

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR
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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.

Making Midterms Manageable: How You Can Help

It's midterms time! Your student is likely gearing up to demonstrate her knowledge—or lack thereof—on her first set of midterms. You can be more helpful in this process than you think, no matter whether you are near or far.

Be Supportive. When talking with your student over the next few weeks, remember that his stress level may be high. Midterms can cause many students to panic. Reassure him that you just want him to do the best he can and remind him to use his resources.

Send Some Encouragement. Now's a great time to put a little something in the mail to let your student know you're thinking about her. A bit of home cooking or a humorous card will do the trick!

Don't Take Things Personally. If your student seems unaware of things happening with your family or is cutting conversations short, it most likely is due to feelings of being overwhelmed. Many midterms are given as take home exams, which take a great deal of time to complete. For those happening in class, students are often expected to know everything they've learned up

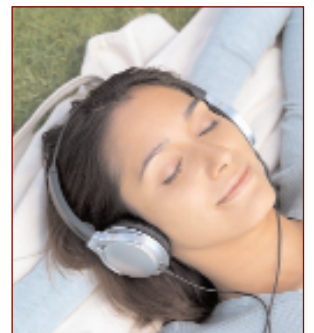
until this point in the term. Some classes only offer two opportunities for assessment—midterms and finals. So, you can imagine the pressure he might be feeling to do well.

Encourage Healthy Eating and Sleeping Habits. This is

probably the last thing your student wants to hear, but the reminders are important. Make sure to

gently remind your student to eat well and to get plenty of sleep, especially if she wants to be at her best for midterms. A tired student doesn't remember things very well!

Most Importantly, Just Be Ready. Ready to support, ready to talk or ready to back off just a little to offer your student space to do as well as he can. Once midterms are over, everyone can take a deep breath and get back on track. Your support will mean a great deal to your student during this hectic time.



Rise in Teen Dating Violence & the Economy— Are They Related?

One in three teens report threats of violence or sexual or physical abuse in their dating relationships, according to a recent survey conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited for the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) and Liz Claiborne Inc. The survey also found that there appears to be a link between the current condition of the economy and increased levels of teen dating abuse.

Specifically, the survey found that:

- Nearly half of all teens whose families have experienced economic hardships in the past year have witnessed their parents abusing each other. These teens also reported a higher incidence of abuse in their own dating relationships.
- Some parents aren't grasping the serious levels of teen dating violence occurring. Many aren't talking about dating violence and most abused teens are not telling their parents if they've been abused either.
- Nearly one in three teens report actual sexual abuse, physical abuse or threats of physical abuse.
- Nearly one in four have been victimized through technology (texting, cell phones, Internet, etc.).
- Nearly one in two teens in relationships report being controlled, threatened and pressured to do things they do not want to do.

What You Can Do

Sometimes, in their inexperience, teen daters find behaviors flattering in their partners, instead of recognizing the signs that they could

be in real danger. Not allowing someone to spend time with friends, calling someone constantly to check in, and offering "advice" about hair or clothes are all behaviors that could be considered "cute," but in reality might mean much more. Verbally and emotionally abusive behaviors have become commonplace among some of today's youth, to the point that it is difficult to recognize when these behaviors have become problematic.

Teen dating violence can take many forms and can take place during casual and serious relationships. And while young women report the problem more often, young men are not immune from teen dating violence.

If you are concerned about the context of a student's relationship, your thoughts may be warranted. Teen dating violence can take many forms and can take place during casual and serious relationships. And while young women report the problem more often, young men are not immune from teen dating violence.

Bronwyn Blake, founder and senior attorney for the Teen Justice Initiative, suggests that if you believe your student is experiencing violence in a dating relationship, you should be supportive. "Let the

victim know you care about them, you don't like how they are being treated, and you are ready to help them if they are ready to get help," she says. According to Blake, this approach should also be used if your student is being verbally or emotionally abused, because very often this is an indication that a relationship may become violent.

Helpful Resources

There are a number of online resources that can provide guidance to teens experiencing abuse and their friends and family too:

- www.loveisnotabuse.org, which includes information about the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline and MADE, a growing coalition of concerned parents, teens, education advocates and community leaders urging schools across the country to teach about teen dating violence and abuse.
- www.GiveRespect.org, which provides information for parents on how to talk to their children, define and promote healthy relationships, and intervene if abuse begins.
- www.EndAbuse.org, which includes information on how to create a teen safety plan.

You can help combat the problem of teen dating violence by helping your student understand what a positive relationship looks like—and what it doesn't. This reality check is so important, because so much of what today's teens view on TV and the Web sends a mixed message.

Sources: www.endabuse.org/userfiles/file/Teens/teen_dating_abuse_2009_key_topline_findings.pdf; Campus Safety Magazine (6/13/09)



Helping Students Avoid Unwanted Weight Gain

For many new students, their greatest fear about college is gaining that unwanted “freshman 15.” Their fear is not unfounded. In a study published this year in *Nutrition Journal*, nearly one in four first year students gained at least 5 percent of their body weight—an average of about 10 to 15 pounds—during their first semester. The American Council on Exercise (ACE) believes students can avoid this unwanted weight gain and recently revealed its top ten fitness and nutrition tips for remaining in good health for the 2009-10 academic year.

According to ACE, it’s all about developing and retaining healthy habits such as eating right and staying active. And these habits are helpful to all students. Yes, the first year is filled with uncertainty and many transitions, yet each year of college brings new challenges. If students are equipped with the tools they need, they can successfully maintain a healthy lifestyle—whether it’s their first year or their last in college.

Here are ACE’s top ten tips for avoiding the “freshman 15,” coupled with ideas for how you can help students institute them. These tips are great for all college students!

1. Make better nutritional choices.

- ▲ Avoid unstructured eating by scheduling time for three meals each day—even if breakfast is just something light, like a piece of fruit or a granola bar, grabbed from your room.
- ▲ Remember that everything is okay in moderation. Late-night snacking is fine for example, as long as you don’t go overboard.
- ▲ Check out www.mypyramid.gov for a guide to eating a balanced diet.

2. Eat three meals per day.

- ▲ Make time for breakfast! Studies show that those who skip breakfast are more apt to gain weight.
- ▲ Don’t think you’ll “catch up later” by skipping meals mid-day and then eating a bigger meal later on. You won’t have the energy you need during the day—and you won’t burn as many calories either.

3. Be smart about snacking.

- ▲ If you are up late studying and need a pick me up, make a healthier choice by eating popcorn, dried fruit or pretzels.
- ▲ Stock your room with healthy snacks that are easy to take on the run.
- ▲ Allow yourself to splurge every once in awhile so you don’t overindulge when stressed, tired or bored.

4. Remember the realities of alcohol.

- ▲ Drinking packs on the pounds: 5-6 beers at 150 calories each equals 600-900 calories. And just 3,500 calories equals 1 pound of fat!
- ▲ Drinking can trigger late-night eating.

5. Get your sleep.

- ▲ Poor sleeping habits can contribute to weight gain.
- ▲ It’s not impossible to get good quality sleep in college. With a little discipline, you can get at least six hours of sleep per night.

6. Manage your stress in a positive way.

- ▲ Seek creative ways to cope that work for you.
- ▲ Take advantage of free campus classes on topics such as yoga or meditation.
- ▲ Join an intramural team to get

some exercise and to meet people.

7. Live actively.

- ▲ Enjoy the time it takes you to bike or walk to class by taking in your surroundings instead of just rushing to your destination.
- ▲ Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- ▲ Walk or bike—instead of drive—whenever you can.

8. Take advantage of campus resources.

- ▲ Use what you are paying for! Try out the rec plex, take a dip in the pool, join group fitness classes and more.
- ▲ Don’t be afraid to organize your own group or initiative if you can’t find what you are looking for.

9. Start a workout group.

- ▲ Get your floormates involved in going for a daily walk or playing a pick-up game of basketball once a week. You’ll build friendships and feel good too!

10. Take a health and fitness class for credit.

- ▲ Why not? Take a half-credit activity or lifestyle class and learn something you’ve always wanted to! Ballroom dance, volleyball, belly dancing, horseback riding – check it out and see what’s available to you.
- ▲ You could also consider taking a nutrition class to learn more about leading a healthy lifestyle.

Students will be looking to you to help them make positive choices this year. Set a healthy example and keep the healthy tips coming to help them make sense of their new environment. It’s not always easy, especially for first year students inundated with new experiences.



Planning Ahead with Your Student for Next Term



If your family is like many others right now, you are spending smartly and saving as much as you can. The strain of sending a student to college is tough, especially in this worrisome economy. And it's likely that your student is feeling the financial pressure too. It's smart to start talking about what next term will look like financially now. Consider:

- **Budget Assessment:** How much money is your student spending in a month? Encourage him to keep track during the month of October or November so you can get an accurate assessment of what he needs for next term. Keep in mind that students tend to do more social things in the spring. Not only have they met more people by then, but clubs and organizations tend to be more active then too.

- **Winter Break Plans:** Will your student be working over winter break? If so, now is the time for her to begin putting these plans in motion to ensure she's got the job she needs.
- **Upcoming Expenses:** Ask your student to talk with his peers to find out what expenses to anticipate for the next term. From academic responsibilities to social commitments, he can get a sense for what he'll need from students who've been there before.

Once your student has a sense of what she'll need next term, your family can determine what you can make happen. Talking now offers ample time to have conversations with financial aid officers and to remind your student to make smart choices about spending.

A Tweet Sheet: A Simple Explanation of the Twitter Phenomenon

Are you wondering what this "twittering" is all about? It's quite likely that your student has talked about Twitter or that you've seen reference to it in your daily activities. So what is it?

Twitter is a real-time short messaging service that works over multiple networks and devices. Essentially, people are able to create an account that allows them to follow the sources most relevant to them and access information via Twitter as it happens. Whether its breaking news reports or updates from friends, people can find out what's happening via the Internet, their cell phone, their Facebook account and more.

Twitter has grown tremendously in the last two years, due in part to its simplicity. There's not really much to it! Once you've created an account, there is very little to manage. Users can choose who they want to "follow" and can access information when they want to.

Twitter is all about connecting people. The program asks only one question: "What are you doing?" Answers must be under 140 characters in length and can be sent via mobile texting, instant messaging or the web.

Go ahead and get connected!



New Campus Gossip Website – Will Your Student Be Involved?

Websites dedicated to campus gossip appear to be making a comeback—with a vengeance. The oft-discussed, trash-talking site JuicyCampus caused an uproar when students sued, two state attorney generals investigated its business practices, student governments condemned the site and a few schools blocked access to it. The toxic site went under in February 2009, saying it didn't have enough ad revenue.

Now, the Campus Gossip site, complete with its devil horns logo, provides a place for students to anonymously post gossip. At press time, questions such as "Who's the hottest new freshman you've seen so far?" were posted, along with declarations such as "Matt—has herpes!!!!" from specific schools. According to a note on the site from "Lance Lohan," the made-up name for Campus Gossip administrators, 1600 schools are involved.

The site also includes a place where students can post embarrassing videos and photos, including a "RAW" section for those 18 and over.

Gossip sites such as this will likely bring about arguments and appeals, as JuicyCampus did. The issues of free speech, censorship, civil rights, Title IX violations, tarnished reputations and more could be tied into how these sites are used. As a parent, it's good to have your eyes open to the anonymous and not-so-anonymous gossip that may be flowing through students' computers.

Sources: <http://campusgossip.com>, www.collegeacb.org, The Chronicle of Higher Education, 8/31/09

