Greetings from UMass Amherst Office of Parent Services (OPS)!
Students have been on campus for two weeks and they are excited, anxious, and curious to see what the semester holds. The university is offering a variety of activities during the first 40 days to connect them to resources and campus organizations. This e-newsletter includes information on the UMass Amherst Parents Association (UMAPA) calendar and handbook, the process of making friends, roommate conflict resolution tips, our alcohol and drug policies, and Family Weekend (October 19-21).

UMAPA calendar
By now you should have received your 2018-2019 UMass Amherst Parents Association (UMAPA) calendar and handbook, which was sent to all students’ permanent addresses listed on SPIRE (but only to addresses in the U.S.). If you did not receive it, your student can pick one up during business hours in Knowlton Hall 107, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., while supplies last. There is also an electronic version available on the Office of Parent Services website.

The process of making friends: How to help your student
Many students don’t understand the cycle of friendship and are often unprepared when early friendships seem to change or disappear altogether. As a result, they may become unhappy because they feel as though they don’t have any “real” friends at school and don’t fit in. At this point you may receive a call from your student who is feeling lonely, regretting choosing their school, feeling unlikable, and trying to come home every weekend. This is perfectly normal at this stage and may take some time to overcome. Your role as a parent, family member, or caregiver is to work with your student and help them identify some coping strategies.

- Encourage them to take charge of the process of making friends: Good friendships do not happen overnight—they take time, risk, and effort.
- They should think about what matters to them and look around for people who share similar interests.
- Encourage them to get involved and attend events that interest them. That’s the ideal way to meet people with whom they will feel comfortable.
- Help them understand that there are different kinds of friends and that a little bit of loneliness at times is OK.
- Talk to them about your own friends, how you met them and got to know them better, and how you feel about friendships in general.
- Direct them to campus resources if they feel lonely and unable to cope, such as the RA and Peer Mentor on their floor.
- Remind them to be patient. Friends will come and go—eventually they will find the friends who serve as their mentors, coaches, cheerleaders, and challengers.

Handling a roommate conflict
We hope your student is adjusting or readjusting to campus life and is getting along with their roommate(s). Roommate conflicts are common, especially among first-year students. If your student hasn’t completed the Roommate Agreement form, remind them to do so ASAP. Ongoing communication and compromise are key to resolving roommate issues and the Roommate Agreement is one way students can address small problems before they become big ones. The Resident Assistants in first-year halls will help roommates with the agreement process throughout this month. If your student calls with roommate concerns, here are a few tips to help them handle the situation:

- Discuss with your student what is really bothering them about their roommate(s) or the situation. Are they simply not compatible or is it something else? Sometimes the problem being voiced doesn’t reflect the actual issue.
- Ask your student what they have done to address the problem so far, and what they think they might do to resolve it.
- Encourage them to have open, face-to-face conversations with their roommate, as it is unlikely they will be able to move from the room without doing so first. Communicating via social media or texting is not the right avenue for a successful resolution.
- Keep reminding them that they don’t have to be best friends, but should find ways to be respectful roommates. Helping to reset their expectations will be helpful during this stressful time.
- Encourage them to handle the situation on their own but let them know you are available for support if they need it.
- If after your counsel they’re still not getting along with their roommate(s), encourage them to go to their Resident Assistant (RA) for help. Among other things, RAs and Residence Directors (RDs) are trained in roommate conflict resolution.

**Support your student’s success: Talk about alcohol and drugs**

We care about your student’s health and safety and want to partner with you to create a UMass environment where your student can thrive and succeed. Underage and high-risk drinking are major issues affecting college students’ health. Students may use alcohol or other drugs to cope with stress, out of pressure to fit in with a social environment, or simply to experiment.

Nationally, it appears that new and underage students are most likely to initiate or increase alcohol use during their first six weeks of college. We ask that you take time to engage your student in honest and direct conversation about your expectations on this topic and your investment in their academic success. By having these conversations, you reinforce your student’s positive decision-making and reduce the potential for negative consequences associated with alcohol and drug use.

All students are expected to comply with our alcohol and other drug policies. This email was shared with them at the beginning of the semester. We encourage you to review the policies together with your student and to read the UMatter at UMass student and family guides to familiarize yourselves with a variety of campus support resources.

In case of an emergency, the only way university staff can contact you is by using the emergency contact provided by your student in SPIRE. It is critical that your student update this information and keep it current.

For additional resources we suggest:
- **Talking with your college bound young adult about alcohol**: Tips for talking with your student and national data on college alcohol use.
- **SAMHSA parent resources**: Additional resources to help you start and continue the conversation about the dangers of alcohol at any age.

**Other compliance documents sent to your student**

UMass Amherst has developed standards of conduct and has designed processes to hold students accountable to these standards. The main purpose is to maintain a safe environment for the campus community and to foster the personal development of students. For a list of compliance documents sent so far this semester, visit our E-Newsletter Archive page.

**Settling into the residence halls**

**Mail and packages**

On-campus residents receive regular mail in their assigned residence hall mailboxes. Students can find their mailbox combination in SPIRE under Main Menu>Housing>Assignment Notification. Large packages (under 40 pounds) are held at your student’s Residential Service Desk. Students can also send Amazon@UMass orders to the central pickup location in the Campus Center, including packages that exceed the RSD’s 40 pound weight limit. Many Amazon@UMass orders will arrive within one day. More details on mail delivery, including how to address student mail, are on the Residential Life website.

**Room maintenance**

Students with routine maintenance needs can complete an online i-service request on the Residential Life website. This form is only available on devices connected to the UMass wireless network. Emergency issues such as lock or key problems, flooding, or broken windows should be reported to the Residential Service Desk.

**Assignment changes**

There are three processes students can use to attempt to change their fall housing assignment. Students use the Online Room Selection (to attempt to move into vacant spaces), the Pull In Process (to move in with a specific person who has a confirmed vacancy), or the swap process (to change assignments with another
Disability Services
Disability Services is committed to working with students with disabilities to ensure equitable access during their undergraduate experience. It is the student's responsibility to register with Disability Services in order to request disability accommodations on campus and students are expected to be active participants in the accommodation process. Therefore, it is helpful that they understand their disability and can identify their strengths and challenges. Encourage your student to self-advocate by disclosing their disability to Disability Services and providing documentation in a timely manner. Disability documentation is kept strictly confidential. More information about Disability Services, as well as what documentation is required in order to receive accommodations, is available on the Disability Services website.

Family Weekend reminder
Family Weekend 2018 is a month away! This year’s weekend includes a variety of activities for the whole family. We encourage you to register in advance as registration rates increase after October 12. For more information, including details on the football game and raffle tickets, visit our website and contact the parties directly. For questions about Family Weekend, contact our office at familyweekend@umass.edu or 413-577-4444.

Special family recipes wanted for UMass Dining’s 11th edition Taste of Home Cookbook
Submit a family recipe to UMass Dining by October 31 and it will be featured in all dining commons for a particular meal, and will be published in this year’s Taste of Home cookbook. UMass Dining will send you a UMass baseball cap or tee shirt (limited to two caps or tee shirts per family, per year) for participating. Submit your recipe to the UMass Dining website or mail it to: UMass Dining, Worcester Dining Commons, University of Massachusetts, 669 North Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA 01003-9301.

Important dates
October 8: Columbus Day (no classes)
October 9: Monday class schedule followed
October 19-21: Family Weekend

Links to UMass Amherst websites
Academic calendar
Campus Recreation
Center for Women and Community
Counseling and Psychological Health
Title IX at UMass Amherst
Office of Emergency Management

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the Office of Parent Services, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. We’re more than happy to assist you.

Sincerely,
Jeanne Horrigan, Director
Office of Parent Services
Knowlton Hall
691 North Pleasant Street OFC
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Amherst, Massachusetts 01003-9399

In case of a campus emergency, always follow the university’s main web page at www.umass.edu. The website will display a distinctly colored stripe at the top containing pertinent status updates and information related to ongoing emergencies.