January 27, 2017

Greetings from the Office of Parent Services

January is a great time to start fresh with a few new resolutions for the semester ahead. We hope your students plan to continue to be ambitious in their goals this semester, be challenged by new tasks, open to new relationships, and excited by new opportunities. This issue includes updates on the university’s inclement weather policy, 1098-T forms, flu shots, upcoming career-boosting opportunities for your student, and more.

Inclement weather policy

The university’s emergency team tracks weather events that may affect campus, and is in communication with agencies such as the National Weather Service and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. This team meets prior to the inclement weather’s arrival to plan the university’s response and any potential campus closure.

For a potential early morning closure or delayed opening, lead team members take part in a 4 a.m. conference call to review weather and travel conditions. If the decision is made to close campus, the announcement will be made by 6 a.m. via:

- The emergency closing hotline: (413) 545-3630;
- The UMass Amherst homepage, the university’s emergency closing webpage, and social media;
- UMass Amherst alerts (sent to campus email addresses and through text messages to subscribers); and
- Local TV and radio stations.

Refer to the emergency closing webpage for details on services affected by inclement weather closings or delays and visit the Office of Emergency Management webpage for details on campus emergency preparedness resources.

Super Bowl weekend guest policy

In accordance with Residential Life policy, as it relates to special circumstances involving concern for student safety and security, the residence hall guest policy will be adjusted on Super Bowl weekend. Beginning Sunday, February 5 at noon and continuing through Monday, February 6 at 8 a.m., no non-UMass guests will be permitted to visit the residence halls. UMass Amherst resident students may have up to four guests who are UMass students from the same residential area. For Super Bowl updates and policies and a listing of campus Super Bowl events and viewing parties, visit the Student Life Safety site.

Taxes and the 1098-T

As tax season is upon us, be sure your student has access to tax forms and assistance. To assist students and families in filing their 2016 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 2016 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.

The Isenberg School of Management offers a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program to help
domestic and international students prepare their state and federal taxes. For more information, visit the VITA website.

**Career-boosting opportunities**
Internships and jobs are great résumé builders and early spring semester is the best time to start looking for summer opportunities. Career Services offers two large career fairs and a networking night in February to assist students in their job search. Students of all levels and majors are welcome to meet recruiters searching to fill both full-time job and internship positions. Upcoming events include:

- Spring Arts and Humanities Internship Fair, Tuesday, Jan. 31, 11 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Fine Arts Center Atrium
- Diversity Career Fair, Tuesday, Feb. 14, 1 – 5 p.m., Student Union Ballroom. Over 50 organizations are expected to participate. Many of these organizations attend an interactive Networking Night that evening, beginning at 7 p.m. on the 11th floor of the Campus Center. The event provides more in-depth conversation and mentorship opportunities.
- Career Blast Job and Internship Fair, Wednesday, Feb. 15, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Mullins Center. This is the largest career fair in Western Massachusetts, with approximately 135 organizations and close to 1,300 students participating.
- School of Public Health and Health Sciences Career Networking & Workforce Development Conference (for SPHHS majors), Thursday, Mar. 23, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m., Campus Center Auditorium

**Note:** Students should dress as for an interview and bring a professional, up-to-date résumé to these events.

Career Services offers walk-in peer appointments every weekday, 1 – 4 p.m. in Goodell 511; no appointment is necessary. Any student in need of résumé/cover letter assistance is welcome to stop in for one of these 15-minute sessions.

**Adding emergency contacts in SPIRE**
All students are encouraged to enter an emergency contact on their SPIRE account if they haven’t already done so. Your student can easily do this by logging into SPIRE, going to the main menu, selecting My Personal Information and then Emergency Contacts. Students who already entered an emergency contact should check back once a semester to make sure it’s up to date.

**Flu vaccine**
It’s not too late for your student to protect against flu! Flu shots are available at University Health Services (UHS); call (413) 577-5101 for an appointment. Shots can also be given on request during scheduled appointments. Costs are billed to insurance; remind your student to bring their insurance card to the visit. Learn more about staying healthy now and throughout the semester on the UHS website.

**Health and safety**
At UMass we take students’ health and well-being very seriously. We want to partner with you to help ensure their safety. As a parent or family member, you play an important role in influencing your student’s choices around alcohol and other drugs, including marijuana, and identifying warning signs. Please have a serious conversation with your student about high-risk behaviors. We recommend that you:

- Check in with your student to see how they’re doing, and be sure they’re aware of the health-related resources available on campus. Learn about campus resources at the Center for Health Promotion and Center for Counseling and Psychological Health websites.
- Utilize time you have with your student, such as dinner time during breaks and car rides, to talk
about alcohol. Seek opportunities to raise the topic naturally and take advantage of everyday events to talk about substance use.

- Encourage responsibility and moderation if your student chooses to drink; if you suspect excessive use, encourage them to seek help.

Addressing the issue of alcohol use early can help students perform better in school and be more successful upon graduation. This guide has more information and ways to help start the conversation.

Note: Although the use of marijuana is legal in the state of Massachusetts, it is important to remind your student that it is still prohibited at UMass Amherst. More information about the marijuana policy is available on the Student Life website.

Commencement Weekend updates

- **2017 student commencement speaker – call for submissions:** Graduating seniors are invited to submit a speech proposal for consideration as the student commencement speaker. All graduating seniors are eligible. The deadline is Tuesday, Feb 7, by 4:30 p.m. For more information on submission guidelines, students should visit the UMass Commencement website.

- **Personalized graduation announcements from Print Services:** UMass Amherst Print Services offers graduation announcements personalized with the graduate’s name, degree, and major, presented in either standard or customized texts. Many styles are available. For information, prices, and to order, graduating seniors should visit Print Services.

February poll
February's poll question is: What aspect(s) of your student's major choice is the most important to you? Participate in the poll and view previous results here.

Connect with OPS
Are you new to the UMass Amherst family? Please visit our website for the January 4 parent/family e-newsletter, our timely topic, e-postcards, vendor discount program, and other helpful tips. 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 for opportunities to network with other families and share ideas and advice
- Family to Family blog for advice from experienced families

We hope you’ll stay connected!

Important dates
February 6: Last day to add/drop classes
February 6: Last day to complete MyStudentBody and YIS *(new students only)*
February 6: Immunization records due *(new students only)*
February 7: 2017 student commencement speaker proposal submissions due
February 14: Diversity Career Fair, 1 – 5 p.m., Student Union Ballroom
February 15: Career Blast Job and Internship Fair, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Campus Center, lower level
February 20: Presidents' Day (no classes)
March 1: Fall semester education abroad application deadline

Helpful links
Career Services
We encourage you to explore our websites and become familiar with campus resources, to better direct your student to the appropriate office or department as they continue learning to handle their own problems and concerns.

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

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

Sincerely,
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Office of Parent Services website • UMass Amherst Parents on Facebook
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Treating Our Parents as Partners