

January 16, 2019

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

Welcome to our new families and welcome back to those continuing to support your student at UMass Amherst. We are looking forward to the quickly approaching spring semester and the arrival of students on campus. Below are some important dates and useful information for new and returning families.



Spring Move-In

Residence halls open for the spring semester on January 20 at 9 a.m. Students checking into a new assignment will pick up the room key at their **Residential Service Desk** between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. Any student interested in Early Arrival may contact Residential Life Student Services at 413-545-2100 or living@umass.edu to move in as early as January 18. All students must receive approval to move in early, and will be charged a \$120 Early Arrival fee.

Please allow additional time on Sunday to complete your student's move in. Travel routes on campus will be altered in high traffic areas that day. Review the [Move-In website](#) for more information before arriving.

Students returning to the same assignment for spring need to bring their key and UCard. Students who have lost either or both should immediately contact Residential Life Student Services at (413) 545-2100 so a new key can be available when they arrive on campus. Students who are returning to the same room will be expected to complete a Spring Check-In on SPIRE to confirm their plans.

Inclement Weather during Move-In

There is a potential for freezing rain or snow on Sunday. Please be mindful of the weather forecast as you make your move-in plans and remember, students can move-in on Monday as well. Residential Service Desks will be open from 9 a.m.-10 p.m. for any student checking into a new assignment. Students will receive more Move-In information via email to their student account.

FAFSA form reminder

All students who hope to obtain financial assistance must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year. The form is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Students should file their FAFSA by mid-February to meet the March 1 priority deadline. Refer to our [timely topic article](#) for the 2019–2020 Financial Aid Process Timeline and share that information with your student.

Taxes and the 1098-T

As tax season arrives, be sure your student has access to tax forms. To assist students and families in filing their 2018 taxes, the university issues form 1098-T. This contains important information related to tuition and other qualifying educational expenses that were billed to students in the 2018 tax year. Statements are available to students online through SPIRE, in the Finances section. Students who do not request online access to their 1098-T forms will have forms mailed to their permanent addresses, postmarked no later than January 31. For more information on these important documents, visit the [Bursar's information page](#).

Starting February 5, the Isenberg School of Management will offer income tax preparation assistance to domestic and international students. For more information, visit the [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance website](#).

Strategies for a successful spring semester

Hopefully your student had a successful fall semester. If they struggled with academics, have an honest conversation with them to determine why there were problems, and encourage them to access campus resources early in the spring semester. It is common for college students to experience one semester of academic difficulty, but with careful planning and by using the strategies below, they can improve.

- **Set goals:** Encourage them to make a list of their academic goals so they can assess progress. Weekly lists are helpful in achieving both short and long-term goals.

- **Create a timeline and use a planner:** Once they know their goals, they need to prioritize by making a timeline. They should pay attention to projects that require more time and effort, that are time sensitive and more demanding, or classes they do not understand as easily.
- **Minimize distractions:** Phone, TV, video games, loud music, and a cozy residence hall room can become distractors. Students should block off a certain time of the day to check texts and emails. Additionally, they should avoid watching TV or lying down while studying.
- **Avoid procrastination:** Some students have the tendency to put things off until later. They should instead strategize ways to approach and complete their assignments/projects as soon as they receive them, even if they are busy with previously assigned work.
- **Avoid multi-tasking:** Instead of switching back and forth from one task to the other, encourage your student to split up their tasks and complete them one at a time so that each task has their full attention.
- **Establish a positive and productive work environment:** If your student needs absolute quiet to study, they should use the library or a study lounge instead of a coffee shop so they can fully concentrate on the task at hand.
- **Attend classes:** Encourage your student to start the new year on the right foot by not only attending all class meetings regularly but also by participating and taking notes in class.

The college transition process continued

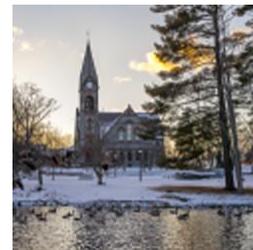
Spring semester is an opportunity for students, regardless of their academic classification, to start fresh. As your student returns to campus, encourage them to continue to:

- Take advantage of campus resources and build rapport with their advisor and professors. They can visit the [Learning Resource Center](#) for tutoring and the [Writing Center](#) for help writing papers. To find information on coping with anxiety, depression, homesickness, and more, they should visit the [Center for Counseling and Psychological Health's website](#). [University Health Services](#) is also available if your student is ill, and [Disability Services](#) can help secure appropriate accommodations.
- Get involved in student activities, clubs, athletics, and student events this spring to interact with others, expand their horizons, and build leadership skills.
- Talk to their Exploratory Track (ET) advisor, if they haven't declared a major. ET advisors offer a wealth of useful information for students who are undecided or considering changing majors.

For families of new students

New Students Checklist

Your student will start their UMass journey within a week. There are a few tasks they must complete before moving to campus. Please check whether they have completed each item on their [new student checklist](#) including AlcoholEdu, YIS: Your Intervention Strategies, the health benefit waiver, immunization records, and emergency alerts registration. The first two items (AlcoholEdu and YIS) are due by January 18. If they fail to complete these items, a hold may be placed on their SPIRE account, which will prevent them from registering for fall courses.



Winter Welcome Week

We have some exciting programs for the first week of classes to welcome new students, including the Winter Welcome Program on Tuesday, January 22 at 5 p.m. in the Campus Center, Marriott Center, 11th floor. Encourage your student to attend as many activities as possible to meet campus leaders, make friends, learn more about the university, and get involved. University resources will be highlighted during the first six weeks of classes. New students should visit the [Winter Welcome website](#) and [40DaysofUMass](#) for more detailed information (e.g. activities, description, time, and location).

OPS is here for you

Whether you live down the street or across the country, the Office of Parent Services (OPS) is here to help you at every stage of your student's college process. Every month during the academic year, OPS will send an e-newsletter to highlight key events and offer tips, advice, and UMass Amherst news relevant to you. Please visit our [website](#) for our timely topic, e-postcards, volunteer form, and places to stay when you are in the area. We also have two social media sites and a blog just for parents/family members:

- [UMass Amherst Parents Facebook Page](#) for weekly tips
- [UMass Amherst Family to Family Facebook Group](#) for opportunities to network with other families and share ideas and information
- [Family to Family blog](#) for advice from experienced families

We hope you'll stay connected!

January polling question

Which of these campus resources have you referred your student to support their health and well-being? Participate in the poll and view previous results on the [OPS website](#).

Important dates

January 18: AlcoholEdu and YIS deadline for all new students

January 20: Residence halls re-open for the spring semester at 9 a.m.

January 22: First day of classes for Spring 2019

January 22: Winter Welcome for new students, 5 p.m., Campus Center, Marriott Center, 11th floor

January 31: UMAPA Advisory Council spring semester [application](#) deadline

February 1: [2019 Student Commencement Speaker proposal](#) submission deadline by 4:30 p.m.

February 4: Last day of add/drop period

February 4: Immunization records deadline

February 4: Health insurance waiver deadline

Links to UMass Amherst websites

[Bursar's Office](#)

[Office of the Registrar](#)

[Residential Life](#)

[UCard Office](#)

We encourage you to look through our sites and become more familiar with campus resources so you can better direct your student to the appropriate office or department as they learn how to handle their problems and concerns.

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

After 36+ years at this wonderful university, I will be signing off for the last time with this email. It has been a privilege and a pleasure working with you and your students over the years. I thank you for all that you do to support this great institution. Goodbye and Go UMass!!

Sincerely,

Jeanne Horrigan, Director

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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 • Phone: (413) 577-4444 • Fax: (413) 545-9631

[Office of Parent Services website](#) • [UMass Amherst Parents on Facebook](#)

• UMass Amherst [Family to Family blog](#) and [Facebook group](#)

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