



a newsletter for parents & families



October 2018

Thinking Ahead: Planning for the Next Few Months

It's only October, right? It may seem like the term has just begun, yet the next few weeks and months are bound to fly by. So, here are some ways to think – and prepare – ahead of time...

Consider Thanksgiving Plans.

If your student lives away, how will he get home? What are your time and family expectations for him during that break? What is important to him to accomplish during that time?



Warmer Clothes

As the temperature starts to dip, student will likely need warmer clothes. They may be tucked neatly in the backs of their closets. Or they may need to be delivered somehow, either in person or via mail. Either way, it's time to make a plan for those sweaters and jackets to get to campus.

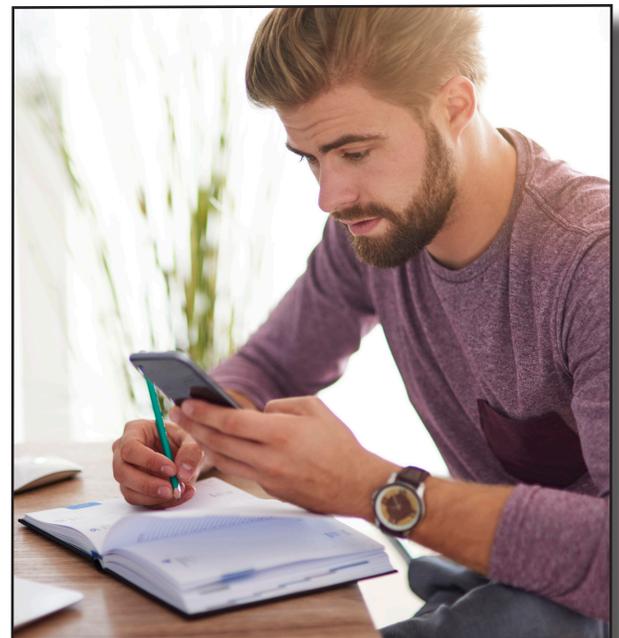
Prepare for Finals.

Those final papers and exams will be making their presence known this December! Help your student see the importance of staying on top of academics now – including reaching out for help where needed (see page 3 of this newsletter) – so she's not scurrying at finals time. And think about how you can be a support system during this stressful time of year.

Make a Plan to Get Home for the Holidays.

Once finals are over, students who live away from home will likely need to get there for the holidays. Figuring out the transportation options now, instead of in the midst of final exams, will make your student's life – and yours – a whole lot easier!

Look at Winter Break Job and Class Possibilities. The winter break will be here sooner than you know it! Encourage your student to think about what job he can work during that time or if he will be taking classes. This break can be an important time for your student to job shadow, do a mini-internship or get some



career experience through a certain job – yet it all requires advanced planning.

Think About the Holidays. How will your family celebrate the holiday season? What role will your student play? How can you help her get in the holiday spirit during the stress of finals week? Even though the grocery store shelves are currently filled with Halloween candy, the December holidays will be here soon enough.

Putting some intentional thought into these milestone happenings now can help all of you be less stressed and better prepared!



Experiencing Difference – a Life-Changing Opportunity

A *big* part of the college experience is students having an opportunity to interact with those who are different from them. These differences may come in the form of...

- Someone from a rural or urban setting
- Someone with a different ethnicity
- Someone who speaks a different language as their primary language
- Someone from a different religious background
- Someone with a different gender identity
- Someone who is much older or younger than they are
- Someone with a disability, whether it's a physical disability or a hidden one such as a learning disability or illness
- Someone who is vegan or vegetarian
- Someone who was home schooled

- Someone from a different racial background

That's just a sampling of the many differences students may experience during their time at college.

At first, it may be a bit uncomfortable to interact with someone different, as we all get used to what our established "norms" are. Yet, opening ourselves to varied people, cultures, ideas and ways of thought can be exciting. There is no better way for students to learn about the world and the multiple differences it holds than getting to know individuals who have had different life experiences than they have had! This type of interaction personalizes difference and adds a very human element to our understanding of one another.

Other Ways to Experience Difference

Students can learn more about other people, cultures and ideas on our campus by...

- Attending a campus lecture or event
- Learning another language
- Taking courses that deal with diverse topics
- Participating in cultural fairs
- Trying different foods
- Engaging in book and movie discussions
- Asking respectful questions
- Meeting people from around the world

So, as students talk about the different people and ideas surrounding them, encourage them to engage in kind, respectful ways. It can all be a part of making your student's world bigger, more connected and much more interesting!

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...

- First year students begin to realize college life is not as perfect as they were expecting it to be
- Diversity issues become very apparent as students begin interacting with others who are very different from them
- Conflicts between friends – both new and old – can occur as students settle into the rhythm of the new academic year
- Feeling behind in class work and wanting more contact with instructors
- Anticipating midterms and questioning their abilities
- People start to show their "true selves" – masks start to come off as students begin to feel more comfortable in their surroundings
- Job panic of mid-year graduates as the realization settles in that they will be graduating soon



Dogs Can Be Empty Nesters, Missing Their Students

Parents aren't the only ones missing their students when they go away to college. The family dog often goes through a mourning period as well.

"It's a big deal for dogs when their people leave," Stephanie Borns-Weil, head of Tufts' Animal Behavior Clinic, told *The Boston Globe*. While parents and siblings know where their college student went – and that they'll be back – dogs only know that their person has vanished for no apparent reason.

So, the people left behind are encouraged to help their dogs feel joy in other ways, such as...

- Taking them for more walks
- Providing stimulating toys
- Giving them hugs
- Working in off-leash time
- Distracting them

Plus, keep in mind that dogs can often pick up on the gloomy mood in a home, too.

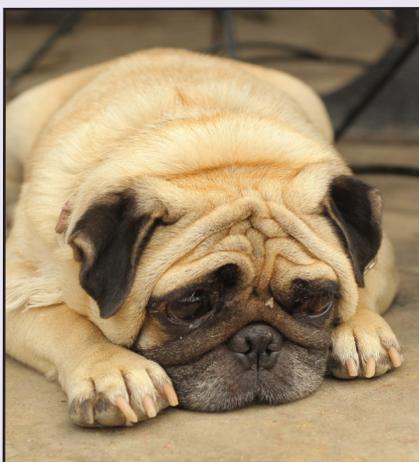
Source: *The Boston Globe*, 9/10/18

Down-and-Out Pups

A depressed dog can act like a depressed person, according to Terri Bright, director of behaviors sciences at MSPCA-Angell. "They seem sad, but they can't tell us," she said. So, you may notice that they...

- Don't eat as much
- Sleep more
- Are not as enthusiastic

Source: *The Boston Globe*, 9/10/18



5 Strategies to Overcome Academic Anxiety

Is your student feeling behind academically? This can definitely be unsettling. Luckily, there are some simple strategies to help overcome this feeling...

1. **Attending Instructors' Office Hours.** These are put in place so students know how to find their instructors when they have questions. So, encourage your student to check out office hours today.
2. **Setting Aside Additional Study Time.** Classes may require more time than your student is currently putting in, so it may be time to ramp up his approach.
3. **Seeing What Other Assistance is Available.** Tutors, learning assistance, counseling for test anxiety, possible accommodations for learning disabilities and more can help.
4. **Staying After Class.** If your student has a quick question, catching an instructor after class may be a simple way to get a quick answer.
5. **Talking with an Advisor.** To gain some perspective and guidance, encourage your student to talk about these academic difficulties with a trusted advisor, whether it's an academic advisor, a residence hall staffer, a professional they know through out-of-class activities or someone in the counseling center. These people know the campus well and can offer suggestions to fit your student's situation.



Preparing for After-College Career Success Today!

The earlier that college students start preparing and looking for a job after graduation – by doing internships and having other career-related experiences while they’re in college – the happier they are with their eventual careers. That’s according to a new survey of 6,000 recent graduates by the consulting firm EAB.

Yet, many students don’t do this. About half don’t start job searching until *after* college, and only three in 10 work a paid internship or attend an on-campus recruiting event.

Knowing this, you can encourage students to take their future career happiness and success into their own hands *now*! Here are a few ways they can do just that...

- **Visit the Career Services Office Today.** Talk with a counselor, take a career inventory and see all the other services they offer. The resources are pretty amazing. And they’re not just for seniors!

“If you let kids wait till senior year, they’re not going to be competitive.”

- Mark Smith, the Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Career Services at Washington University in St. Louis, as told to *The Hechinger Report* (9/6/18)

- **Arrange an Internship or Two Before Graduation.** They’re one of the best ways to gain experience, skills and a whole network of contacts.
- **Attend Campus Career Events.** Doing this before it’s time to find an after-college job can help your student become more comfortable with the process and gather valuable information.
- **Gain Experience in a Variety of Ways.** This can include doing community service, participating in co-curricular activities, working on a project with a professor, developing a practicum experience

and doing informational interviews with people who have jobs they might find interesting.

- **Job Shadow an Alum.** Spending the day with a previous graduate, finding out what they do on the job, can be a great way to check out various careers. Connect with alumni affairs to see what’s possible!
- **Start a Resume Now.** By having the skeleton of a resume together now, it won’t be so overwhelming when your student needs to have one ready to go for an internship or job interview.
- **Put Other Career Specs in Place.** Creating a LinkedIn profile and thinking about how various majors relate to career options are just a few of the things students can do to set themselves up for success.

Working on career-related experiences now will give your student a huge leg up when it comes to the actual job search. These days, only four in 10 college students who want a job have one lined up by the time they’re seniors, according to a survey from UCLA. That’s why visiting the career services office soon and working to gather job information and experiences is so important.

Sources: EAB Student Success Insights Blog, 8/29/18; Research Brief from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, Nov. 2016; *The Hechinger Report*, 9/6/18

