



a newsletter for parents & families

October 2019

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...

- First-year students begin to realize college life is not as perfect as they were expecting it to be
- Feeling behind in class work and wanting more contact with instructors
- Anticipating midterms and questioning their abilities
- Diversity issues become apparent as students begin interacting with others who are different from them
- Conflicts between friends – both new and old – can occur as students settle into the rhythm of the new academic year
- People start to show their “true selves” – masks start to come off as students begin to feel more comfortable in their surroundings

When Homesickness Starts



“I’m Homesick.”

These can be tough words to hear from students, yet it's a reality that some may be missing home and the people who populate that part of their world. And homesickness can often hit during this month.

Here are a few ways to respond . . .

“Have you reached out?”

Sometimes one of the best ways for any of us to get outside of ourselves and our troubles is to reach out to others. For college students, this can be as simple as asking someone to lunch in the dining hall, saying hello in class or volunteering through opportunities offered in the campus ministry office.

“Who is a trusted faculty or staff person you can talk with about this?”

We all need sounding boards, especially those who understand what college students are going through and who *want* to help. Luckily, your daughter is surrounded by these folks, from coaches to professors to club advisors, residence hall staff, campus ministry, and more.

“What have you been doing outside of class?”

Students who just go to class and don't engage through other activities will likely feel homesick because they haven't developed a sense of campus belonging. It can start with little things: attending a club interest meeting, working on a service project, going to a CAB program, saying “yes” when an RA rounds up a group to go to dinner...

“Who and what is it that you are missing?”

Sometimes students just need to lay it all out there, to identify where their homesick feelings are coming from so they can then address them. Asking a few questions in this vein can help your student get to that point, so you can then help her figure some ways to face the issues, head on!

What If . . .

In today's electronic and digital world, access to students, and you to them, is greater than ever! It should not be surprising for you to receive regular texts sharing updates, asking questions or just venting frustrations. You are a safe place for students to share the challenges and victories!

However, it can be hard to know how to appropriately balance *enabling* versus *empowering* your student...and when! So, next time your daughter texts you with a question or problem, consider answering with a question...

STUDENT TEXT: Droppin Econ! Don't understand prof & hate class



PARENT RESPONSE: Learning new things is tough. What campus resources could help? Office Hours or Tutoring?

STUDENT TEXT: Roomie keeps eating MY food! Noisy! Hate country music! Can you get me outta here?

PARENT RESPONSE: Sharing space takes patience. What steps have you taken to communicate concerns and share mutual expectations?

STUDENT TEXT: CC bill came today...needed gas for car last week and had to go out for dinner twice-working on group project. Send \$\$\$ plz

PARENT RESPONSE: Unexpected expenses can come up. What are your plans to reduce your spending this week to find funds to pay off your bill?

STUDENT TEXT: Sooo stressed! 3 HUGE TESTS. Can't sleep or eat. UGH!!

PARENT RESPONSE: First...just breathe...you got this! How about talking through with a trusted professor, advisor, counselor or staff member?

STUDENT TEXT: SO BORED! This place is a ghost town. Miss friends and home.



PARENT RESPONSE: We know that transitioning to a new place isn't easy. Are you getting out? Are there clubs that interest you?

A Note From the CSM Director of Counseling

Stacey Werth-Sweeney, LMHP

Now that it has been over a month since you said goodbye to your college age teen, you may have had moments where you have been worried, concerned and/or at a loss on how you can help. This year of transition for your student will be full of challenges and achievements and may at times seem like a roller coaster ride. Encouraging your child to stick to foundational skills will help them achieve success and maximize their mental well-being. The JED Foundation has programs that assist in giving you and your student practical advice on how to successfully transition. This site (<https://www.settogo.org/>) features articles on how to assist your student in managing first steps for their college journey, great articles that you can review with your student to identify areas/concerns and how to manage them to encourage success.

It is natural as a parent to worry and be concerned about the success of your student. Remember, it is also normal for your student to experience stress as they transition to college. As parents, it may be challenging to realize that the stress they are experiencing is prevalent and real and that it is inevitable . . . and potentially a good thing. Finding the balance between true concerns, providing support, and knowing when to let it be can be tricky. If you have indications that the stress they are experiencing is more than normal everyday stress and that it is becoming or has the potential of becoming an extreme situation, talking to someone here at the College will help us to be aware and keep an eye on your student. We may not be able to share information with you, but we can definitely check on them!

A topic that I would like to stress is the importance of sleep. College students are at a high risk of not getting



adequate sleep and studies have shown that this is even more prevalent for college athletes. For many students, the adjustment to moving out of the home, living in a residence hall, and the excitement and adventure of being “on their own” can have serious implications for their sleep. Encourage your daughter to try to stick to a regular sleep schedule, to maintain a daily routine of exercise and to limit her consumption of caffeine. All this can have a positive correlation with her academic performance. Creating a healthy sleeping environment is conducive to getting essential sleep as well. A comfortable and uncluttered room and a bed that is only used for sleeping and not studying gives the brain the message that it is time to relax. Having comforting items from home such as a favorite pillow or blanket can be what it takes to give them a sense of calm as well. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine published an article on the importance of sleep with college age students. If interested you can read it at this link:

<https://aasm.org/college-students-getting-enough-sleep-is-vital-to-academic-success/>



There's Additional Help Available After Hours or on Weekends...

If you suspect that your daughter needs help when Stacey is not in her office, encourage her to use CSM's Counseling Assistance Program (CAP) through CHI Health 24 hours a day by calling **402-398-5566**. This service is free!

CSM Home Athletic Events

CSM has many home athletic events that are **FREE** to CSM students. Volleyball, soccer, tennis, swimming and basketball all have events this month on campus. To see the current schedule, visit CSMFLAMES.com.



9 Tips for Handling Roommate Conflicts

After living together for a few weeks, some roommates may “butt heads” or run into conflict. Here are some tips to share for handling those situations . . .

1. Give your roommate the benefit of the doubt and try talking to her first.
2. Identify what you want to say to your roommate and rehearse it.
3. Revisit the roommate agreement the two of you filled out. If you haven't done this yet, ask a member of the Residence Life staff to provide a copy.
4. When discussing things, focus concisely on the problem at hand instead of dredging up old issues.
5. Use “I” statements instead of “you” statements to show your concerns without assuming a blaming tone.
6. Listen to what your roommate has to say without interrupting her. Take turns sharing your thoughts.
7. Keep an open mind about how to resolve conflicts.
8. Speak with a residence life staff member if you need additional assistance or if you'd like more tips on working through roommate concerns.



CSM Dates to Remember:

- * Wednesday, October 2: El Mercado Event showcasing Mexican culture and cuisine
- * Thursday, October 3: Avoiding Procrastination and Test Anxiety-Achievement Center (AC) Workshop
- * Wednesday, October 9: *Life Hack Fair* (Information on Community Resources and Financial Literacy)
- * Thursday, October 10-Wednesday, October 16: **Mid-term Exams**
- * Wednesday, October 16: Improving and Understanding Your Communication Style-AC Workshop
- * Thursday, October 17-Friday, October 18: **Fall Break (No Classes)**
- * Tuesday, October 22: Resilience Strategies—AC Workshop
- * Wednesday, October 23: Big Pink Volleyball game hosted by Health Education
- * Thursday, October 24: Fall Alternative Break Presentation by Students
- * Monday, October 28: Residence Life's 'Halloween in the Halls' (trick/treating)



Greetings from the Vice President for Student Development and Success!

Dear Parents and Families,

Can you believe we are almost to mid-term exams and fall break?! We've had a fun and busy semester already on campus, and I hope your daughter is adjusting well if this is her first semester. Our newsletter will continue to offer resources for you to use during important conversations, as well as current information about campus events and deadlines. Let me know anytime if you have a topic you'd like us to cover. Have a great month!

Sincerely,
Tara Knudson Carl, Ph.D.

