

July 2014

New Student Issues

Students preparing to dive into college for the first time may have a lot of things on their minds, such as:

- Feeling sad about leaving established friends and family at home
- Concern about issues of “belonging” and finding a comfortable place on campus
- Excitement coupled with anxiety about making a fresh start
- Worry about academics being “hard” and beyond their abilities
- Thinking about what type of first impression they’ll make
- Concern about roommates and housing (if living on campus)
- Possibly transitioning into a long-distance relationship or deciding to end a current relationship
- Financial worries – wondering if they’ll be able to make enough during the summer and also how much they’ll need to work once school begins

Managing the To Do List Before Your Student Heads to College

Chances are that your To Do list is feeling large these days, as you and your student prepare for his exit this summer. To help you along, here are a few things to take into consideration...

Insurance. Will your student’s property be covered by your homeowner’s policy if she is living on campus? Will renters insurance provide adequate coverage if she’s moving off campus? And what about health insurance – will your major medical policy provide coverage, no matter where your student is going to school, or is it limited geographically? And how will you handle auto insurance, if a car is in the picture?

Room/House Amenities. Do campus mattresses require extra-long sheets? What is your student’s roommate bringing? How big is the room? And what is allowed/not allowed?

Travel. How will your student get to school – and what about his belongings? Will you drive, borrow/rent a vehicle or mail things ahead of time?

Technology. If your student has a cell phone, will the plan/coverage remain the same in a new location? What computer facilities are available on



campus? Does the campus bookstore offer deals on tablets and laptops?

Finances. What kind of bank account will your student use during her time at school – one from back home or through a bank in town? What expectations do you and she have regarding finances? Will she work while at school? Does she have a credit or debit card and, if so, what is it to be used for?

Follow Up. Is there any lingering paperwork from orientation or admissions?

These are just a few important considerations to keep in mind as you help your student prepare for college. Best of luck during this busy, yet exciting time!

If you have questions about any of these things, please don’t hesitate to contact us! We’re glad to help.



Preparing to Pack

It's a good idea to make the acquisition of "college stuff" an ongoing summer project, rather than scrambling in August. It's also smart to really consider the realities of space when your student gets to college. Yes, she may *want* all of her familiar, comfortable items around her, yet she may *need* to pick and choose – or rotate items during trips home – in order to avoid a crowded, cramped room.

Furniture. For instance, consider furniture. Your student will be provided with the necessities within his residence hall room. To make it "homier," a large couch often isn't such a good idea! Instead, he can bring along two large floor pillows (that can be stashed on the bed when not in use), a video game chair that sits on the floor, a beanbag or one of

those inflatable chairs. They all provide comfort while not eating up valuable room space.

Clothes. Also, help your student think about her wardrobe. Bulky sweaters will only serve to take up closet and dresser space during the warmer months. So, can she pick up winter clothing during a break period instead? Or can it be mailed to her? Another option is making sure she has space to stash a suitcase full of winter clothes below her bed, out of the way until needed.

Books & Papers. Help your student remember that he'll be acquiring a lot of books and papers when purchasing class materials. The shelves and files will fill up quickly! It's okay to bring along some favorite books and papers from home – just not too many.

Personal Stuff. An area where many students get hung up is "personal stuff," from framed photos to graduation gifts to knick-knacks with meaning. There's no way that



all of this can fit in one residence hall room plus, when there's too much, it can make things seem less special. Encourage your student to pick and choose carefully – and to leave things that are really valuable at home.

The great stuff sort-through is part of the packing process. Encourage your student to start out simple, without excessive stuff, until he gets familiar with his roommate and his space. He can always add things in. This way, he won't get frustrated and you won't be left with a car full of items to truck back home once moving day is over!

Avoid Duplicates

Once your student knows her roommate(s), it's important for them to communicate before they arrive on campus. That way, they can avoid duplicate rugs, TVs, fridges and more.

Take Stock of Belongings

Before your student heads to college, it's a good idea to have him take stock of his belongings, says the Missouri Department of Insurance. Have him estimate and itemize the dollar value of what he'll have with him at college. Then, encourage him to update this list annually and keep it in a safe place, such as a safe deposit box or at your house.

And when your student gets to school, he can ask about an "Operation ID"-type program, often run by the campus public safety department. They provide an engraver so students can engrave an ID number (NOT their social security number!) on the back of major items and then keep a list on file with public safety as a precaution, in case anything is stolen.

Thinking ahead to those "what if" scenarios where students' belongings can be compromised may not feel great, yet it can help you and your student be proactive while adding to your peace of mind. And that can be priceless!

Source: Missouri Department of Insurance, <http://insurance.mo.gov>



Being a Coach & Encourager

One of the key roles that parents and family members can play during their student's time at school is that of coach. This is different from doing things *for* your student or setting him off completely on his own. It's a more nurturing, developmental approach that can have great results!

Coaching Strategies

Listen to your student talk about her college vision. What is she looking forward to, what does she hope to accomplish and what will equal success in her eyes?

Inspire him to unlock his true potential. Encourage self-exploration, trying different classes, meeting new people and getting involved so he can explore what fits best. You can ask leading questions to help this process along.

Encourage her to take action. This is something she needs to do on her own; no one else can do it for her!



Empower him. Some students may not fully know where to begin, so adapt a “yes you can!” attitude and talk with him about things he can do, one step at a time.

Solicit suggestions. Instead of putting words in your student's mouth, let her contribute to the process too. It's important that she learn to trust her own ideas and instincts, rather than purely leaning on those of others.

Provide tools. Do your own campus research so you can point out resources your student can tap into, from the career center (it's not just for seniors!) to the wellness center to the study abroad office.

Encourage creativity. There's nothing saying that your student has to do things the same old way! Encourage her to tap into creative ideas, ways of thought, problem-solving strategies and more.

Energize him. We all need a boost now and then to keep us going. Provide him with the energy that comes from having someone recognize a job well done or root him on in person, when possible. He'll feed off your energy!

Push her toward the journey. While it's easy to get derailed from our path sometimes, having a coach to push us along and provide encouragement makes it easier. Talk with your student about how she's feeling being on a certain path and try not to make demands that she stay on that path if it's not feeling right. There are plenty of variations that might fit her more effectively.

Encourage reflection. As you coach your student through her college process, make sure that both of you set time aside to reflect on how things are going. The process of doing without reflection isn't half as satisfactory, or effective!

Areas of Growth

Consider asking your student: What are some things you'd like to learn, areas you'd like to improve on or experiences to pursue? Encourage him to make a list of 5 growth areas he'd like to focus on. This will help make his efforts at college more intentional, while also leading him toward a major, a career and a life he is proud to live!

Providing Encouragement

As students dig into their college life, they may sometimes bite off more than they can chew. That can manifest itself with an overwhelming class load, too many hours at work or taking on student leadership positions in bulk.

One of the roles of a coach is to encourage students to “add rungs to their ladder.” They don't need to take huge steps all the time – sometimes they can add smaller steps in between to help them get where they want to go.



Cars on Campus

In the term ahead, if your student is going to have a car on campus, encourage her to follow some smart rules of the road that go along with car ownership...

- ▶ Always keep the car locked
- ▶ Don't have any valuables in there – especially in plain sight!
- ▶ Keep the license, insurance and registration up to date – and always available in the car
- ▶ Register your car on campus
- ▶ Respond to any parking tickets right away – they don't go away if ignored and often the fines and other consequences increase
- ▶ Feel free to say “no” when friends ask to borrow the car – it's not public property
- ▶ Abide by campus parking rules and general rules of the road
- ▶ Be vigilant when walking to your car at night and try to have someone with you – public safety is a resource, too
- ▶ Inflate tires appropriately and check them frequently
- ▶ Respond to any strange noises or actions in your car – don't just let them go
- ▶ Have winter supplies in the car



(mini shovel, ice scraper, cat litter for traction), if needed

- ▶ Don't use jumper cables unless you're sure what goes where – it's good to learn!
- ▶ Try to keep the gas tank at least half full at all times – you never know when you might be stuck in traffic or driving somewhere without any open gas stations
- ▶ If you're drowsy when driving, pull over in a safe location – being sleepy behind the wheel can be almost as dangerous as driving while intoxicated
- ▶ Keep up with oil changes
- ▶ Don't text or use a cell phone handset while driving – distracted driving has led to many accidents
- ▶ And, of course, don't drive under the influence of any substances!

The Pros & Cons

Here are some things to consider about having a car on campus...

- Paying for insurance, registration, gas, maintenance and more
- Being in the position where people ask to borrow your car
- The convenience for doing errands, traveling to work, etc.
- Campus parking costs and availability
- Digging out after a snow storm
- Being able to get to internships, co-op experiences, etc.
- Freedom to get off campus when you want
- Needing to maintain the car on top of your other responsibilities

Planning a Send-Off

If your student is going away to college, family and friends will likely want to send your student off with good wishes. However, the week or two before he leaves can be hectic! So, consider planning your send-offs now, before things get crazy, whether it's a family dinner, a visit to see the grandparents or a picnic at the local park.

And realize that it'll be tough to get “quality time” during move-in day because there are so many other competing priorities. Students can naturally feel stressed and stretched during this time – anything you can do to alleviate that will be welcomed!