



a newsletter for parents & families

December 2014

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 month:

- Much panic, fear, and cramming as finals and project deadlines approach
- Short temper as stress mounts
- The realization that some friends may not be returning next term
- Financial strain due to holiday gifts and travel costs
- Excitement/anxiety about returning home

Mid-Year Transitions

When the end of the term hits, students will be going through transitions of various kinds. Here are some to be aware of as you help your daughter through these trying times...

Saying Goodbye. Some friends may be graduating in December, while others are transferring to other schools, dropping out, studying abroad or heading off to internship opportunities. Whatever the case may be, saying goodbye to good college friends can be tough for students, and your understanding can help ease the pain.

Ending a Good Academic Experience. Sometimes, a class or a teacher will touch a student in a profound way. So, when it ends, that student may understandably feel a bit lost and sad. Encourage her to talk about what she learned as a way to honor what that experience meant to her.

Leaving a Loved One. If your student started a relationship in Omaha, parting over the holidays will likely be difficult. She may want to visit a significant other or have you help host a visit. Talk about how to split time and be supportive, too.

Preparing to Take on a New Leadership Experience. After being one of the "worker bees" within a student organization, your student may soon be taking on more of a leadership position. This can be both exciting and terrifying, so let her talk about her



feelings and plans as she prepares for this important transition.

Transitions come in all shapes and sizes – and supporting students as they get ready for change will give them courage, confidence and the knowledge that someone cares.

Other Possible Transitions

Your daughter may also be readying for...

- A new campus job
- Living with a different roommate
- A new class schedule
- An internship opportunity
- Changing a major/minor (or declaring one)



How to Help Your Student Explore Career Options

During winter break, students will likely have a chance to stop, breathe after the stress of finals and start thinking about what comes next. This means being intentional about career exploration, whether they are in their first year or their fourth.

How can you help your daughter explore career options? Here are a few suggestions...

Support your student as she chooses to take a variety of classes. This is what college is all about. You never know what might spark a student's interest and lead to a career choice in the future.

Talk, listen and suggest options. Many students go through a year of college before deciding what they want to do. This is normal. Encourage your student to take advantage of internships and other practical opportunities to try out potential career areas. The more

exposure your daughter has to different arenas, the better. She can make an appointment to see John Quinn, the Career Coordinator, in our Achievement Center for vocational assessments! We also provide campus resources such as career fairs and discussions with professionals in various fields. Contact jquinn@csm.edu.

Share your wisdom. Many students don't consider the values and lifestyle choices associated with making a

career decision. What have you learned along the way? What might you have done the same or differently? Share openly but just remember that your student's values might be different than your own at this point in her life.



Exploratory Questions to Ask Students

- What classes have you enjoyed? Why is that?
- Who has a job that seems appealing to you? What is the appeal?
- What would you definitely like to have in your workplace? Not like?
- What topics do you have a passion for?
- What types of things do you think you are good at?

Residence Life Reminders

- Christmas Break begins Friday, December 12 at 5:00pm. The residence halls close at this time and will reopen on Wednesday, January 7 at 1pm.
- Students may request break housing during the following times below and must be approved to stay:
 - ⇒ Friday, December 12 at 5:00pm to Friday, December 19 at noon for a total fee of \$25.
 - ⇒ Sunday, January 4 at 1pm to Wednesday, January 7 at 1pm for a total fee of \$25.
- From Friday, December 19 at noon to Sunday, January 4 at 1pm, the residence halls are CLOSED down, as is the entire campus. No entry can occur during these dates.
- During break housing, the dining hall is closed. The last meal is lunch served on Sunday, December 14 and meals resume with dinner on Wednesday, January 7.
- To sign up for Christmas Break Housing with the Director of Residence Life, the deadline is Friday, December 5.



****Your daughter must have made her spring semester financial arrangements to sign up for break housing.**

Keeping Up the Pace

From now through the end of the term, students need to keep their stamina up so they can finish strong academically. Here are some simple ways they can do just that...

- Eat healthy meals
- Make sleep a priority
- Study some every day, rather than cramming
- Get fresh air
- Say "no" to something if they're overwhelmed
- Spend positive time with friends
- Seek help if they're struggling

Making academics a priority means making *yourself* a priority. You can help your daughter realize this so the remainder of the term is a healthy one.



Staying Healthy During “Sitting Season”

December is one of those intense “sitting-a-lot” times, as students prepare final papers/projects and study for final exams. Studies are mounting that say sitting for long stretches of time can lead to a shorter, less robust life, as well as conditions like kidney disease, diabetes and heart disease. So, reducing the amount of time we spend sitting is necessary.

Computer Vision Syndrome

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), nearly 80 percent of those working at a computer for more than two hours a day suffer from the symptoms of Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS). Symptoms include:

- Headaches
- Loss of focus
- Burning/tired eyes
- Double/blurred vision
- Neck and shoulder pains

Tips to help reduce the amount of “sit time” include...

- Stand up for two minutes for every 20 that you spend sitting
- When watching TV, stand up during commercials
- Try to watch fewer than two hours of TV per day to be in a lower risk group
- Stand during telephone calls
- Be sure to exercise

At the Computer

When students are sitting, they are often at a computer. To help your student stay ergonomically healthy, encourage...

- Making sure the top of your monitor is at or just below eye level



- Keeping your head and neck balanced and in line with your torso
- Relaxing your shoulders
- Keeping elbows close to your body and supported
- Supporting your lower back
- Having wrists and hands in line with your forearms
- Keeping your feet flat on the floor
- Taking screen breaks every 20-30 minutes to give your body a break

Sources: www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/; WebMD Health News, 10/15/12; *The New York Times*, 10/17/12

Preparing for Your Student’s Return

As you prepare to have your daughter home for the winter holidays, here are a few things to keep in mind...

Make Sure Your Student Has a Space. It’s common for rearranging to take place once a student has departed for school. Has your daughter lost her bedroom? If so, make sure you prepare a space for her to sleep and store belongings, prior to coming home. This way, your student won’t feel displaced or like she’s a burden.

Talk With Your Student About Lifestyle Changes. Rather than waiting until your student comes home, talk beforehand. It’s quite likely that your student’s sleeping, eating, dressing and thinking patterns have changed during the last few months. Try to avoid surprises by discussing these new habits and perspectives ahead of time.

Prepare Siblings for Your Student’s Return Home. If there are other children in the family, they will be anticipating your daughter’s arrival, too. Remind them that she will be very excited to see them, but also will have a lot to do while she is home. This will help alleviate disappointment if there is not enough time for extensive one-on-one interaction.

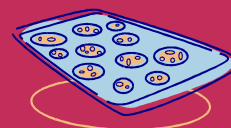
Communicating with care can help ensure a happy holiday visit for all!



Reconnect

Reconnect with your daughter by...

- * Planning a family game night
- * Going to a coffee shop
- * Sharing photos from the last few months
- * Attending a local school event
- * Staying up late one night chatting
- * Cooking Sunday breakfast
- * Asking for her help setting up a computer program
- * Making cookies together the night before she heads back to school so she can share them with friends



Care Packages: A Welcome Study Break!

If you didn't get the chance to order the care package offered by our Residence Hall Council by the deadline, here are some great ideas for you to send on your own. Remember, your daughter loves to hear from home and any added encouragement you can send her way during finals would be much appreciated!

You could include:

- ◆ A quick video with folks at home offering fun tips and advice
- ◆ Coffee or cocoa, along with a cozy mug
- ◆ An iTunes card to download some new music
- ◆ Healthy snacks
- ◆ Homemade treats
- ◆ Vitamin C drops
- ◆ A good luck note
- ◆ A comfy pillow, slippers or sweatshirt for late-night studying
- ◆ A photo of the family cat or dog saying, "Come home soon!"



CSM Dates to Remember:

- * Tuesday, December 2: Test Taking for Finals Workshop
- * Wednesday, December 3: Campus Ministry Fall Auction to support service trips
- * Wednesday, December 3: Campus Activities Board - SANTA in the dining hall!
- * Friday, December 5: CSM Christmas Concert
- * Sunday, December 7: Basketball game vs. Mount Mercy University
- * Tuesday, December 9: Friday, December 12— Final Exams

- * Tuesday, December 9: Campus Activities Board - Late Night Breakfast
- * Saturday, December 13: Baccalaureate Mass and Graduation
- * Monday, December 15: Tuesday, January 13 - No Classes for Students
- * Wednesday, December 24 to Sunday, January 4 – College and Campus Closed



Greetings from the Vice President for Student Development!

Dear Parents and Families,

I hope you enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving and are well on your way to enjoying the Christmas season! As our semester draws to a close, I hope your daughter has found a home away from home here at CSM and is learning more about her gifts and potential. In addition, I hope this newsletter has offered some nuggets of information and advice that has proven helpful during the last few months. You are always welcome to request a certain topic for the next newsletter!

Here's hoping you have a wonderful and blessed Christmas holiday!

Sincerely,
Tara Knudson Carl, Ph.D.

