Greetings from UMass Amherst!
The fall semester is off to a great start on campus. As your student settles in, there are many things to consider, from important deadlines to don't miss events. Read on for updates on the UMass Amherst Parents Association, Add/Drop, Residential Services, and much more.

UMAPA calendar and membership card
By now, you should have received your 2015 UMass Amherst Parent Association (UMAPA) calendar and membership card. Find the membership card on the front cover of the calendar; bring it with you on visits to Amherst and enjoy the many discounts offered by local vendors. Our website includes a complete listing. Learn more about the UMAPA at the annual meeting, October 3, during Family Weekend.

Add/drop period
The add/drop period ends Monday, Sept. 21. Students must be registered for at least 12 credits to be considered full-time. If your student needs additional courses, encourage them to contact an advisor immediately, as classes cannot be added after this date. Students can find information about their advisor on SPIRE, under the Academics link; a list of this semester's courses is also on the site. Students needing courses to fulfill general education requirements can find them on the Registrar's website.

Monday, Sept. 21 is also the deadline to submit new student immunization information, waive the Student Health Benefit Plan, and cancel or downgrade a meal plan.

Settling into residence halls
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. Find more information on maintenance and hall services on the Residential Life website.

Mail and packages
On-campus residents are assigned a mailbox and receive regular mail at their residence halls. Students can find their mailbox combination in SPIRE under Main Menu > Housing > Assignment Notification. Large packages 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. Many orders will arrive within one day. More details on mail delivery, including how to address student mail, are on the Residential Life website.

Assignment change
Students can use two processes to attempt to change their fall housing assignment; both start this month. Students use the preference application to attempt to move into vacant spaces, or the swap process to change assignments with another student. Find more information on the Residential Life website.
Residence hall security
This year, all UMass residence halls have begun using a new electronic security system for admitting and tracking guests. If your student lives on campus or visits friends or family members who live in residence halls, read this recent communication on residence hall security updates. To understand your student's rights and responsibilities as a host, review the guests section of the Residential Life Community Standards.

Getting involved
Now that your student has settled in, on- or off-campus, attended their first week of classes, and gained familiarity with the campus, the next step is getting involved! Encourage them to check out Student Activities and Involvement (SAI), home to more than 200 registered student organizations. Students can stop by the Student Union office or browse Campus Pulse to find organizations that match their interests. During the semester, students also receive a weekly e-newsletter with timely information on activities, events, and involvement opportunities; it's a great way to start exploring!

Your student's career starts now
The path to a career begins now. Whether your student just enrolled or will graduate within the next year, encourage them to attend one or more of Career Services' upcoming fairs and internship information sessions. Events this month include, "Professional and Executive Development 101," for advice on standing out at any career event; an engineering and technology career fair; and the Isenberg School of Management career day. Check the online calendar often for upcoming events.

Career Services offers walk-in peer assistance weekdays, 1 to 4 p.m. in Goodell 511. All students needing help with a resume or cover letter are welcome to stop in for a 15-minute session - no appointment necessary.

Project Protect
Project Protect is a UMass Police Department initiative to register valuable items and increase the chance they can be returned if lost or stolen. After registering their items, your student will receive decals to place on them. Decals act as theft deterrents, alert finders of lost property that the item is registered, and help police return recovered property. The registration form and helpful tips are on the Project Protect webpage. Project Protect is only a small part of securing your student's valuables. Remind them not to leave laptops, smartphones, or other devices unattended in a public area, and to lock residence hall, apartment, and office doors when they'll be away, even for a few moments.

Family Weekend countdown
In just two weeks UMass Amherst will welcome you back to campus for Family Weekend - a chance to reconnect with your student and share in their UMass experience. A multitude of events are scheduled; highlights include late-night movies, a student farmers' market, meet-and-greet with UMass Amherst Parent Association Advisory Council; the Chancellor's Welcome; performances; demonstrations; a home football game; and much more. Don't miss out! Register by Friday, Sept. 25 at 5 p.m. for a discounted fee of $30. After that date, you can still register online at the standard rate of $40 per family.

Join the UMAPA Advisory Council
The UMAPA Advisory Council is currently accepting applications. Members serve a two-year term, attend two meetings per year, and participate in sponsored projects and volunteer activities. Apply by Wednesday, Sept. 30 by completing a form on the UMAPA website; mail or fax the completed application to the Office of Parent Services. The Council will reconvene Sunday, Oct. 4 to review and approve applications.
Follow us on Facebook
The Office of Parent Services Facebook page lets you network with other parents and families, receive helpful tips every week, learn about vendor discounts, and share stories. "Like" us for the latest news and updates and spread the word to other UMass families!

Important dates
September 21: Last day to add/drop classes, waive the Student Health Benefit Plan, and submit immunization records
September 26: Mass Impact Day of Service, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
September 30: UMAPA Advisory Council membership application deadline
October 2-4: Family Weekend
October 15: Education abroad spring semester application deadline
October 17: Homecoming football vs. Kent State, 3 p.m., McGuirk Alumni Stadium

Helpful links
Academic calendar
Campus Pulse
Family Weekend
Mail delivery in the residence halls
Office of the University Registrar
Residential Life Student Services calendar
Student Activities and Involvement
UMass Amherst events

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the Office of Parent Services. Our office is open 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

Treating Our Parents as Partners

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Office of Parent Services Website
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