating this engagement and all it can offer.





Keeping Up the Pace Through Finals

“How in the world am I going to keep going until finals?” That may be the question currently on your overtired, overwhelmed student’s mind.

Self-care is critical in this scenario, as the next busy months loom large. Here are some key tips to share with your student...

Go to Sleep. Pulling all-nighters, burning the midnight oil and caffeinating to the hilt are all quick fixes that can do more harm than good. Getting solid nights of sleep will help your student’s mood, concentration and academic abilities.

Eat Well. Get good protein, pay attention to fruits and veggies, and steer clear of too much sugar and fat. Regular, nutritious meals will help fuel your student’s body and mind.

Make Time to Move. Taking a walk, doing some treadmill time or playing volleyball with friends is not



only good for your student’s physical well-being, it’ll also help him sleep better.

Have Down Time. It can’t be go, go, go all the time! Students need to spend time with friends, take an occasional nap and do things for pleasure, too. Consider encouraging the reward system in this context: for instance, after a three-hour study session, your

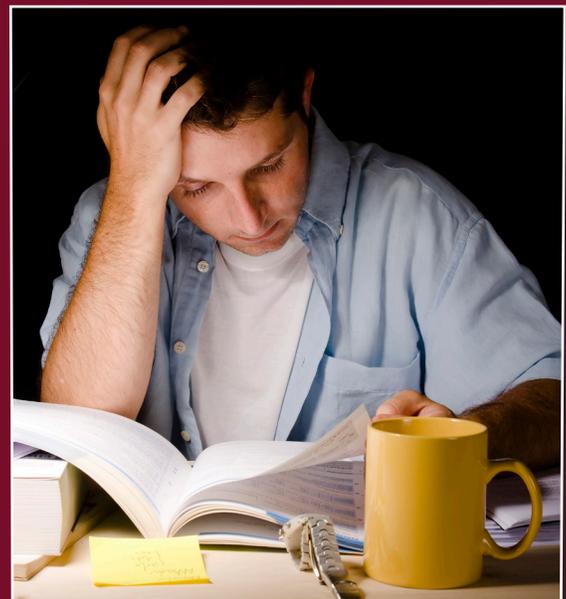
student allows herself to go to the movies with friends.

Support, encouragement and self-care are all needed as your student focuses on the finals finish line. Academics should never take the place of his or her well-being! Instead, the synergy of self-care and academic attention can create a balanced, positive outcome.

Seasonal Student Issues

There’s a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month...

- Roommate problems and floor tension
- Academic pressures due to procrastination, workload and lack of ability
- Burnout
- Not feeling like they have the stamina to keep up the pace through finals
- Job search stress for holiday break
- Problems from increased alcohol consumption
- Lack of initiative to find new friends or activities because it seems social groups are already set
- Concerns about going home at Thanksgiving time and seeing changes among old friends, interacting with family members or facing a romantic relationship





The Thanksgiving Transition

If your student has been living away from home, the Thanksgiving break will be a time of transition as you live under the same roof again. Here are some things to keep in mind as you lovingly make this transition work...

Discuss, Don't Demand. A student who has been living independently for the past few months will naturally balk if ordered to do something. Try to have discussions instead, where you *listen* to one another.

Consider Compromise. Where can you compromise so that you and your student can meet in the middle?

Prepare for Difference. As your student learns new things and experiences new people, chances are that some of her views will change. Be prepared for her to express different opinions and discuss varied topics.

Agree to Disagree. You and your student may not always see eye to eye. This doesn't mean he disrespects you. It's more about him testing his newfound knowledge and interests. So, agree to disagree on certain topics and listen to one

The Stress of Heading Home

Although there will be a lot packed into the next few weeks as students finish up assignments and take exams, it's important not to forget that preparing to go home for the holidays can be a stressful time for your student.

Consider some things students might be most nervous about...

- Sharing new or different aspects of who they are
- Seeing a parent or sibling they've fought with over the phone during the last few months
- Seeing old friends or an old romantic partner
- Discussing a change of plans such as major choice
- Coming clean about poor grades or getting in trouble at school
- Having to conform back to your rules and ways of doing things

Taking the time to talk with your student candidly and supportively during the next few weeks will help make the holiday break, whatever it may hold, more pleasant all the way around.

another's different perspectives. You'll learn a good deal from one another!

Reintegrate Into Family Life.

The student who has been away for a while may need time to reintegrate back into family life. Her sleep patterns may not match everyone else's. She may take some nudging

to participate in household chores. And siblings will need to get used to one another again. Just be prepared that this reintegration won't happen automatically.

The Thanksgiving transition will be okay, if you and your student prepare for changes and remain open to one another.

In Pursuit of Happiness

Think about happiness in terms of your student...

- What brings him happiness?
- Has she found new sources of happiness on campus?
- Does he find happiness from internal as well as external sources?
- What are some of the "oldies but goodies" when it comes to her happiness – from her dog to her favorite meal that you make?

Happiness is newly defined with every new experience that your student has. It could be a great topic of conversation during the Thanksgiving holidays, when you're all focusing on thankfulness.

More information regarding the pursuit of happiness is available at: <https://gretchenrubin.com>.





Handling Community Tension

For students living on campus, tempers may flare and tolerance may wane after the past few months of communal living. If your student is caught in the middle of community tension, there are some ways she can steer clear of the turbulence while also not contributing to the problem.

For instance...

Don't Take Sides. Just because there's a feud between certain people or groups on the floor, it doesn't mean that your student must take sides. She can interact equally with everyone, showing her willingness to engage and her diplomacy. This takes courage and character – and can ultimately lead to stronger floor relationships.

In any interaction, it can help to ask...

- › Is it kind?
- › Is it true?
- › Is it necessary?

Choose Not to Engage in Drama.

Life already has enough inherent drama. So, why add to it? Steering clear of the rumor mill and gossip circles can help your student not get caught up in the drama of it all.

Don't Talk Behind Backs. When there's trouble brewing, students sometimes tend to process and talk

behind one another's backs, rather than confronting issues head-on. Encourage your student not to get swept up into this practice, as it can lead to misunderstandings and much more trouble than it's worth.

Steer Clear of Social Media Battles. When there's tension, sometimes people take to the anonymity of social media to express their views. This can result in misunderstandings, bullying and more. It doesn't help.

Be Kind. When it comes to human interactions, operating from a place of kindness and care can make a difference. Encourage your student to consider his actions and reactions through this lens to make good decisions.

Staying Stressed

When students are feeling stressed, remind them that they can *stay* stressed by...

- › Breaking off friendships as soon as something doesn't go their way
- › Personalizing all criticism
- › Never asking for help
- › Worrying about things they can't control
- › Discarding time management skills
- › Eating anything they want
- › Never exercising
- › Pulling all-nighters on a regular basis
- › Viewing everything as extreme
- › Making more promises than they can keep
- › Forgetting their sense of humor
- › Getting very little sleep
- › Breaking all boundaries
- › Procrastinating
- › Setting impossible standards
- › Viewing all challenges as problems
- › Never taking time off

The One-Minute Stress Reliever

Students can follow these steps for a simple one-minute stress buster...

1. Find a quiet spot. Remain standing.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Take 10 deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose to a count of 10, and then out through your mouth to a count of eight. Listen to yourself breathe in and breathe out.
4. Try to visualize the color white.
5. Take 10 more deep inhalations and exhalations, again listening to your own breathing.
6. Roll your head all the way around very slowly, first to the right three times, then to the left three times.
7. Take three more deep breaths and then slowly open your eyes.