

August 19, 2020

In this issue:

[Fall Welcome](#) | [Off Campus Living](#) | [COVID Testing](#) | [Financial aid appeals](#) | [AlcoholEdu and YIS](#) | [Student employment](#) | [Family Weekend](#) | [Important dates](#) | [Web links](#)



Greetings from UMass Amherst Office of Parent Services (OPS)!

The beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year is here. We want to take this opportunity to welcome new and returning students and families to the university community. This newsletter is largely focused on opening/starting the fall semester and key student and family engagement opportunities for the next six weeks. We look forward to working with you this academic year.

Student Communications

Your student has received and will continue to receive, information from many university offices. Please encourage them to regularly review their UMass email and check their SPIRE account for useful information and alerts. We will continue to forward important messaging to you so that you can stay informed and help reinforce messaging to your student.

Fall Planning FAQ Page

We also want to draw your attention to the [Fall Planning FAQ](#) page available for your reference. Continue to visit the page for answers to your questions and concerns.

Off Campus Living

Per the UMass Agreement, we strongly encourage all off campus students to have a [quarantine and isolation](#) plan. The Off Campus Student Life office will provide support services to students living off campus in the area or at home with families, but there will not be space on campus for students to quarantine or isolate. Have a conversation with your student about what their plan will be and what items they may want to prepare ahead of time. For more information and resources on living off campus during this challenging time, visit the [website regularly](#).

Off Campus Student Life staff can assist with off campus housing searches, finding roommates, understanding leases and budgeting, safety, landlord issues, [Party Smart Registration](#), and getting to know the local area. Staff is available Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and can be reached at ocsc@sacl.umass.edu or by calling 413-577-1005 and leaving a voice message. For a list of fall semester opening events, your student can visit the OCSC [Facebook](#) page or [Campus Pulse](#).

COVID Asymptomatic Testing

As stated in the UMass Agreement, students living on campus or accessing on-campus resources are required to participate in asymptomatic testing throughout the semester. Read more about testing on the fall reopening [website](#).

Financial Aid Appeals: When, Why, and How?

In some circumstances, the UMass Amherst Financial Aid office offers students and families the option to file an appeal for a review of the student's financial aid award. These circumstances include a loss of income in 2020 (or any circumstance where 2020's income will be lower than 2018's), high out of pocket medical expenses in 2019, or a change in marital status.

Students must file a 2020-2021 FAFSA before they can file an appeal. Not all appeals result in a change

in the student's financial aid award. The appeal form and instructions are posted on the [Financial Aid Services website](#) under the heading "Appeal for Special Circumstances." Appeals for the 2020-2021 school year must be filed before November 2, 2020 for students graduating in December 2020 and before April 1, 2021 for all other students.

Books by eCampus

Books By eCampus makes textbooks affordable! With the fall 2020 semester starting soon, order now through SPIRE — it's easy, fast, and guaranteed accurate. Choose free UPS shipping to your residence hall or home address; the Campus Center pickup location will not be available at this time. Act now to be Day One ready! **Note:** If you have already ordered textbooks through eCampus to be delivered to the Campus Center Pickup location, please contact eCampus Customer Service at bookstore@ecampus.com or 859-209-6958.

Mandatory Online Orientation Health Education Activities for New Students

Reminder: All new students, including transfers, are required to complete **AlcoholEdu** and **YIS: Your Intervention Strategies**. To complete the required activities by the August 21 deadline, students need to log into Moodle using their NetID and password, select their orientation course NSO-IUMCVR-S20, and scroll to Health Education in the Phase 2 section. Learn more about AlcoholEdu and YIS by visiting the [New Student checklist](#).

Fall Welcome Activities for New Students

Fall Welcome

Fall Welcome occurs August 20 through August 30. This is your student's time to get acquainted with the UMass (virtual) experience, meeting other students, and reconnecting with Summer NSO staff. Whether on campus or remote, students will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities including a comedy show, trivia night, and our New Student Convocation program. Encourage your new student (first year and transfer students) to participate in as many activities as possible to get connected to the university community. For a list of scheduled activities, visit our [website](#) or download the My UMass App.



40 Days of UMass

Making the transition to college is an exciting time for all new students. Throughout the first 40 days of the semester, we will connect your student to information related to academic and social success, remote learning resources, accessing financial resources, and getting connected to the larger university community. Encourage your student to get involved and discover ways to make the most of their UMass experience. They should check out the [40 Days of UMass website](#) for more information.

Student Employment on Campus & Remote

UMass Amherst students have a wide variety of employment options, including on-campus, off-campus, and remote employment. If your student plans to work, there are forms they must complete before they can be hired and paid. To make sure their HR paperwork is filled out properly, please be aware of the following:

- All new student employees, even those working remotely, must bring original identification documents to their employer and complete an I-9 form prior to beginning their employment. Photocopies and faxed documents are not acceptable. Refer to the I-9 form for more information.
- As direct deposit is mandatory, they will need their bank name, routing number, and account number. The account number is NOT the number on their debit/credit card.
- They will need to have the necessary information to complete their federal and state tax forms (e.g. knowing the number of allowances they would like to claim or whether they will claim as exempt from taxes). UMass cannot provide assistance in filling out tax forms.

An up-to-date listing of available student employment positions is available on the [UMass Amherst Student Employment website](#).

New ValleyBike Student Membership

ValleyBike Electric Assist Bike Share Program is now offering students annual membership for \$60/year.

Highlights:

- The first 45 minutes of each ride is included in your membership
- Use the bikes as many times as you like per day — you will only be charged overtime fees if a single ride lasts over 45 minutes
- Leave and take the bike from any docking station during your rental time
- Make intermediate stops outside of stations by using the secondary lock on the bike

Visit the [website](#) for more information or to [sign up](#) (be sure to use your .edu email address to receive the student rate) or call 1-877-460-2435.

Make Plans to Participate in Family Weekend 2020

Family Weekend is October 16-18. For the first time ever Family Weekend will be remote. We are planning a lineup of exciting programs for everyone to enjoy from the safety and comfort of home. We hope you will make plans to participate in a weekend of informative and engaging virtual events. You, your family, and extended family members are invited to join us. Visit our [website](#) often for the latest schedule updates.



Stay Connected to other UMass Amherst Families

The [OPS Advisory Council](#) looks forward to working with new and current UMass Amherst families to improve the college experience for undergraduate students and families. As you begin the new academic year, we encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities sponsored by the Council to become engaged, connected, and involved.

- Connect to other UMass Amherst families by joining the [Family to Family Facebook group](#). Note: Once you click on the link and request to join, you will automatically receive a note from the group admin asking you to confirm your status as a UMass Amherst family member. Respond to the screening question and add your student's name and class year as confirmation (e.g. "Yes [Jane Doe, Class of 2024]"). For security reasons, you will not be given access to the group if you do not complete this screening process.
- Visit the UMass Amherst [Family to Family blog](#) to find insights, advice, and resources, all provided by experienced UMass Amherst families.

Freshman Playbook

It has been brought to our attention that some incoming first year students and their families may be receiving a solicitation from the Freshman Playbook, inviting incoming students to enroll in a tutoring service for \$99. The marketing materials look official and do not clearly identify that Freshman Playbook is a separate company. The Freshman Playbook is in no way affiliated with, endorsed, or sponsored by the University of Massachusetts.

Important Dates

August 20 – 30: Fall Welcome for first year and transfer students

August 24: First day of classes

September 7: Bills due for fall 2020

September 7: Last day to add/drop classes, waive the Student Health Benefit Plan, change meal plan for the fall semester, and submit immunization records.

Website Links

Fall Welcome
Family Weekend
Office of the Bursar

Our staff will continue to work remotely this fall semester to monitor emails and return call back requests. 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,

Rose M. Boulay, 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.

Email: umassparents@umass.edu
[Office of Parent Services website](#) • [UMass Amherst Parents on Facebook](#)
• UMass Amherst [Family to Family blog](#) and [Facebook group](#)
Treating Our Parents as Partners

Copyright 2020. [University of Massachusetts Amherst](#)

[Manage](#) your preferences | [Unsubscribe](#)