



OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR
FOR EDUCATIONAL AND STUDENT SERVICES
& DEAN OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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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:

- ▲ Much panic, fear and cramming as finals and paper deadlines approach
- ▲ High temper as stress mounts
- ▲ The realization that some friends may not be returning next semester
- ▲ Increased pressure to participate in sexual activity because of the approach of vacation and extended separation
- ▲ Financial strain due to holiday gifts and travel costs
- ▲ Religious conflicts as your student gets ready to return home after a semester of gaining new perspectives
- ▲ Excitement/anxiety about returning home
- ▲ Increased use of alcohol and drugs

Talking About Academics

First semester grades will soon arrive on your doorstep. What are you expecting as far as your student's grades are concerned? Are you prepared to have the appropriate conversations with your student about his academic performance? Regardless of whether or not he got all As or all Ds, addressing grades should be a priority this winter.

No matter what, though, try to keep in mind two important things:

College is about so much more than grades.

The grades belong to your student—they are his responsibility and if he's done poorly, now it's his choice whether or not to work even harder to pull up his overall average.

This isn't easy to swallow, especially if you're the one paying the bills. But, if you can remember these two things, it might make having the conversation a little bit easier.

For the student who has done well:

- **Celebrate!** Getting good grades in college is tough to do, especially for first-year students and those balancing coursework with athletics, a job or other co-curricular activities.
- **Discuss what your student learned this past semester.** Which class was most engaging and why? What was she able to apply from classes to her life outside of classes? Will

she be taking any additional courses to further explore a particular subject area?

- **Review study techniques and other preparation strategies that worked well.** What tricks did your student discover for himself? Will he be using the same strategies next semester? Will he be trying anything new?

For the student who hasn't done so well:

- **Explore the reasons for the performance.** The why behind the poor grades is what is most important. Perhaps your student is struggling with a professor and needs support in handling the situation. Or, maybe your student spent too many nights goofing off and not enough nights studying. Whatever the case, get to the root of the issue and address it.
- **Seek to understand.** What's done is done. It's important to focus on fixing the issues so that this doesn't happen again.
- **Brainstorm some strategies for improvement.** Although college students are considered "adults," they still need help. It could prove very helpful to sit down and brainstorm together. Some potential areas to discuss include:

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A Winter Break Book List

One great way to spend quality time with your student while she's home over break is to read a book together. Here are a few recommendations to consider:

- **Quarterlife Crisis: The Unique Challenges of Life in Your Twenties** by Alexandra Robbins and Abby Wilner
- **Grown Up Digital-How the Net Generation is Changing Your World** by Don Tapscott
- **A Greener Christmas: Discover a Simpler, Greener Christmas** by Sheherazade Goldsmith
- **Going Rogue: An American Life** by Sarah Palin
- **Generation Me** by Jean Twenge
- **35 Dumb Things Well-Intended People Say: Surprising Things We Say That Widen the Diversity Gap** by Maura Cullen
- **God's Dog: Conversations With Coyote** by Webster Kitchell
- **The Rhythm of Life: Living Every Day with Passion and Purpose** by Matthew Kelly

You'll be surprised at how much you learn about your student—and that your student learns about you—from doing something as simple as reading and discussing a book together. From learning processes to values, the opportunity to have meaningful conversation is there.



A National Campaign is Afoot

Challenge Your Student to Be More Respectful

Are You In It? That's the question the Circle of Respect initiative is asking as it inspires us to live in ways that embody respect for ourselves, our friends, our families, and our communities in the places where we live, work and play. From inappropriate moments at the MTV Movie Awards and the Video Music Awards to the outburst at the U.S. Open earlier this year, the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) says the disrespect needs to stop.

In October, NCPC launched the Circle of Respect initiative, which aims to create a nationwide movement that will fundamentally change the way people treat each other, beginning with a new approach to bullying. The Circle of Respect will bring together people from across the country to build workplaces, homes, schools, malls, online spaces and communities that foster respect and consideration for one another, with the larger goal of decreasing criminal behaviors, such as bullying and cyberbullying, harassment, vandalism, theft, alco-

hol and other drug abuse, date rape and hate crimes.

With the goal of creating safer and more caring communities, the Circle of Respect campaign will have a role for everyone—children and youth, adults and parents, teachers, law enforcement, community organizers, businesses and other nonprofits. Asking "Are You In it?," the Circle of Respect initiative will start by addressing the issues of bullying and cyberbullying to fundamentally change the notion that bullying is a rite of passage to one where bullying is unacceptable.

You can get involved in the Circle of Respect campaign by going to www.circleofrespect.org/ to get sneak previews of what's happening next, enter contests, make a pledge, participate in monthly book clubs, learn more about bullying and cyberbullying, and more.

Whether your student just started college or is getting ready to graduate, remembering to treat others with respect is so important. This campaign provides a great reminder of what this means for your student in his personal and professional life.

Talking About Academics

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- ▲ Daily study habits
- ▲ Skill sets including note taking, writing, reading and test taking
- ▲ Room set-up
- ▲ Class schedule
- ▲ Out-of-class involvements and responsibilities
- ▲ Whether or not a learning disability might be coming into play

No matter what, let your student know that you're on her side. While

getting good grades is your student's responsibility, being confident that she has your support will make a world of difference. You'll be less likely to get surprised with poor grades too, as you'll be able to maintain open lines of communication—about the As and the Ds. Remember, college is all about learning. Sometimes, it's the flops that teach the most.



There's a New Disorder in Town: Drunkorexia

Students Combine Eating Disorders with Binge Drinking

Drunkorexia: shorthand for a disturbing blend of behaviors that includes self-imposed starvation or bingeing and purging combined with alcohol abuse.

While it's not an official medical term, it is a troubling phenomenon rearing its ugly head on college campuses. Typically, "drunkorexics" are described as college-age binge drinkers, in many cases women, who engage in behaviors associated with eating disorders to offset the calories they consume when drinking.



According to Dr. Tamara Pryor, the clinical director of the Eating Disorder Center of Denver, college students receiving treatment have admitted they often numb their pain by drinking alcohol. Some also drink to calm down before eating or to ease the anxiety of having eaten a meal, reported *The New York Times*. Others use alcohol as their only sustenance in a day. And those with bulimia have a hard time regulating what goes into their body so they consume alcohol like they do food: they can't stop and then they purge.

Societal Pressure

Some experts, including Dr. Douglas Bunnell, the past president of the National Eating Disorders Association, believe that the obsession with being skinny and the social acceptance of drinking and using drugs are partly to blame. Bunnell also believes that the media's focus on celebrities checking into rehab as "cool" isn't helping either.

"Both disorders are behaviors that are glorified and reinforced," Dr. Bunnell told *Coloradodaily.com*.

"Binge drinking is almost cool and hip, and losing weight and being thin is a cultural imperative for young women in America. Mixing both is not surprising, and it has reached a tipping point in terms of public awareness."

Lauren Harte, president of the Panhellenic Council at Lehigh University (PA), describes it like this: "I can understand how drunkorexia develops in women at Lehigh and with college women in general. It combines the two biggest pressures that we feel—being skinny and being 'that fun girl' out at parties" (*Thebrownandwhite.com*).

A Dangerous Mix

As you can imagine, mixing binge drinking with an eating disorder can be extremely dangerous. Alcohol offers no nourishing calories. With alcohol being the number one health concern facing college campuses, coupled with the prevalence of eating disorders, drunkorexia is a growing problem, Pryor believes. In fact, in a study published last year in the *Biological Psychiatry* journal,

researchers discovered that between 25-33% of those with bulimia also struggle with alcohol or drugs and between 20-25% of those with anorexia also have substance abuse problems. According to some, the connection between bulimia and substance abuse is a field that has been neglected in the research world.

The treatment for these two disorders can be tough too, since the response to addiction is abstinence, but that's certainly not the case when food is involved. "We're trying to get our patients to find effective behaviors and life skills," said Dr. Kevin Wandler, the vice president for medical services at Remuda Ranch, which addresses both eating disorders and addiction at its facilities in Arizona and Virginia. "Eating normally would be an effective behavior, but it's easier to give up alcohol and drugs because you never need it again," Wandler said. "If your drug is food, that's a challenge."

Sources: *Thebrownandwhite.com*, 9/8/09; *Coloradodaily.com*, 8/10/09; *The New York Times*, 3/2/08

New H1N1 Resources for Parents & Healthcare Professionals

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia has redesigned their website, including the Vaccine Education Center (VEC) and Parents PACK (Possessing, Accessing and Communicating Knowledge about vaccines) sections. Included on the website is a new tear sheet for parents titled "Novel H1N1: What You Should Know."

- Check out the redesigned VEC web section and bookmark the new URLs by going to www.vaccine.chop.edu
- To visit the Parents PACK section, go to <http://vaccine.chop.edu/parents>
- To view the new tear sheet for parents titled "Novel H1N1: What you should know," go to www.chop.edu/export/download/pdfs/articles/vaccine-education-center/h1n1-tearpad.pdf

This website can help you wade through all of the information out there on H1N1 and feel confident that you are getting the facts from a trusted, reputable source.

It Makes Good Financial Sense



Spend some time with your student over winter break reviewing his finances and helping him plan for a successful future. MyMoney.gov is a great resource that you can use to help your student learn how to save, invest and manage his money better.



The Financial Literacy and Education Commission developed the MyMoney.gov website to teach individuals about the basics of financial education. You can use the tools on this website to help students learn how to balance their checkbook, invest in a 401k or even plan to buy a home once they graduate. The website incorporates educational materials from across the spectrum of federal agencies that deal with financial issues and markets.

Among the agencies represented on the website are the Federal Trade Commission, the National Credit Union Administration, the Social Security Administration and the U.S. Department of Defense. And these are just four of the 20 Financial Literacy and Education Commission Member Agencies!

The website includes hundreds of links on the following topics:

- Budgeting & taxes
- Credit
- Financial planning
- Home ownership resources
- Kids

- Paying for education
- Privacy, fraud & scams
- Responding to life events
- Retirement planning
- Saving & investing
- Starting a small business

By visiting these sections, your student (& you!) can learn everything from the path a check takes once it's signed to where to find a credit union in a desired area to what to know when buying a gift card. There's information aplenty, for sure! What's great is that much of the information is written in a way that makes good, common sense. Even the most financially-challenged individual can make sense of the resources provided.

Other Tools & Resources

You can also encourage your student to order a free "My Money" Tool Kit, which is a package of helpful publications on saving, investing, protecting and getting the most for your money. The Tool Kit contains a consumer Action Handbook, a publication on questions you should ask before investing, tips and worksheets for calculating net worth, and more.

Plus, one section of the website is devoted entirely to calculators! Visitors can do everything from calculate their college and student loan budget to learn how long it will take to pay off a credit card balance.

The website is available in both English and Spanish. Help your student help himself with this comprehensive and interactive resource. You'll be just in time for Financial Wellness Month, too, which happens annually in January.

Give a Special Gift This Holiday Season

What better way to spend time with your student than doing some good this holiday season? There are plentiful options...

- make and deliver cookies to old teachers, along with a note about how college is going
- help make and/or deliver holiday meals
- donate old blankets and towels to local animal shelters
- staff a gift-wrapping booth for an organization you believe in
- adopt a family
- head out with young friends, siblings, nieces/nephews to all pick out a toy to donate to Toys for Tots
- do the same for a local book-collection drive, too
- shovel out a neighbor
- visit veterans at a local vet hospital
- usher at a holiday concert
- babysit for friends so the adults can get out to do some holiday errands

Who knows? An activity you try this year could become a lovely holiday tradition.

