



a newsletter for parents & families

## September 2020

### Seasonal Student Issues

Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- What will the pandemic mean for my college experience?
- A desire to feel connected to campus
- Roommate adjustments
- Exploration of personal values
- Long distance relationship strain
- Feelings of loneliness and homesickness
- Getting acclimated to a new type of academics
- Figuring out how to get organized & manage time

### Fall at CSM: A New Beginning

On college campuses everywhere, fall is a time of new beginnings and fresh starts. It's like our very own version of New Year's Day!

As your daughter plunges into this exciting time, she may be clinging to the comfort of old, familiar talents, people and perspectives. There's nothing wrong with embracing these things, if they're good for her. And, with a fresh start waiting in the wings, she can add the following into the mix...

#### New Learning.

Trying a new type of class, attending thought-provoking campus programs and talking with people who have different perspectives can help your student's mind expand. There's so much to explore here on campus, with new learning always at her fingertips.

#### New Friends.

There are people to meet everywhere – in the residence halls, through campus organizations, in class, at the dining hall...

Encourage branching out and reaching out to meet other students who could easily become new friends, especially if she is only connecting with her high school friends.

#### New Ideas.

These may come about during a late-night chat with friends, attending different spiritual development programs or reading articles on a particular subject. Whether it's considering vegetarianism, better understanding the global water crisis or rethinking her approach to exercise, new ideas can be refreshing and rejuvenating!

#### New Challenges.

Along with most new beginnings comes some challenges. Your daughter may struggle getting a handle on her new responsibilities at her work study job or doing group work for a collaborative class. Encourage her to take on these new challenges, as they most certainly lead to...

#### New Growth.

While growth isn't always the most comfortable thing, it's important for all of us to stretch beyond our comfort zones and try new things. Remind your student that the discomfort sometimes associated with new experiences is **normal** . . . But is sure sign of growth. And that's what new beginnings can do for us all!



## CSM's COVID-19 Preparation for Fall 2020

As we opened a new semester at College of Saint Mary, we were thrilled to welcome students to campus and look forward to the teaching and learning the new term will offer.

This fall, some things will be different at CSM as we take every step possible to ensure the safety of our students, faculty, and staff throughout campus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To promote the health and safety of our campus, CSM has:

- Implemented a mask requirement
- Rearranged classrooms and computer labs to allow for social distancing
- Installed Plexiglass barriers in areas where 6ft of separation is not possible
- Implemented enhanced cleaning processes that have required the addition of new cleaning equipment to ensure all areas of campus are covered
- Adjusted class schedules to minimize the number of people in the halls at any given time
- Reserved the dining hall for students' use only during the initial weeks of the fall semester
- Moved the college's busiest stairwells to one way traffic
- Added more than 800 pieces of signage to encourage social distancing and good hygiene habits

- Trained contact tracers to quickly contact anyone exposed in the event of a positive test in our community

In addition, the college has developed a community pledge to commit to practices that help prevent the spread of COVID-19. We have asked all students, faculty and staff to complete the pledge at <https://www.csm.edu/csm-community-pledge>.

CSM will continue to evolve our policies to align with guidance from health authorities in the weeks and months ahead. The college saw its first positive case of COVID-19 on campus over the summer. We implemented our processes and procedures to ensure the safety of our community and stand ready to act should another occur in the future.

For the latest health guidelines, a dedicated webpage has been established and is available via a link in the header at CSM.edu or directly at <https://www.csm.edu/covid-19-info>. This resource will contain the latest information regarding the pandemic and be a place for the community to provide updates on their health status or ask questions they might have. The college will also report on the incidence of COVID-19 in our community and around the region.

***If your daughter believes she may have been exposed to COVID-19, please have her complete the health reporting form available on the webpage above. There is also a form on this page if she has a question to ask.***

## College Student Mental Health

Attending college is an important achievement and exciting time in life. Your daughter will gain greater independence, meet new people and have new and memorable experiences. It is a time of significant transition, which can be both positive and challenging. For some, the stress of college may impact mental health, making it difficult to manage the daily demands of school. In fact, did you know as many as one in five students experiences a mental health condition while in college?

To help put a thoughtful plan into place should a mental health condition arise, NAMI (the National Alliance on Mental Illness) and JED have created the guide found here to help start the conversation: <https://nami.org/collegguide>. It offers both parents and students the opportunity to learn more about mental health, including what the privacy laws are and how mental health information can be shared.

Conversations allow you and your daughter to plan for the unexpected; to know what to do if she develops emotional distress, a mental health condition or if an existing condition worsens. Talking about mental health is important even if someone isn't experiencing a mental health condition because someone may need help. Students often prefer to confide in a friend before confiding in anyone else—or they may notice that a peer is struggling and may be able to assist. By learning more, they'll be better equipped to know what to do.

**Andrea Joyce**

**CSM's Director of Counseling**

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## Talking to Your Daughter About Being Safe on Campus



The safety and security of every member of the CSM community is a major priority for all of us. We want to

work together with parents to help students become more aware of important issues as they relate to security measures, both on and off-campus. Please consider taking some time to discuss these issues with your student. Some of the strategies listed below can help you to generate a healthy dialogue that will communicate your concern as well as your expectations.

Urge your daughter to be aware of her surroundings. CSM is located in an urban environment, and no city is immune to crime. Students need to be alert to where they are, the time of day, and the area surrounding the university. Walking or running in dark areas, and alone, can increase their vulnerability to crime. We encourage students not to wear ear buds or

headphones when walking or running alone.

Students will automatically be enrolled in the "CSM Alert" system to receive emergency or weather-related text messages. These alerts are also sent via e-mail and text to all members of the college community whenever a serious crime occurs, either on campus, or off-campus when it is near our site.

Remind your student not to venture out alone off-campus at night in unlit areas. Students should think about having a plan of how they are getting from one place to another before they leave their original location. For example, confirming plans with a friend, who can be on the "look-out" for your daughter's safe return to her residence hall room.

Discuss with your daughter how alcohol/drug use can compromise an individual's ability to make good judgments. It is important that students be in control of themselves at all times. Not only should they be aware of their safety, but they should

also deter their friends from entering into dangerous situations.

Urge your student to minimize the use of a cell phone while walking off-campus. Cell phone theft is one of the fastest growing property crimes. Thieves target victims for the value of their smart-phones and students can be easily distracted while conversing or texting.

Remind your daughter that Safe Walk is available at CSM. The Safe Walk is a Safety and Security Department Crime Prevention Program designed to assist the CSM community by providing escort services from one campus location to another. Members of the Safety and Security Department will provide the safe walk as needed 24 hours a day. Safety and Security can be reached at 402-670-8848 or by dialing "1" on any campus phone.



**Meet David Ferber**  
Director of Safety and Security

## Gaining Independence



Students need to express their autonomy and spread their wings when they get to college. This doesn't mean that they've stopped needing you. What it may mean, though, is that students need a chance to:

- Make their own mistakes
- Decide how to confront challenges

- Communicate with others when there's a problem
- Choose how to spend their time
- Take responsibility for their actions
- Struggle a bit
- Learn from experience

Be there to talk things through when students need that and to offer support. The actual "doing," though, is primarily up to them. This independence is one of the main ways that they will learn, grow and develop into strong adults.

## CSM Home Athletic Events

CSM has many home athletic events that are FREE to CSM students. Soccer, Volleyball and Softball have events this month on campus. To see the current schedule, visit [CSMFLAMES.com](http://CSMFLAMES.com).



## The Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge

This has been a time of racial unrest in our country, and in this time and space, many of us are examining our habits, beliefs and even our biases as societal events bring certain issues to light. We encourage this reflection and learning as CSM continues to strive to be an inclusive campus, one of our strategic goals.

Social justice educator and writer Debby Irving offers a "21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge," filled with suggestions for readings, podcasts, videos, observations, and ways to form and deepen community connections.

Issues of power, privilege, oppression, supremacy, leadership and equity are the main focus. The challenge can be done individually, with friends and family, or with an organization.

To check out this challenge and all the available resources provided, go to the site at: <https://debbyirving.com/21-day-challenge/>.



### CSM Dates to Remember:

- \* Thursday, September 3: Online Study Strategies via Zoom
- \* Monday, September 7: **Labor Day Holiday**  
**No Classes, College Closed**
- \* Tuesday, September 8: The People's Voice: 2020-2021 Local Women Candidates Panel Discussion via Facebook Live
- \* Wednesday, September 9: Study Strategies via Zoom
- \* Thursday, September 10: Virtual tour of the Sisters of Mercy house in Dublin, Ireland
- \* Thursday, September 17: Constitution Day Trivia
- \* Saturday, September 19: In Person Kick-Off for Spirit of Service 5k Walk/Run
- \* Monday, September 21: Opening Convocation: Dedication of the 2020-2021 Academic Year
- \* Thursday, September 24: Campus Activity Board's Grocery Bingo
- \* Monday, September 28: Resilience Strategies via Zoom



### Greetings from the Vice President for Student Development and Success!

Dear Parents and Families,

It has been great to see students back at CSM! Hopefully, you are adjusting to your daughter's absence or new schedule. As you continue to play an important role in helping your daughter handle the adjustments of college by offering guidance, I hope our monthly newsletter will offer resources for you to use during these important conversations, as well as current information about campus events.

Have a great Labor Day weekend!

Sincerely,

Tara Knudson Carl, Ph.D.

