



a newsletter for parents & families



Potsdam
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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A New Beginning

On college campuses everywhere, fall is a time of new beginnings and fresh starts. It's like our very own version of New Year's Day!

As your student plunges into this exciting time, he may be clinging to the comfort of old, familiar talents, people and perspectives. There's nothing wrong with embracing these things, if they're good for him. And, with a fresh start waiting in the wings, he can add the following into the mix...

New Learning.

Trying a new type of class, attending thought-provoking campus programs and talking with people who have different perspectives can help your student's mind expand. There's so much to explore here on campus, with new learning always at her fingertips.

New Friends.

There are people to meet everywhere – in the residence halls, through campus organizations, in class, at the dining hall, amidst service projects, during get-togethers at friend's apartments... Encourage branching out and reaching out to meet strangers who could easily become new friends.

New Ideas.

These may come about during a late-night chat with friends, attending different spiritual services or reading articles on a particular subject. Whether it's considering vegetarianism, better understanding the global water crisis or rethinking his approach to exercise, new ideas can be refreshing and rejuvenating!

New Challenges.

Along with most new beginnings comes some challenges. Your student may struggle getting a handle on her new responsibilities at the campus newspaper or doing group work for a collaborative class. Encourage her to take on these new challenges, as they most certainly lead to...

"The beginning is always today."

~ Mary
Wollstonecraft Shelley

New Growth.

While growth isn't always the most comfortable thing, it's important for all of us to stretch beyond our comfort zones and try new things. Remind your student that the discomfort sometimes associated with new experiences is a sure sign of growth. And that's what new beginnings can do for us all!





Doing the Organizational Dance

In order for students to succeed academically, they need to get organized. That doesn't necessarily have to mean color-coded folders and putting their label maker into overdrive, unless they're into that sort of thing. What it does mean, however, is being intentional about managing their stuff and their time before the term really kicks in.

Here are a few tips to share as they embark on this organizational dance...

Clean Up That Desktop. A cluttered computer can make it hard to find things, leading to lost time and great frustration. So, an hour or two

of organizing desktop files, clearing out old emails and creating a system that works for them can be time very well spent!

Corral Those Papers. While much of life is electronic these days, there are still notebooks, papers and files to whip into shape. Sifting through them, making needed papers easily accessible and recycling the extras now will make your student's life a lot easier these next few months.

Prep Organizational Tools. If your student chooses to use a planner or an online calendar, now's the time to put in class projects, club meetings, weekend commitments and the like.

Remember: Stuff Steals Time...

Share this wisdom with students so they can get organized, save time and stay sane in the academic year ahead!

Having all these things in one place can give students great peace of mind and help them not double book future gigs.

Remembering Names: Memory Tips

Who? If this time of year has you feeling like an owl, trying to remember who people are on campus, never fear! As you navigate Parent/Family Weekend, meeting your student's friends and connecting with other families, we have some simple memory tips for you. Pretty soon, you'll be a pro at the Name Game!

Unique Features. When you meet someone, focus on something interesting about each person, from hair color to a wacky interest. For instance, if Rebecca has red hair, she can become "Rebecca Red" in your mind. Or if Steve is interested in golf, think "sTEEve" to remember him teeing off.

Mnemonic Devices. Try turning the person's name into a mental image of an object. For instance, Steph sounds like "step" so imagine her running up the stairs.

Repetition. During your first meeting, repeat the person's name out loud and say it to yourself several



times, too. This can help it really stick!

Double Take. At the end of your encounter, repeat the person's name ("See you later, Steph!"). This can help clinch the person's name in your memory, especially if you've used it several times during your interaction.

Write it Down. And if your memory needs a nudge, write down a person's name! It can't hurt to have a list of your student's friends that you've met in your phone. The act of writing them down can help reinforce their names, while also giving you a reminder to refer to later.

Seasonal Student Issues

Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- A desire to feel connected to campus
- Roommate adjustments
- Exploration of personal values
- Long distance relationship strain
- Feelings of loneliness and homesickness
- Experimentation with alcohol and other drugs
- Getting acclimated to a new type of academics
- Figuring out how to get organized & manage time
- Searching for a sense of belonging



Simple Spanish Phrases

We may all encounter Spanish-speaking members of the campus and wider community, so why not use this handy chart to help communicate more effectively?

- A pleasure to meet you = Mucho gusto
- Good morning = Buenos dias
- Good night = Buenos noches
- My name is ___ = Me llamo ___
- What is your name? = Como se llama usted?

- Goodbye = Adios
- See you later = Hasta luego
- Excuse me = Con permiso
- Please = Por favor
- Thank you = Gracias
- I'm sorry = Lo siento
- You're welcome = De nada
- How are you? = Como esta usted?
- Welcome = Bienvenido

The Celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month is September 15-October 15

Encourage your student to learn more by attending campus and community events during this time!

The FAFSA Process

Some changes have been made to the process of filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). According to the Federal Student Aid office of the Department of Education, they include:

- You can submit your FAFSA earlier. This means you can now

complete and submit a FAFSA are early as October 1 each year.

- You'll use earlier income and tax information. You'll be required to report income and tax information from an earlier tax year (see the chart). This means you will have already done your taxes,

rather than having to estimate tax information.

Be sure to check our school and state financial aid deadlines so you don't miss out on any aid! And visit StudentAid.gov/fafsa for assistance as you fill out your FAFSA.

CHANGES TO THE FAFSA® PROCESS FOR 2017–18

SUBMIT A FAFSA EARLIER: Students will be able to submit a 2017–18 FAFSA as early as Oct. 1, 2016, rather than beginning on Jan. 1, 2017. The earlier submission date will be a permanent change, enabling students to complete and submit their FAFSAs as early as October 1 every year. (There is NO CHANGE to the 2016–17 schedule. The 2016–17 FAFSA became available Jan. 1, 2016.)

USE EARLIER INCOME AND TAX INFORMATION: Beginning with the 2017–18 FAFSA, students will report income and tax information from an earlier tax year. For example, on the 2017–18 FAFSA, students (and parents, as appropriate) will report their 2015 income and tax information, rather than their 2016 income and tax information.

Here's a summary of key dates for submitting the FAFSA depending on when you plan to go to school:

IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND COLLEGE FROM	YOU WILL SUBMIT THIS FAFSA	YOU CAN SUBMIT THE FAFSA FROM	USING INCOME AND TAX INFORMATION FROM
July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016	2015–16	January 1, 2015–June 30, 2016	2014
July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017	2016–17	January 1, 2016–June 30, 2017	2015
July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018	2017–18	October 1, 2016–June 30, 2018	2015
July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019	2018–19	October 1, 2017–June 30, 2019	2016



Learning Inside AND Outside the Classroom

The learning opportunities available to students happen both in and out of the classroom at our institution. This gives students a chance to learn in a variety of ways, from classes to experiences, so they'll benefit from the variety available on campus and in our community.

Here are some of the opportunities students can try...

Gaining Classroom Knowledge. Lecture notes, class discussions, textbooks and projects will help students dig into specific subject matter. Don't be surprised if your student is excited about anthropology or astronomy next time you talk!

To Help Focus on the Learning, You Can... Ask your student what she's learning. It'll be great to hear her excitement, plus by sharing the knowledge with you, it's helping her clinch it in her own brain even more.

Getting Involved in Service Experiences. By participating in class-based service learning projects and out-of-class community service initiatives, your student is learning about giving back and engaging with the community.

To Help Focus on the Learning, You Can... Role model community involvement and the value of giving back. Also, talk with your student

Involvement & Academics Go Hand-in-Hand

Research says that students who get involved on campus will likely do better academically, too. In and out of class involvements complement one another!



about the people he's meeting through his community service.

Participating in Campus Leadership. Getting involved with the biology club, student government or the campus radio station can enhance students' sense of belonging because they really feel a part of something. Plus, they're learning how to follow, how to lead, how to work with a wide variety of people and how to be part of a team.

To Help Focus on the Learning, You Can... Stay in touch with your student about what her group(s) is up to. Is there a program happening this weekend? Has she been working on a particular project? Ask her about it.

Assisting a Professor. Sometimes students have an opportunity to get involved with a research project. If your student decides to do this, he'll enhance his classroom learning through practical experience.

To Help Focus on the Learning, You Can... Try to understand the research your student is involved in, even if you feel like it's "over your head." By explaining things to you in layperson terms, you're helping him be in a teaching role.

Your student is surrounded by in and out of class learning opportunities. The combination is unbeatable!

10 Ways to Handle Loneliness

Students often encounter varying levels of loneliness when they first come to campus. Here are 10 ways they can address those feelings...

1. Reach out to other people who seem lonely and like they're trying to find their place, too
2. Attend an organizational meeting for possible new members – you'll all be in the same boat!
3. Go to a residence hall or campus program to be with others who have similar interests
4. Participate in a service project to take the focus off self and contribute to others
5. Talk with a trusted staff or faculty member to gain some insight and be listened to
6. Offer to assist with a campus or community project – people love willing helpers!
7. Connect with old friends when needing a boost
8. Make a list of your strengths and what you have to offer
9. Say hello when walking through campus
10. Try not to look at your loneliness as a permanent condition – your efforts will pay off!