The Rhythm of College Life

Issues that affect our students
SUMMER

Common Issues

• Questions on submitting health forms and housing applications, meeting administrative deadlines
• Getting the “perfect class schedule”
• Meeting roommate(s), living with others
• What to bring to campus
• Last minute questions about paying for college

What to Expect

• Feeling overwhelmed, yet excited
• Worried about leaving high school friends

Tips

• Encourage your student to ask questions if he or she doesn’t understand or needs clarification

First Year Experience theme-Welcome
SEPTEMBER

Common Issues

- Fitting in
- Transitioning from high school to college
- Homesickness
- Adjusting to administrative ‘red tape’
- Finding on-campus jobs

What to Expect

- Testing of limits, boundaries
- Experimentation
- Family Weekend (September 26-27)

Tips

- Help your student make good decisions
- Encourage your student to use campus resources
- Encourage your student to establish relationship with academic advisor
- Make a financial plan and discuss spending expectations

First Year Experience Theme-Get Involved
SEPTEMBER

Conversation Starters

What classes are most interesting to you?

Have you found a good place to study? Where?
OCTOBER

Common Issues

• Midterm grades – reality has set in!
• Questions about belonging/values exploration
• Roommate conflicts
• Disenchantment with school
• Finding a job

What to Expect

• Fall Break, October 10-13

Tips

• Suggest getting involved on campus
• Encourage that your student maintains a ‘healthy balance’, get a flu shot
• Time to schedule an appointment with an academic advisor
• Seek tutoring

First Year Experience Theme-Be Smart
Conversation Starters

- What can you do differently on your next test or paper to earn an even better grade?
- When do you plan to meet with your professors during their office hours?
- What events have you attended?
Common Issues

- Increased responsibilities and feeling overwhelmed
- Time management issues
- Money management (e.g., Flex Points)
- Feeling comfortable on campus, trusting their neighbors. This is when students aren’t as aware of their surroundings

What to Expect

- Registration for Spring 2016 classes
- Anxiety and/or excitement about Thanksgiving Break (November 25-29)

Tips

- Make plans for transportation home for Thanksgiving Break
- Discuss any expectations or rules that may have changed since high school

First Year Experience Theme—Take Responsibility
NOVEMBER

Conversation Starters

- What classes are you thinking of taking in the spring?
- Are you staying within your budget?
- How are you managing stress?
DECEMBER

Common Issues

- Financial worries
- Health issues
- Classes end (December 4)
- Final Exams (December 5-11)
- Questioning of major or career choice

What to Expect

- Visiting high school friends
- Extended holiday break; what it means to your family and your student

Tips

- Find study groups and get tutoring

First Year Experience Theme-Finish Strong
DECEMBER

Conversation Starters

What are you doing to stay well during finals?

Which exams are you most worried about?

What could I send you to make you feel better?

What do you want to do at home during break?
January

Common Issues

• A fresh start, new commitment to studying and setting new goals
• Possible change in living arrangements
• Major and career changes

What to Expect

• New Year’s resolutions
• Reincorporating social and academic life

Tips

• Discuss applying for financial aid by the February priority deadline

First Year Experience Theme-Reconnect
JANUARY

Conversation Starters

What are you doing differently with your studying this semester?

Tell me about your good friends on campus.
FEBRUARY

Common Issues

• Cabin fever, feeling restless
• Staying healthy
• Valentine’s Day

What to Expect

• Feeling comfortable with friends and ODU
• Academic advising
• Early alert grades

Tips

• Encourage your student to see an academic advisor early

First Year Experience Theme-Go to Work
What are your plans for spring break?

Have you learned of any new clubs or organizations that you’d like to join? Tell me about them.

Tell me about your fitness and diet plans.
MARCH

Common Issues

• Time management
• Increase in tests, homework, and papers

What to Expect

• Roommate selection, signing of a lease for 2016
• Spring break (March 7-12)

Tips

• Remind your student about return housing, if applicable

First Year Experience Theme-Healthy Choices
Conversation Starters

Looking back, how do you think you’ve changed this year?

What are you looking forward to in your sophomore year?
APRIL

Common Issues

• Class registration for Summer and/or Fall 2016
• Spring fever
• The pace of activities has increased and students feel bombarded with upcoming decisions
• Summer plans

What to Expect

• Questions about majors and careers

Tips

• Talk to your student about managing stress

First Year Experience Theme-Be Global
MAY

Common Issues

• Final exams (April 27-May 4)
• Financial concerns
• Leaving their college friends for the summer

What to Expect

• Questions about returning home, fitting in
• New boundaries

Tips

• Discuss summer options with your student

First Year Experience Theme-Celebrate Success
SUMMER READING LIST

• You’re On Your Own (But I’m Here if You Need Me) by M. Savage
• Empty Nest…Full Heart: The Journey from Home to College by A. Van Steenhouse
• I’ll Miss You Too: An Off-To-College Guide for Parents and Students by M. Woodacre Bane and S. Bane
• Let the Journey Begin: A Parent’s Monthly Guide to the College Experience by J. Kiernan MacKay and W. Johnson Ingram
• When Kids Go to College: A Parents Guide to Changing Relationships by B. Newman and P. Newman
• Almost Grown: Launching Your Child from High School to College by P. Pasick
QUESTIONS?

- Your next session begins in a few minutes and features ODU from a Student Perspective.