

Tips for Parenting a First Year Student

In the space of one week, a new student will likely:

- Arrive on campus without knowing a soul.
- Share a room for the first time with a total stranger.
- Find her or his way around on an unfamiliar campus.
- Find a spot in the right parking lot.
- Be at the right place at the right time for way too many activities.
- Learn a whole new set of policies, procedures, and rules.
- Get five syllabi from five different classes and try to define the word syllabus.
- Try to make some friends.
- Find a job.
- Decide whether to attend a party off campus.
- Explain to family that despite a seemingly empty schedule they are still very busy.

New Students quickly discover that:

- Reading something once does not make it stick.
- Listening to lectures without taking notes is not enough.
- Writing the first draft of a paper as the only draft usually ends up with a paper that looks like it went through a battlefield.
- Sitting around in the lounge with a book open is not really studying.
- Expecting the teacher to go over assigned readings in class doesn't happen.
- Studying the same amount of time as in high school isn't enough.
- Going to class is essential.
- Late assignments will not be accepted.
- Expecting courtesy points because the teacher likes you doesn't happen.
- Juggling family commitments and study time is a real trick.
- Saving studying until the night before an exam has long-term risks.

New Students face a myriad of social challenges which they must solve by:

- Not running home on weekends to avoid the discomfort of being alone.
- Connecting with faculty and staff on campus.
- Finding people who have similar ideas about what it means to have fun.
- Deciding how and whether to retain relationships at home.
- Negotiating the constantly changing rules of potential dating relationships.
- Finding productive activities to fill what seems like a lot of time on their hands.

*Adapted from "Web Resources for Parents and Families." Indiana State University (10, May, 2005)
<http://web.indstate.edu/st-aff/parents/faq.htm>*

Letting Go and Letting your Student Grow

This is an exciting and anxiety producing time for you and your student. You have already played a major role in helping your daughter or son succeed academically. You've been there during their high's and low's. Now it's time for your student to start a new journey. She or he will figure out how to navigate through the personal, academic, and emotional challenges with the life skills you have modeled. Although your student will start to function more independently, she or he will still need to maintain an emotional tie with you. Your relationship will change, but in very exciting ways as you begin to figure out how to develop an adult-to-adult connection.

This may be your first child attending college, or you may have already experienced this transition with another child. Even if this isn't your first to attend college, you may have a very different experience this time around. Transition impacts each of us in very different ways.

Your student will probably seem different after he or she has been in college for awhile — even for a few weeks. You may see changes in hair styles, eating habits, sleeping patterns, how they see themselves, and how they interact with the rest of the family. The key is to be prepared for these changes. Don't make snap judgments on the quality or character of the differences. They may change again in the next month. Try to appreciate that your student's view of the world is expanding.

Suggestions for helping parents deal with the sense of loss, and successfully "letting go" as your student goes to college:

- Start to build an adult relationship with your student with phone calls, e-mails, letters, and "care" packages. Let the student control the timing of these interactions to help maintain that sense of freedom.
- Focus on the things you enjoyed doing before your student began college. This is a great time to focus on reclaiming your hobbies and interests.
- Don't feel guilty if you adjust to your student being in college before other parents do. Each parent will make the adjustment in his or her own time.
- Work to keep your emotions under wrap. If you burst into tears every time you speak to your student, she/he or he may: 1) Feel even worse about being in school than he or she already does, and /or 2) Stop talking to you altogether!
- Try not to focus conversations on problems or uncertainties that you're facing in your life. Help your student focus on new goals or activities in her or his life.
- Try to limit any other major changes in your life for now. Sending a student to college is enough of a shock. Changing jobs or moving to a new house could be challenging for everyone!
- If you have other children still at home keep your sense of loss or grief under wraps. If your other children see that you're very upset, they may get the feeling that you value the college student more than you do them.

Tips for Keeping the Lines of Communication Open with your Student:

- Communicate via e-mail. It's inexpensive and enables the student to communicate with you as her/his schedule allows.
- If your student doesn't have a cell phone, provide her with a pre-paid phone card.
- Write letters. Students look forward to the mail delivery every day. Don't take it personally if they don't have the time to call or write back immediately.
- Check the Ursuline College website www.ursuline.edu to stay informed about campus happenings. This may provide you with some good conversation starters.
- Send small care packages with items such as food treats, quarters for doing laundry, flowers, and local news clippings.
- Make every effort to visit your student during special weekends or events. Don't plan to spend every minute of both days with your student. Let him or her set the tone for how the weekend is spent.
- Allow yourself to be a "shoulder to cry on." College can be stressful and frustrating for many students. When your student calls or writes, just take in the information and don't be judgmental. Often, the student isn't asking for a solution to the problem, he or she just wants to let out some feelings.
- Understand that your student may not appreciate an unannounced visit to campus.

- Accept the choice of their major; it rarely determines a career and it may change numerous times during their first two years.

If your main form of communication is the telephone, here are some ideas for getting the most out of your conversations:

- Make a list of items you want to discuss with your student. Keep it near the phone so that when he or she calls, you can cover any important topics.
- Begin your calls with positive news, information that's not controversial. Don't put a damper on the conversation by immediately bringing up bad news.
- Share news about yourself and life at home, but don't go on and on about people your student doesn't know or like.
- Let your student determine the length of your talk. He or she may need to study or go to class. Controlling the amount of conversation is also another way your child can exercise his or her freedom. If you need more time, ask to schedule some uninterrupted time to talk.
- Don't ask a question if you really don't want to hear the answer. If you respond in a judgmental fashion to something your child tells you, it will limit how much he or she shares with you in the future.

Adapted from a publication from the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office • 1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350, Saint Paul, MN 55108-5227 • 651.642.0567

Dealing with Parental Blues

How do you know if you have the parent's version of the Freshman Blues? Here are some common signs:

- You gain or lose weight.
- Tensions increase within the family, with your spouse or other children.
- You feel deep sadness for no apparent reason.
- You find yourself wanting to call your student twice a day.

On the other hand, life may actually get a little easier with one less child at home. There are fewer schedules to coordinate. It may give you more time to spend with your spouse, other children, and/or yourself.

What's the cure for the Parental Blues?

Try to find some positives in the situation. Of course you miss your child. Most parents do. But remember that after 18 years (or so) of raising this child, you can now sit back and appreciate what you've accomplished. Congratulate yourself by:

- Spending more time with the children still at home
- Spending more time with your spouse
- Starting a new hobby
- Traveling
- Returning to school yourself

Of course, these really aren't solutions to feeling sad or lonely. They're simply some ways you can balance letting go so that your college student is free to mature yet connected as a source of love and support.

Ways you can help your student cope with being homesick

- Time is the best cure. As your student gets involved in school and makes new friends, he or she will become more comfortable with the new situation.
- When your student leaves for college, put on a confident smile. Assure your student that he or she is doing the right thing.
- Don't call every day. That can emphasize the distance between you instead of minimizing it. It might also give the student the sense that you don't trust him or her! Give your student a phone card if she or he doesn't have a cell phone.
- If your student tells you he or she is homesick, don't spend a lot of time recommending cures. Often, the student simply wants a sounding board to express his or her problems. Simply by offering a "shoulder to cry on," you can usually help your child through this crisis.
- Send things to your student, e-mails and especially snail mail! Most college students know exactly when the mail arrives. They eagerly check the mail slot hoping to see something from home. Notes, letters, postcards, pictures, and "goodies" from home are greatly appreciated.
- Don't make an emergency trip to campus and "rush to the rescue" as if there is something wrong with your student being homesick. That will only reinforce his or her fear of "being a baby" and could embarrass your child in front of other students.
- Sometimes a visit home can be a cure. This may be easier for some students than others due to distance and availability of transportation. However, if your student is coming home every weekend, it means that he or she isn't getting involved in the many activities available at most colleges. This could prolong the homesickness. Students are invited to stop by the Office of Student Development, Leadership, and Orientation in Mullen 130 to learn more about the many ways to get involved on the Ursuline campus. Please visit our website at <http://www.ursuline.edu/students/activities/>.
- Encourage your student to stay on campus the first two weekends so they can meet people and get comfortable with campus.
- The bottom line is that students adjust to college in their own way and in their own time. It's easy for some and hard for others. Look for signs of progress rather than quick and easy cures.

Student Safety Tips

- Your student should always travel in groups or use campus security as an escort service after dark or early in the morning. She or he should never take short-cuts, jog, or walk alone at night.
- Encourage your child to share her or his class schedule with you and other friends.
- Your student should find a classmate who can walk with them to their car or residence hall if they have an evening class.
- Help your student study the area around the campus and the college neighborhood. Identify potentially dangerous areas and where the campus emergency phones are located.
- Students who commute should make sure their car is locked.

Tips for Students Living in Residence Hall:

- Students should keep their room locked at all times.
- Encourage your student to always let someone know where they're going. Leave a note with their roommate if no one is around.
- Remind your child not to leave valuables such as wallets, laptops or ATM cards in plain sight.
- Help your child to program his or her telephone with emergency phone numbers including police, fire, family and friends.
- Encourage your child to get to know his or her neighbors, and not to be shy about reporting strangers who are loitering and/or engaged in illegal activities.

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*If an emergency occurs on campus (either a medical or security related) students should call 911 (no money is needed at a pay phone to dial 911), and then call the Campus Security Office (x4204).

*Seven outdoor security telephones are located throughout the campus. The phone will connect directly to Campus Security (x4204).

*Ursuline College employs security personnel on campus 24 hours a day. They do not have police powers; however, the College has a close working relationship with the Pepper Pike Police, who respond promptly to calls from the College. It is College policy that crimes be reported to the Pepper Pike Police for appropriate investigation.

*For security reasons Ursuline College academic buildings are locked at 10:30 p.m. on class nights and earlier if no classes are scheduled. Residence halls are locked at all times.

Crime Statistics and Crime Rates

In accordance with the Campus Security Act of 1990, following are the reported crime statistics for Ursuline College for the past three years:

OFFENSE	2007	2008	2009
Murder	0	0	0
Sex Offenses: Forcible	1	0	0
Sex Offenses: Non-forcible	0	0	0
Robbery	0	0	0
Aggravated Assault	0	0	0
Burglary	0	2	2
Motor Vehicle Theft	0	0	0
Arson	0	0	1

Coping with Challenges throughout the Academic Year

Many general student concerns are typically seasonal. This is not to suggest that certain types of problems occur only at certain times. Various challenges are likely to be more prevalent at certain times because of various activities, schedules and campus tensions.

August

August is a time of adjustment and transition. It begins with Orientation which is both fun and overwhelming for some students. Many students experience loneliness, and are focused on making new friends and trying to figure out how to get involved in activities. They might also be missing friends or a significant other from home.

September

The month of September raises questions about how to study for college level courses, how to cope with independence, possible roommate conflicts, and pressures from various groups to belong. Students may also begin experiencing problems with budgeting and be subject to the temptations of credit card abuse. Also, some students may become over-involved in their new social lives and have trouble focusing on academics. They may experience their first test in some classes.

October/November

Many tests are given during this time. Mid-term exams can create stress, especially if only a midterm and final are given. This puts much more pressure on the student to perform. The possibility of roommate problems (during tense mid-term exam period) also arises. Advising and registration for the spring semester will take place and will require decision making. Students are now becoming more confident (and restless), as Thanksgiving break approaches.

December

Excitement and anxiety continues as the end of the semester draws near. Some students experience with thoughts of going home. First-year college students may feel like strangers at home—they have to readjust to their family and friends. Final exams create a variety of reactions (gloom, cramming, despair, high tempers, and panic); roommate changes may be a future possibility; and, for some, there is that final realization that they were not able to earn the grades that they expected. All this leads to feelings of happiness and relief over the coming semester break.

January

Many students are excited about returning to school after a long break. Some may experience some anxiety if their first semester grades were low. Cliques become stronger on floors, and winter blues spread as students realize there are three full months of school remaining.

February/March

Mid-semester slouch appears in February and March (academically, this is dangerous). Mid-winter sickness and a growing restlessness for brief (but needed) spring vacations contribute to students becoming tense and restless.

April

Advising and registration for the fall semester will occur, requiring decision making on the part of students. Spring fever (and problems) appears as students become restless. As the weather gets warmer students are louder, less interested in course work, and more likely to be distracted.

May

Last minute concerns over exams and almost-due research papers bring tension, although there is more confidence as first year students have already been through finals and know what to expect. Still, there is some anxiety over exams, and cramming often leads to tension-relieving pranks. Students look forward to summer.

More Serious Problems

Sometimes students' challenges become overwhelming and students may experience more serious concerns: feelings of depression, anxiety, abuse in relationships, abuse of alcohol or other drugs, harassment, etc. As a parent or guardian it can be very frustrating not knowing how to be helpful to your student. A variety of resources are available on campus to assist students in working through more serious concerns.

*If your student is living on campus the Residential Life staff can serve as a resource for students. It is always helpful to bring problems/concerns to the residence life staff.

*Individual counseling is available to all enrolled Ursuline students. The number of visits is determined individually. Individual counseling is limited to brief therapy, generally between six and twelve sessions. Appointments generally last for one hour. This service provides students a confidential place to work through stress and individual challenges. Students can contact Anita Culbertson, Ph.D., at 440 646 8323. Her office is in 317 Mullen.

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Talking to your Student about Alcohol

Talk with your student about alcohol. While parents may not be able to actively monitor students away from home, they can be available to talk and listen, and that is just as important.

1. Set clear and realistic expectations regarding academic performance. Studies conducted nationally have demonstrated that partying may contribute as much to a student's decline in grades as the difficulty of his or her academic work. If students know their parents expect sound academic work, they are likely to be more devoted to their studies and have less time to get in trouble with alcohol.
2. Stress to students that alcohol is toxic and excessive consumption can fatally poison. This is not a scare tactic. The fact is students die every year from alcohol poisoning. Discourage dangerous drinking through participation in drinking games, hazing activities or in any other way. Parents should ask their students to also have the courage to intervene when they see someone putting their life at risk through participation in dangerous drinking.
3. Tell students to intervene when classmates are in trouble with alcohol. Nothing is more tragic than an unconscious student being left to die while others either fail to recognize that the student is in jeopardy or fail to call for help due to fear of getting the student in trouble.
4. Tell students to stand up for their right to a safe academic environment. Students who do not drink can be affected by the behavior of those who do, ranging from interrupted study time to assault or unwanted sexual advances. Students can confront these problems directly by discussing them with the offender. If that fails, they should notify residence hall staff.
5. Know the alcohol scene on campus and talk to students about it. Students grossly exaggerate the use of alcohol and other drugs by their peers. A recent survey found that University of Oregon students believed 96 percent of their peers drink alcohol at least once a week, when the actual rate was 52 percent. Students are highly influenced by peers and tend to drink up to what they perceive to be the norm.
6. Avoid tales of drinking exploits from your own college years. Entertaining students with stories of drinking back in "the good old days" normalizes what, even then, was abnormal behavior. It also appears to give parental approval to dangerous alcohol consumption.

7. Encourage your student to volunteer in community work. In addition to structuring free time, volunteerism provides students with opportunities to develop job-related skills and to gain valuable experience. Helping others also gives students a broader outlook and a healthier perspective on the opportunities they enjoy. Volunteer work on campus helps students further connect with their school, increasing the likelihood of staying in college.
8. Make it clear -- Underage alcohol consumption and driving after drinking are against the law. Parents should make it clear that they do not condone breaking the law. Parents of college students should openly and clearly express disapproval of underage drinking and dangerous alcohol consumption. And, if parents themselves drink, they should present a positive role model in the responsible use of alcohol.

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Ursuline College Alcohol Policy

Ursuline College exists in a state, which regulates the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Under state law one must be 21 years of age in order to purchase or consume liquor, wine, wine coolers, liqueur, beer or other alcoholic beverages. Ohio State law also prohibits the carrying of an open container of any alcoholic beverage on the street or in a motor vehicle. Criminal penalties range from fines to imprisonment depending on the nature and seriousness of the offense.

Ursuline College policy will be in accord with state law and with local ordinances regarding the purchases and consumption of alcoholic beverage. The policy recognizes that alcohol abuse leads to a variety of physical and/or emotional problems. These effects may be significant or even fatal. As a college whose primary mission is the education of women, Ursuline College is also concerned that men and women understand that using alcohol while pregnant may cause damage to a fetus.

The College also exists within the context of Christian concern for the physical, mental and spiritual welfare of all human beings and a value system which respects both the rights of the individual and the needs and rights of the community.

The Ursuline College policy on the use of alcohol:

1. No persons under age shall consume, purchase or be served any alcoholic beverage.
2. No alcoholic beverage is permitted in the student residence hall rooms.
3. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in residence hall public areas and in the buildings of the College except with approval.
4. Registered parties and events on campus with alcohol will be permitted only in accord with procedures established in accord with this policy.
5. College sponsored events held off campus will be on a cash bar basis unless specifically approved by the President.
6. The college will provide alcohol awareness education programming and the counseling opportunities for those who seek and/or would benefit from such counseling.

Alcohol Policy with Regard to FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits institutions to directly contact parents or legal guardians of students under the age of 21 who are found responsible for violating institution policies on the use or possession of alcohol or controlled substances. After lengthy discussion and review, we concluded that college staff from the Vice President of Student Affairs Office will notify

parents or guardians of a student when that student is found responsible for the use, sale or possession of controlled substances (illegal drugs) within the community. We will also notify parents or guardians of a student when that student is found to have violated the Student Code of Conduct policies on the use and possession of alcohol when they are under the age of 21 and one or more of the following occurs:

1. When a student has been found to have violated the alcohol policy a second time;
2. When there is significant property damage;
3. When medical attention to any person, including the student, is required as a result of the student's alcohol-related behavior;
4. When the student demonstrates reckless disregard for his or her own personal safety or the safety of others;
5. There is evidence that the student's alcohol-related behavior negatively impacted the learning environment.