

FIRST YEAR ISSUES CALENDAR

The first year can be a tough one for your student. Dealing with the adjustments of a new school, new surroundings, new friends and new classes on top of an onset of responsibilities can be somewhat overwhelming. Talking with your student about these issues will be a great benefit to both you and your student. Most importantly, remember that this is a learning experience and that mistakes can be fixed!

August

Issue: Anxiety related to fitting in and making new friends are typical during this time, whether your student is about to leave for college or has already arrived.

Solution: Talk with your student about getting involved in an activity or organization that interests them. This is the easiest way to meet people that your student will connect with. Additionally, encourage your student to think about the qualities that they would like in a friend.

Issue: Students that are unsure of their major or career path may experience some anxiety about classes beginning.

Solution: Suggest that your student talk with an academic advisor and/or contact the Career Services Center to take an interest assessment. Often times, freshmen students can take a few basic classes while trying to figure out exactly what they want to do. Remember, changing a major will hopefully ensure that your student is happy in their upcoming career.

Issue: Living with a new person can be difficult, especially if your student is not used to sharing a space. This might cause some stress for your student.

Solution: Encourage your student and his/her roommate to discuss their living situation. Some important things to discuss might be cleaning responsibilities, study hours and visitors. Housing has some great resources concerning roommate discussions, including a roommate contract, which might help with a smooth transition.

September

Issue: Leaving home is a big change and transition, especially emotionally. Your student may experience some homesickness or stress about being away from family and friends.

Solution: Check in on your student periodically (not excessively) to make sure they are doing ok and adjusting. Consider sending them a care package (we have some information on our website about this service) or dropping them a card.

Issue: At this time in the semester, students may become overwhelmed with trying to balance their studies and social commitments. Additionally, assignments and tests are coming up.

Solution: Suggest that your student purchase a planner from the bookstore to keep assignments and activities organized. Encourage them to assign time to the most important things first, so they will have time for other activities.

October

Issue: As mid-terms and projects are coming up, your student may become stressed about studying and retaining material.

Solution: Remind your student about the Math and Writing lab, and Oak Hall Tutors if they need additional outside of the classroom tutoring. Encourage your student to check in with their professors concerning their current standing in the class and potential room for improvement.

Issue: Spring semester registration is coming up in early November and your student might be unsure of the classes he/she should take.

Solution: Propose that your student meet with their academic advisor in their college or school for more information pertaining to classes offered and possible advising holds. The Career Services office might offer suggestions to possible internships or on-campus jobs related to your student's interests or career aspirations.

November

Issue: Your student might be experiencing financial issues or stress as it reaches the end of the semester and funds are dwindling.

Solution: Encourage your student to begin searching for an on-campus job. This is also a great time to talk about budgeting money and priorities.

Issue: Stress is starting to accumulate because the semester is about to end and students may begin to worry about grades for the end of the semester.

Solution: Remind your student to begin studying early. Suggest that they talk with their professor about specific topics or concepts that they don't understand. Forming a study group with other classmates might also be a good option for your student.

December

Issue: Anxiety might increase as final exams and papers are due and your student has to push themselves to finish.

Solution: Encourage your student to finish the semester strong. Being organized during this time is crucial; suggest having them write down all deadlines on a calendar and set aside time to study for tests and preparing papers. Consider sending them a good luck care package (more information on our website) to keep them energized.

Issue: As students prepare to return home for the holidays they might experience some anxiety towards reconnecting with friends and family members they have missed since leaving for school.

Solution: Talk with your student about your expectations during the break. Will they have a curfew? What are your family plans? Remember that your student will want to reconnect with as many people as possible and this can become overwhelming, so knowing what is expected from them will really help reduce undue stress. Also, remember to be realistic with your expectations.

January

Issue: Getting back into the groove of going to class, homework, and studying and student activity commitments might be difficult, as your student might be missing friends and family due to the break.

Solution: Suggest that your student create a calendar with all their upcoming dates and times of commitments, tests and assignments for the semester. Getting prepared and organized early will reduce stress later on in the semester.

Issue: After a tough first semester, your student might be a little anxious or apprehensive about returning to campus and starting their classes.

Solution: Talk with your student about what worked and what didn't work for them. Help them brainstorm possible improvements for this semester. Ask how you can help support them in their efforts.

February

Issue: With the winter weather and Valentine's Day coming up, your student may be feeling a little lonely.

Solution: Encourage your student to attend on-campus events and meet new people. Consider sending your student a Valentine's Day care package (information on our website). If your student continues to have issues, suggest that they speak with a counselor at Counseling and Health Services.

March

Issue: Spring break is coming up and your student is looking for something to do during the break.

Solution: If your student is interested in going on a trip for Spring Break, but is unsure of where to start looking, suggest one of the University sponsored trips.

Issue: As midterms approach, your student may feel overwhelmed with commitments and class assignments.

Solution: Provide your student some motivational words and talk with them about prioritizing all of their commitments. Encourage them to balance their school work by scheduling in their study time. If they start preparing early, they can use their social commitments as breaks.

April

Issue: Your student is preparing to register for classes for the Fall semester and some uncertainty may arise concerning their major, their course load or their specific career path.

Solution: Discuss registering for classes with your student. Encourage them to seek out advice from the Career Services or their favorite professor or staff member. Suggest that they consider shadowing someone in their ideal job. Help them think about all their commitments (work, school, church, social, student involvement, etc) when registering for classes to achieve the right number of ours for them.

Issue: As the school year is coming to an end, your student is probably thinking about their plans for the summer.

Solution: Talk with your student about their plans—are they looking at taking classes, studying abroad, working at a summer camp? Discuss all the options and consider what is best for your student and your family. If they are planning on returning home for the summer, explain your expectations—what will their curfew be, if they have one?

May

Issue: By this time of their second semester, your student may think that final exams are no big deal. But waiting until the last minute can cause issues and with summer break a few weeks away, it might be difficult for them to focus.

Solution: Talk to your student about studying early and being prepared for their last few weeks of school. Remind them that summer starts after finals are over.