



April 2006

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 spring:

April

- ➔ Spring fever hits and problems arise as students become restless
- ➔ Anticipating the end of the year
- ➔ Frustration and confusion develop because of class registration
- ➔ Papers and exams are piling up
- ➔ Some students lose their motivation for the final push
- ➔ Summer job panic
- ➔ Feeling like they are no longer accountable for their actions—may turn to vandalism
- ➔ Sexual assault increases
- ➔ Concerns about moving home for the summer



Preparing for Checkout

If your student lives in the residence halls, he or she will be going through the room check-out process before leaving. Since that time is right around the corner, here are a few tips to share with your student to ensure that the process is smooth as can be:

- **Go to Informational Meetings and Read Flyers.** The residence hall staff will pass out information about checkout and the process students need to follow. Encourage your student to go to informational floor meetings and to read the materials. Plus, they can ask questions of the hall staff, too—they'll welcome the interest!
- **Don't Ignore It.** It's important to note that the checkout process isn't optional—failure to comply with hall policies will likely result in an improper checkout charge. Students need to turn in their keys and sign out of their rooms officially. Ignoring the process just makes the aftermath messy—and expensive.
- **Make a Checkout Appointment with Your RA.** Students should take a look at

their final exam schedule and plan when they'll go home accordingly. RAs are students, too, going through finals while also trying to close the building so, students are often asked to make an appointment with their RA to check out. Encourage them to stick to this timeframe out of respect for the staff's schedule—and to make sure that, when they're ready to leave, there is an RA ready to help. Otherwise,

they may have to wait awhile when all they want to do is hit the road for the summer!

- **Clean the Room!** Once students start packing and moving things around, the

giant dustbunnies are bound to make themselves known. Encourage students to clean as they go so that they don't have a big mess to contend with when they're ready to check out. And leaving a room filthy is not only disrespectful to the kind cleaning staff who have helped your student all year, there is also a hefty charge associated with it.

- **Contend with Rug Residue.** If your student is holding his rug



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Getting Summer Plans in Place

Perhaps your student already has job, internship or volunteer plans in place for the summer. If so, you can breathe a sigh of relief. Yet, if he's still trying to figure out what to do this summer, you can help:

- **Ask Her What She's Interested In.** What does it mean to "have a worthwhile summer" in your student's eyes? Ask her! Seeing what's important to her will help you help her reach her goals, instead of imposing your own.
- **Direct Him to Career Services.** The good folks in this office can help him look for summer jobs, internships and more. They won't get the job for him—that's up to him! Yet, they'll provide support and resources throughout the process.

Talk About "Summer Curriculums"

Since your student is in the academic mindset, talking about a "summer curriculum" might make a lot of sense to her. This just means being intentional about the things she'd like to learn and experience this summer. Maybe she's been talking about how she misses reading "real" books because she always has reading to do for class. This can go on her curriculum. Or maybe she's hoping to learn how to kayak or knit or ride a horse... put it on the curriculum! And make it a partnership by suggesting that both of you (or the whole family!) write out your summer curriculums. Then share them so you can support one another in pursuit of these summer goals!

- **Put Out Some Feelers.** It's not your job to "fix" the summer plans issue for your student. Yet, if he asks and will be with you for the summer, put out some feelers in town. Let community members know that your talented, hard-working kid will be around and looking for work!
- **Talk Realistically About Money.** It's easy to have grand dreams about the summer yet, it's also important to be realistic about what needs to be done. Have an intentional conversation with your student about money and what needs to happen in order to cover next year's college costs. If she knows that she's responsible for spending money and books and other expenses, that will help her gauge her work schedule while also seeing if she can fit in the volunteer gig she'd like to try. Providing complete information so she can make adult choices is a great step in fostering self-responsibility.

Now that it's April, your student may need a nudge to get some summer plans in place. Offer support and ideas and encouragement. The rest is up to him!



Summer Reading for Parents

Here are a few suggestions for books you may find of interest for your summer reading list!

- ❖ *Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years, Third Edition* • by Karen Levin Coburn, Madge Lawrence Treeger
- ❖ *The Parents Guide to Paying for College (Parents Guide to Paying for College)* • by Gerald Krefetz
- ❖ *When Kids Go to College: A Parent's Guide to Changing Relationships* • by Barbara M. Newman, Philip R. Newman
- ❖ *You're On Your Own (But I'm Here if You Need Me) : Mentoring Your Child During the College Years* • by Marjorie Savage
- ❖ *Empty Nest ... Full Heart: The Journey from Home to College* • by Andrea Van Steenhouse

Preparing for Checkout

- in place with duct tape, there will likely be sticky residue when he pulls it up. Have him ask the building staff what he should use to clean that up. Again, if left behind, he will be charged for floor cleaning.
- **Think About Other "Little Things."** Furniture that was in the closet all year needs to be put back on the floor. Tape residue on the walls and doors needs to be removed.

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- **Know What You're Signing.** Once the room condition has been assessed, your student will probably be asked to sign her room contract, saying that she agrees with the assessment. Make sure that she pays attention to what it is that she's signing so there are no surprises over the summer!

Good luck with checking out and have fun checking in to a great summer!



The Month of Mirth!

April is National Humor Month

Calling all April Fools! It's National Humor Month—a time for joking, joshing and just plain laughing out loud. And while, yes, April can be a stressful month, a dose of humor may be just what your student needs to make it through.

Here are a few ways to share the mirth:

- **Send along a “Chuckle Chow” care package.** It can include anything funny like a Snickers (tee-hee!) bar, those smiling Oreos, Laffy Taffy, smiley lollipops and more. Feed their laughter while also providing fun treats!
- **Stick a book of Mad Libs or a goofy joke book in an envelope and send it along.** Cover the envelope with smiley face stickers for a real Humor Month package.
- **Sign emails with funny wordplays** such as “Jest thinking of you!” or “Hope you get some smileage out of this.” Your student will think you're a cornball yet she'll probably love it!

Fill empty medicine containers with jokes written on pill-shaped pieces of paper. Send them to your student to take one joke whenever they are feeling sad or upset. But they don't have to call you in the morning!

- **Suggest to your student that you think about some creative, funny ways to respond to people's polite question: “How are you?”** Answer them with something like “If I was any better, I'd be twins!”
- **At your next family gathering, firehouse, PTA or Junior League meeting,**

Humor Hits!

A few sites to tickle your funny bone...

The Humor Project

www.humorproject.com

This international humor clearinghouse offers:

- ✓ **Daily Laffirmations**
- ✓ **books, videos and other mirthful resources**
- ✓ **interviews with famous funny folks**

Larry Wilde

www.larrywilde.com/month.htm

The founder of National Humor Month offers:

- ✓ **a joke of the day**
- ✓ **a test your funny bone quiz**
- ✓ **National Humor Month info and posters**
- ✓ **tips on how to use humor to relieve stress**

Pun Fun

- ✓ **www.punoftheday.com offers Funny People Bios as well as puns aplenty**
- ✓ **www.badpuns.com offers clean puns sure to make you chuckle**



he'll show that photo to his friends, proudly.

- **Trace a roll of masking tape on bright yellow paper and cut out a bunch of smiley faces.** Have everyone in the family—or in the neighborhood—write a joke or note on the back of a smiley. Then send an envelope full of the good feelings to your student at school. It's a Smile Attack!

Have fun with the funny stuff!

ask group members to pose for a photo. The catch? Have everyone wear a bright red clown nose! Then, send a digital photo to your student. He'll think you're all off your rocker! Yet, chances are that



Humor is the great thing, the saving thing. The minute it crops up, all our irritations and resentments slip away and a sunny spirit takes their place.

~ Mark Twain



Thanks For Your Support“ers”

Administrative Professionals Day is April 26

Whether your student was an on-campus resident, commuted from home or lived in an off-campus apartment, there is an excellent chance that they needed the help of an administrative professional or support staff person this year. These folks help with everything from room assignments, to class scheduling problems, to issues with meal cards. They have an impact on just about every area on campus.



April 26 is Administrative Professionals Day and it seems the perfect time for your student (and you) to thank one or more of these professionals who have helped you throughout the academic year. Here are a few ideas on how to do just that:

- Have your student take the support staff a box of munchkins or donut holes with a note that thanks them for “Filling in the hole” that is left from you being at home while your student is at college.
- Send the staff member a virtual card or some type of online gift certificate. This is a great way to reach out from afar and most administrative professionals are linked into their computers most of the day.

- Have your student drop off a candy treat such as a Nestle Crunch bar with a note attached that says “Thanks for helping my son/daughter in a crunch.” Or a roll of Life Savers with a

note that says “You were a real life saver for my son/daughter. Thank you for your help.”

This group is a huge asset on any campus, take a minute to thank them for their help!

Positive Spring Flings

After being cooped up during the winter months, your student may feel the need for some cabin fever relieving. It's important, however, that her spring fling doesn't take a harmful form. For instance, encourage her to steer clear of:

- ➔ vandalism that seems “fun” at the time
- ➔ drinking to excess
- ➔ experimenting with drugs
- ➔ walking alone at night because the weather is finally nice
- ➔ going off alone with someone she doesn't know
- ➔ blowing off classes or letting academics slide

That may seem like common sense which, of course, it is. Yet students who have been feeling repressed may go wild to an opposite extreme. Encourage moderation—there's plenty of fun to be had this spring! For instance, why not suggest:

- ➔ going on a road trip with trusted friends
- ➔ participating in all the fun stuff happening campus wide
- ➔ shopping for a new spring outfit
- ➔ getting outside to play Frisbee, golf or volleyball
- ➔ going to the park instead of the library to study with friends
- ➔ having a picnic or going camping
- ➔ playing in an intramural softball game
- ➔ reading a good book outside under a tree



There are many ways to welcome spring—positively. Tell your student to just get out there and do it!

