



December 2005

## Seasonal Student Issues

There's a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few thoughts on what may happen during Winter Break

- ➔ Students Receive Grades. They may rejoice in the pay-off from hard work, be disappointed that they didn't do better or have worries about being placed on probation.
- ➔ Relationship Difficulties. Perhaps your student is separated from his significant other. Maybe there are struggles being reunited with a high school love. Or maybe a breakup or lack of a relationship is getting her down.
- ➔ Readjusting to Life at Home. Being around siblings all the time again, living under your roof after a semester of "freedom," integrating into the rhythm of family life... there will be readjustments.
- ➔ Friendships Falter. Old friends may find that they've grown apart. New friends may feel neglected during break. Juggling friends is likely on your student's mind.
- ➔ Financial Strain. Buying holiday gifts, traveling home for the holidays, wondering how to pay for next semester... finances may be causing your student some stress.

## Ways to Spend Quality Time with Your Student During Break

- Volunteer together to help with a local holiday meal, gift-wrapping booth or adoption days at the local animal shelter
- Take an elderly neighbor or relative out to do something she likes that will get her in the holiday spirit
- Go to craft fairs together
- Try snowshoeing, cross-country skiing or some other sport that could be fun for both of you to try
- Ask him to meet you for lunch at your office so you can introduce him to your co-workers
- Go on a walk or bike ride together
- Try one of those new Sudoku puzzles together—they're Japanese number puzzles that are the current craze
- Cook a nice meal together to share with family or friends—see if your student has any recipes to share or if he wants to learn how to make one of your specialties
- Ask your student to share some of his papers with you from the semester that he's particularly proud of
- Adopt a family for the holidays and make/buy items that will help them have a great holiday season
- Have a Father/Student or Mother/Student night at the movies with another parent/student pair that your son/daughter chooses
- Head to the wellness center in town for chair massages
- Look through digital photos that your student wants to share—it's a good way to see her friends and surroundings
- Check out a church supper or firehouse pancake breakfast instead of going out to eat at a restaurant
- Go browse through the bookstore or library, comparing things you'd both like to read
- Go grocery shopping
- Stay in some night, with popcorn and board games—sometimes old-fashioned fun can be the best!
- Have a New Year's potluck with friends so you can all enjoy one another's company once the holiday hub-bub has died down—and share your leftovers
- Participate in the New Year's Day bird count at your local environmental education center
- Start a new tradition, whether it's buying a children's book to donate or picking out a Toys for Tot donation—together



# 'Tis the Season for Thieving

Many campuses experience an influx of thefts during December. Textbooks, laptops and other valuables are at risk, making it even more important for students to take simple precautions. You can help students keep their belongings safe and sound by sharing the following tips:

- **Textbooks.** Encourage your student to write his name near the binding of a certain page in each textbook. This way, if a book is stolen, he can tell public safety to look for his name on page 77. This will help identify his book, should it be sold back to the bookstore.
- **Locking Doors.** If your student lives in a residence hall, she's probably feeling pretty comfortable with the people on her floor by now. However, that doesn't mean she should leave her room unlocked, even if she runs down the hall to the bathroom. For both personal and property safety, encourage her to keep the door locked. Thieves become familiar with people's patterns. A locked door can thwart even the most prepared want-to-be-thief!
- **Laptops.** These are BIG targets throughout the year. Does your student have a laptop safety device? Is the computer engraved with an ID number? These precautions can help track down laptop thieves more easily.



- **Unattended Goods.** Leaving a book bag on the library study table for two minutes or failing to lock it up when you're working out at the gym increases the chances of it walking away exponentially. Students need to keep their belongings with them at all times or locked safely away.
- **Big Ticket Items.** Stereos, DVD players, iPods, portable CD players... these items and others are a temptation for thieves looking to "holiday shop" in your student's room. Encourage him to keep these things out of site, when possible, and, again, to keep the room locked at all times.
- **Cash.** It's never a good idea to have large amounts of cash on hand. Whether it's stashed in a sock drawer or readily available in a wallet, industrious thieves can find it. Keeping track of cash, ATM cards, credit cards and other personal IDs is very important for students to keep in the forefront of



## Lost Keys/Cards

When students are feeling frazzled and fried due to finals, they can get a bit scatterbrained. This might mean that residential students misplace their room keys or cards. Instead of "waiting until it turns up," the best bet is for them to alert residence life staff immediately and get their locks changed. It's too easy for someone to find the key/card and access a student's room, especially if it was attached to their student ID or other identification. This puts the people—including your student's roommate(s)—and the property in that room at risk. This is never a good gamble to take!

their minds, even when papers and projects are piling up.

Gently remind students that this is one of the hottest times for thieves to strike. By taking some simple precautions, they can avoid some complex headaches.

## "Empty Nester" Packages

The travel industry is starting to target "empty nesters" with some special package deals. Here are a few we found floating around on the Internet:

- ✓ The Mirror Lake Inn—Lake Placid, NY • [www.mirrorlakeinn.com/packages/?package\\_id=22](http://www.mirrorlakeinn.com/packages/?package_id=22)
- ✓ Arawak Beach Inn—Anguilla, British West Indies (Caribbean) • [www.arawakbeach.com/html/special.html](http://www.arawakbeach.com/html/special.html)
- ✓ Costanoa Coastal Lodge & Camp—The California Coast, south of San Francisco • [www.costanoa.com/special.html](http://www.costanoa.com/special.html)

\* *The Campus Link doesn't vouch for any of these deals.*



## An Eye-Opening Look at a Dangerous Problem

# Drowsy Driving Among College Students

**A**s winter break approaches, many students will be driving home for the holidays. This is a crucial time, then, to alert them to the dangers of drowsy driving. The common effects of driving while drowsy include becoming stressed, getting impatient and driving faster—a dangerous, and commonly fatal, combination.

The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) developed a website dedicated to creating awareness and providing resources for preventing this dangerous problem at [www.drowsydriving.org](http://www.drowsydriving.org).

The grim accident statistics speak loud and clear—the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) conservatively estimates that 100,000 police-reported crashes are the direct result of driver fatigue each year.

Striking even closer to home are the findings from the NSF on young people and drowsy driving:

- Approximately 55% of drowsy driving crashes are caused by drivers less than 25 years old.
- Being awake for 18 hours is equal to a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08%, which is legally drunk and leaves you at equal risk for a crash.

### Drowsy Driving Basics for College Students

Cornell University also has a drowsy driving site at

<http://www.drowsydriving.cornell.edu> filled with “Drowsy Driving Basics for College Students.” There, the site notes, “Drowsy driving refers, of course, to drivers who actually fall asleep at the wheel. But it also includes those drivers who are so fatigued that they are slow to perceive risky situations and unable to respond



quickly enough to avoid a crash.”

It goes on to provide some tips for preventing drowsy driving, as noted by the NSF, which

include:

- **Get a good night’s sleep.** The average person requires about 8 hours of sleep a night. Plan to drive during times of day when

### Danger Signs on the Road

If these things occur, students should get off the road immediately before they fall asleep and/or get into a drowsy driving crash:

- ✓ experience wandering or disconnected thoughts
- ✓ drift from your lane or hit a rumble strip
- ✓ keep jerking your vehicle back into the lane
- ✓ tailgate
- ✓ miss traffic signs
- ✓ yawn repeatedly
- ✓ have difficulty keeping eyes open and focused
- ✓ can’t remember the last few miles
- ✓ have trouble keeping your head up

Source: [www.powersleep.org](http://www.powersleep.org)

“Research shows, one of the groups at highest risk for sleep related crashes are young adults, who tend to stay up late, sleep too little, and drive at night.”

Source: [www.drowsydriving.cornell.edu](http://www.drowsydriving.cornell.edu)

you are normally awake and stay overnight rather than traveling straight through.

- **Avoid driving during your body’s “down time.”** Take a mid-afternoon break and find a place to sleep between midnight and 6 a.m.
- **Get a companion for a long trip.** Passengers can talk with you, help look for early warning signs of fatigue and provide a change of drivers when needed. If you don’t have a companion, try organizing a carpool via a campus ride board.
- **Schedule regular stops** every 100 miles or two hours.
- **Avoid alcohol and medications that may impair performance.** Alcohol interacts with fatigue; increasing its effects—just like drinking on an empty stomach.
- **Consult your physician or a sleep disorders center for diagnosis and treatment** if you suffer frequent daytime sleepiness, have difficulty sleeping at night often, and/or snore loudly every night.

Before your student climbs in a car after this busy, often sleepless month, alert him to the dangers that drowsy driving may have for him and others this holiday season. And be aware of the dangers yourself, should you head off to pick up your student after a busy workweek. Caution is key.



# Holiday Gifts Your Student Will Appreciate

This season, tap into some items that your student will really dig. For instance:

- a gift card for a drugstore to pick up personal care products
- movie coupons to have some off-campus fun
- a new set of sheets
- a cool picture frame
- a donation in her name to a favorite cause



- an iPod
- coins for laundry
- ink cartridges
- mall gift certificates
- a coupon for a care package in the middle of winter
- special software for his computer
- something that reminds her of childhood, whether it's a Muppet doll of her favorite character or a certain book or a photo
- a good book by a favorite author
- a gift card for a CD or DVD

- a great piece of clothing
- a Blockbuster rental card they can use to get movies at school

Consider what students said when they were surveyed about care packages, too. According to the survey commissioned by The UPS Store and Mail Boxes Etc.:

- 67% said home cooking was what they craved most in a care package
- 35% said they'd most like gift cards from local retailers or restaurants
- over 20% said they'd like to get clothing in their package
- only 15% said they'd like to receive money

So, as you're trying to determine the gifts that will fit your student best, take into consideration what you know about her, what you know about her college experience and what can help make things even nicer in the new year!

## FERPA Facts

Parents often want more information than school officials are legally able to give them. While most student affairs administrators welcome parental involvement and support, legal constraints under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and under many state "right to privacy" statutes often prevent administrators from effectively satisfying parents' requests.

What makes this most challenging is that under FERPA, parents have complete access to their child's K-12 school records. However, when their son or daughter enters college all FERPA rights,

including the right to limit disclosure of any information to third parties (including parents), are transferred to their college student. Unfortunately, many parents don't learn of this change until there's a crisis or problem at school involving their child and a staff member tells them they aren't privy to certain information.

To be proactive, ask school officials how FERPA plays out on your student's campus. What stance do they take when it comes to:

- IRS dependency?
- drug and alcohol notification?
- health and safety notification?

Campus administrators are bound by FERPA—it's the law. To learn more, go to [www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/parents.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/parents.html).

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The institution can not release the following items without the student's permission:

- grades
- test scores
- student numbers or social security numbers
- financial records
- disciplinary records
- class schedule

