



**December 8, 2014**

### **Greetings from the Office of Parent Services!**

This week is a very important one for the UMass Amherst community. Students are taking their final exams; faculty are grading papers and exams; staff and administrators are wrapping up fall activities and finalizing plans for spring; and you're getting ready to welcome your students back home! As you plan for the winter recess, be sure to take a look at winter break closing information. We've also included important reminders about financial aid deadlines, spring tuition bills and Career Services opportunities.

### **Final Exams**

Final examinations start today and end Friday, Dec. 12. Visit the [Registrar's](#) website for the complete final exam schedule; students can also view the schedule on SPIRE.

Studying for and taking final exams can be stressful if students aren't physically and mentally prepared. Encourage your student to get plenty of sleep, eat well, exercise and make time between exams and studying to relax with friends. If they haven't drafted a plan to tackle the work that remains, suggest they do so by breaking tasks down day by day. Projects seem less intimidating and more manageable, and it's easier to create a daily 'to-do' list.

Beginning this week, the library is open 24 hours a day; it will close at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13. It's the ideal place for students to study if they can't get their work done in their rooms or need a change of scenery.

Cards or joyful emails and texts are great ways to lift your student's spirit during this stressful time. Send them a note to remind them how much you care about them.

### **Winter Break Information for Residence Halls and Off-Campus Housing**

#### **Residence Hall Closing Information:**

- All residence halls except break housing halls and the North Area apartments close at noon Saturday, Dec. 13. Students and families should make plans for departure based on this closing date and time. Students who haven't vacated or checked out of their residence hall by the deadline will be charged a \$150 unauthorized occupancy fee.
- Students who've cancelled for spring or have either completed a roommate pull-in or requested an appointment for online room selection must fully check out of their current room assignment.
- First-year students living in Wheeler have the option to remain over the winter break. Interested students should contact the Residential Life Student Services office.

For more information about residence hall closing, contact the Student Services office, (413) 545-2100.

### **Student Belongings:**

Remind your on-campus student to take all essential medications and valuables home. Students returning to the same room for the spring semester may leave non-essential items in their rooms over the break. Encourage your student to pack before their ride arrives, so departure can be quick and easy. Expect some congestion in the Commonwealth Honors College Residential Community, as space to load and park is limited.

### **Off-Campus Student Housing:**

If your student lives off-campus, remind them to take all necessary steps to ensure there's adequate heat in their apartments and houses before leaving for the semester break. Windows must be closed and the thermostat set appropriately. It can also help to open cabinet doors under sinks in bathrooms and kitchens. Many leases require tenants to maintain a certain temperature level and notify the landlord if they'll be away for more than a couple of days. In addition, remind them to take valuables such as electronics and jewelry with them, or make sure these items are out of sight by closing window shades and blinds.

### **Spring 2015 Opening Information**

Students may return and check into residence halls for the spring semester on Sunday, Jan. 18 from 9 a.m. - 10 p.m., or on Monday, Jan. 19 during regular service desk hours. Visit the [Residential Life](#) website for more information on check-in procedures.

### **Career Services Opportunities**

Students sometimes make the mistake of waiting until their senior year to discover the many resources and programs available through Career Services. It's never too early! Getting involved can help students build valuable skills, make professional connections and find a job that's right for them. Encourage your student to visit the [Career Services](#) website over the break to learn about internships, information sessions, career fairs, résumé workshops, graduate and professional school days, and more; upcoming events are posted on the Career Services [calendar](#).

### **Spring Registration**

By now, all students returning for the spring semester should have completed course registration. If, for some reason, your student hasn't done so, encourage them to contact their academic advisor to set up an appointment.

### **Financial Aid Services Reminder**

Financial Aid Services reminds students and parents that the 2015 - 2016 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can be submitted beginning Jan. 1. Find the form and more information on the [FAFSA](#) website. The form should be filed by February 14 to meet the March 1 priority deadline. Applications received after that date will be considered for financial aid awards based on funds available. If you haven't completed your 2014 taxes, you may estimate your income. After completing your taxes, replace the estimate with the actual information using the IRS' data retrieval tool on the FAFSA website. If you have questions, call Financial Aid Services, (413) 545-0801.

### **Tuition Bills/Student Billing**

Tuition bills for students registered for spring semester classes will be available on Monday, Dec. 15. Students can view bills, payments, to-do items, holds and more on SPIRE. It's important to check bills thoroughly and often to ensure all charges are current and accurate. Spring semester bills are due by Monday, Jan. 12; students are responsible for paying their balance in full and on time every semester to remain in good financial standing. Visit the [Bursar's Office](#) for more information on billing and payment plans.

## December Graduates

Congratulations to all December graduates' parents and families! We salute your student's achievement and wish them the very best in their future endeavors. As a reminder, the university does not offer a winter ceremony; December graduates are invited to attend commencement in May. We also hope your student will stay connected to their alma mater as an active member of the [UMass Amherst Alumni Association](#). **Note:** Parents and family members of graduates remain on our e-newsletter list until they choose to unsubscribe. If you wish to cancel your subscription or change your e-mail address, use the unsubscribe link at the end of this message.

## Important Dates

**December 8-12:** Final exam period

**December 13:** Residence halls close for winter break at noon

**December 15:** Bills post for spring semester

**December 22:** Final grades due

**December 26:** Fall semester grades posted to SPIRE

**January 12:** Spring semester bills due

**January 18:** Residence halls re-open for the spring semester at 9 a.m.

**January 20:** First day of classes

## Helpful Links

[Bursar's Office](#)

[Career Services](#)

[FAFSA](#)

[Residence hall opening/closing information](#)

[UMass Amherst Alumni Association](#)

## Happy Holidays!

We hope you have a healthy, restful and joyous holiday season with family and friends. We look forward to welcoming you and your student back next year. As always, feel free to contact the Office of Parent Services if you have any questions or concerns. Our office is open Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We are more than happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Horrigan, Director  
Office of Parent Services  
*Treating Our Parents as Partners*

5 Arnold House  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Amherst, Massachusetts 01003

Email: [umassparents@umass.edu](mailto:umassparents@umass.edu)

Phone: 413-577-4444

Fax: 413-545-9631

[Office of Parent Services Website](#)

[UMass Amherst Parents on Facebook](#)