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

“I’m SO Behind!”
Addressing that overwhelmed feeling

It’s one of the worst feelings – that you’re behind in your academic work and may never catch up. And many students feel this wash over them at one point or another. The unsuccessful ones sit still and let it drown them, while the successful ones actively reach out for help.

Encourage your student to be one of the latter, by trying some simple, yet effective academic success strategies:

**Use Instructors’ Office Hours.** Go meet face-to-face with an instructor, explain how you’re struggling and ask for assistance. This helps teachers see that you care and want to do well. Plus, you become more than a face in the crowd this way!

**Visit Support Services.** Whether it’s visiting the disability support office to address a learning concern, the writing center to get help with a paper or the counseling center to talk about test anxiety, the support is there and ready to help.

**Come Up with a Study Plan.** Many students are used to studying when they can and may do a lot of their work at the last minute. This won’t fly at college, so it’s important to come up with a study strategy that maps out the week ahead and what needs to get done. Figure intentional chunks of time to study and where to go to make this happen.

**Don’t Just Rely on Weekends.** It’s easy to put the majority of your academic work off until the weekend. Yet, that rarely works because everyone needs down time to be a successful, healthy student. So, parcel out the work throughout the week and the weekend, giving yourself time to enjoy some non-academic pursuits, too!

Seeking help, adding some intentional structure and being smart with his time can help your student get an academic leg up. Doing this now will help the remainder of the semester not feel so overwhelming.
When Conflict is Brewing

Confronting peers can be tricky for today’s generation. Yet, as your student and her peers settle into the school year and get more comfortable with one another, it’s likely that some conflicts will occur.

When you get that phone call that a conflict is brewing, you can help your student see the many benefits of confrontation, especially when it’s done well. Consider sharing the following with your student to ensure she is as effective—and comfortable—as possible when confronting her peers:

**Care.** Reframe your thinking surrounding confrontation to the idea of “carefrontation.” This involves considering the individual’s feelings and role in the situation. It also involves demonstrating a level of care during the confrontation, no matter what the circumstances.

**Use “I” Language.** Get your point across about how someone’s actions have impacted you by using “I” statements. This takes away the blaming component of a confrontation to make it more of a productive conversation instead.

**Be Sincere.** Remember to be sincere during confrontations. Sincerity can be demonstrated by asking questions that can help you understand where the other person is coming from.

**Keep Anger at Bay.** Nothing is accomplished when anger takes over, so try to keep things as civil as possible. Write out the main points before the confrontation in order to get them out. That way, you’re less likely to explode during the confrontation.

**Think Long-Term.** In the heat of the moment, it’s sometimes easy to forget that this situation could affect the way that you and the other person interact for the rest of the year. Be respectful and proud of your actions.

**Move Ahead.** Once the confrontation is over and you and the person have come to a resolution, move forward. Now’s the time to rebuild the relationship, not rehash the conflict time and time again.

**Seek Help.** If a situation feels out of control, go to a trusted campus professional like a coach, residence life staffer, counselor or advisor for assistance.

It’s our reactions to conflict that often cause the most problems. Encourage your student to try the above tips to address conflict productively and move forward.

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**Verbal & Non-Verbal Tips**

When addressing incidents, consider:

- **Tone of Voice:** Use a calm, soothing tone rather than sarcasm or anger
- **Rate of Speech:** Speak more slowly so the situation isn’t escalated
- **Vocal Inflection:** Speak as if you are having a conversation rather than lecturing
- **Body, Hands & Face:** Keep your body relaxed, arms at your side and a positive look (not a smirk or a scowl) on your face
- **Eye Contact:** Don’t look away, yet don’t stare either

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**Honor Make a Difference Day**

This year, October 26th is Make a Difference Day. This annual event, held on the fourth Saturday of every October, is a time to embrace difference making. You can check out the Make a Difference Day site at www.usaweekend.com/diffday/index.html for ideas and more information.

In the meantime, you can make a difference today! Consider calling or writing your student to tell him the difference he has made in your life. It may sound corny, but we bet you’ll catch your student off guard…and probably make his day!

You can also encourage your student to take a moment to drop a line to the people who’ve made a difference in his life. Chances are, he’s had teachers, coaches, family members or mentors who’ve helped him get to where he is today. Taking stock of where we’ve come from, and those who’ve provided support and direction along the way, is a humbling and meaningful experience. Plus, doing so will make your student feel really good in the process.
When Homesickness Strikes

You’re all going through a transition these days, as you get used to your student being in college and he gets used to being there. And a natural part of this transition for some students is going through a bout of homesickness.

Once the initial excitement of the new academic year wears off, it’s pretty common for students to start missing home and the familiarity of their old routine. They may miss friends, family and their “old life,” especially once classes start getting harder and they have to work on social connections.

You can help your student cope with these feelings of homesickness by offering him the following suggestions:

**Acknowledge Your Feelings and Worries.** Once you’ve identified that what your student is experiencing is homesickness, it can be much easier to address it. Otherwise, you may be wondering what’s happening to you.

**Take Advantage of Campus Resources.** Residence life staff, counselors, campus ministers, peer educators and others are prepared to help students who are homesick or lonely. Don’t be afraid to tap into them as a resource – that’s why they are here!

**Get Involved.** If you sit and think about what your student is missing at home, you are also missing what you could be doing on campus. This is a lose-lose proposition! Trying new things and meeting new people is one of the best ways to combat loneliness.

**Stay Connected to Friends & Family.** Although it’s important to develop some independence, staying connected is a great way to feel supported as you grow during your collegiate journey. We all need old friends – and the promise of new ones, too.

**Play to Your Strengths.** Find something on campus that allows you to experience your established strengths, like playing on an intramural basketball team, getting creative with a hall council project or singing in the campus choir. Your confidence level – as well as your comfort level – will increase as a result.

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### When Your Student Needs Something More

How do you know if your student is experiencing a normal bout of homesickness or if he is really struggling in a way that might require some additional support? Here are some signs that could signal that your student is severely homesick:

- **He Finds Reasons to Call.** If your student starts contacting you much more often than normal, it could mean that he is looking for reasons to talk to you.

- **He’s Not Getting Involved.** If you aren’t hearing your student talk about co-curricular activities or he keeps giving excuses as to why he isn’t getting involved, he could be holing up in his room and not connecting with his peers.

- **He’s Becoming More and More Dependent.** Is your student asking you to handle simple tasks that he normally handles on his own or should be handling on his own now that he is in college? It’s one thing for a student to call for some advice or to talk through some possibilities, yet it’s another for a student to ask someone to handle something he should be.

- **He Keeps Getting Sick.** Sometimes, homesickness can manifest itself in physical symptoms such as headaches, insomnia, nausea or fatigue. If your student is experiencing these symptoms with regularity, it could mean more than poor habits.

- **He’s Getting Poor Grades.** Severe homesickness can make it really difficult for a student to concentrate on his schoolwork. Talk with your student about his grades, what he is learning in his classes and what he is enjoying about his academic pursuits.

If you believe your student is severely homesick, encourage him to visit the campus counseling center. A professional can help him work through his feelings and get him on the right track.

Most of all, you can help your student by reassuring him that by accepting his life in college, he’s not giving up his life at home. He can have both… it just looks different. Send him some things to remind him of home, make sure he knows you are thinking about him and help him feel confident about the months ahead.

**Source:** Some information adapted from Helium.com
How NOT to Get in a Car with an Impaired Person
Helping your student stay safe

Both designated drivers and those who make smart decisions about not getting in the car of an impaired driver save thousands of lives each year. Unfortunately, many more lives are needlessly lost when people make poor choices.

Help your student have the strength and knowledge to NOT get in the car with a driver under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Reminding her to think ahead may very well help her stay safe when an actual situation occurs.

- Plan ahead by choosing a designated driver whenever you are going to socialize at an event where alcohol is in the mix.
- Collect everyone’s car keys at the start of an event so there is no chance that someone will drive under the influence. Give them all to the designated driver to hold for safekeeping.
- Be sure you have the phone numbers for local cab companies and/or bus and shuttle schedules in your phone and wallet. Print them out so you always have them with you.
- Try to avoid a confrontation with the person under the influence. Just be matter-of-fact about your choice to seek alternative transportation.
- If you are hosting a party where people may get intoxicated, plan ahead by having everyone stay over for the evening or only allowing them to use public transportation or a designated driver to get home.
- Don’t be afraid to call for help. Under no circumstances should you get in the car with someone under the influence. You can always call a friend or campus police if you need assistance. You’re never a bother!

Remind your student that, no matter what, she should stand firm in her decision not to get in the car of a driver who is under the influence. Her life isn’t up for negotiation.

Simple Hispanic Heritage Month Celebrations

From September 15-October 15, we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. Here are some quick and easy ways that you and your student can, too:

- **Food!** Go to a Mexican, Cuban, Spanish or other spicy restaurant when you’re visiting for the weekend.
- **Coffee!** Send some different types of coffee from Hispanic/Latino countries, such as Colombian coffee, café mexicano, shade-grown coffee from Central and South America, and more.
- **Words!** Share a Spanish word of the day when you’re emailing or texting one another – sites like www.spanishdict.com/wordoftheday can help.
- **Stories!** Check out the intriguing stories of people in history, such as Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, at www.biography.com/hispanic-heritage/ and share links with one another.
- **Travel!** Talk about study abroad options and how your student can learn more.
- **Events!** There are some great Hispanic Heritage events happening on campus this month, so encourage your student to check them out.
- **More Food!** Encourage your student to try some of the cultural cuisine offered in the dining hall – it’s delicious!
- **Fun!** Send your student a filled piñata that she can use with her friends.
CAMPUS EVENTS:
10/9: Blood Drive, 9:30am-6:30pm, Public Square MPR
10/10: Midnight Madness, 10pm, Wilbur Lobby
10/13: Women's Rugby vs. Fairfield University, 1pm, Back Field
10/14: COLLEGE CLOSED
10/16: Bra Pong, 3:30pm, Public Square Lawn
10/17: Clearly Crystals, 10am-4pm, PS Lobby
10/17: Breast Cancer Ribbon Sale, 12pm-3pm, Kellenberg Hallway outside AR & Wilbur Lobby
10/17: Business & Accounting Club Meeting, 3:30pm, Trading Room
10/17: Mr. Molloy, 6pm, Madison Theatre
10/18: MPAC Haunted Theatre, 7pm-11pm, Hays
10/19: Lupus Awareness Basketball Tournament, 3pm-7pm, Gym
10/23: Convocation, 10am-11:30am, Gym
10/24: Majors Minors Fair, PS Lobby, 1-4pm
10/24: Student Media Scavenger Hunt, 6pm, PS Patio
10/25: CSD Career Day, 3pm-6pm, Hays Theatre
10/26: Halloween Festival, Public Square
10/26: Safe Halloween, Fitzgerald Hall, 11am – 1pm
10/27: Men's Rugby vs. Fairfield University, 1pm, Back Field
10/30: Halloween Movie Night, 9pm, Madison Theatre
10/31: Halloween Party, 8pm-12am, Gym

ATHLETIC EVENTS:
10/9: Men's Soccer vs. Holy Family University, 4pm, Skelos Field
10/10: Women's Volleyball vs. LIU, 6pm, Quealy Gymnasium
10/10: Women's Soccer vs. NYIT, 7pm, Skelos Field Senior Day
10/11: Women's Tennis vs. University of New Haven, 3pm, Eisenhower Park
10/15: Women's Volleyball vs. Pace University, 6pm, Quealy Gymnasium
10/18: Women's Tennis vs. Dowling College, 3pm, Eisenhower Park
10/19: Women's Tennis vs. St. Thomas Aquinas College, 12:30pm, Eisenhower Park
10/23: Men's Soccer vs. NYIT, 7:30pm, Skelos Field Senior Day
10/24: Women's Volleyball vs. Mercy College, 6pm, Quealy Gymnasium
10/29: Women's Volleyball vs. Queens College, 6pm, Quealy Gymnasium

OCTOBER HAPPENINGS