

February 12, 2020

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

February is a very busy month on campus. Activities range from fall housing applications to career fairs for all students, and more. We hope your student continues to work hard and get all they can out of the next few months.



Health, safety, and code of conduct communications

At UMass we take students' health and safety very seriously and we want to collaborate with you to help ensure their well-being and success. As a parent or family member, you play an important role in influencing your student's health and safety choices and identifying warning signs. Several [emails](#) were sent to students and the community last month to address health and safety and our community values. We encourage you to talk to your student about personal safety and behavior and point them to the many resources on campus.

Flu vaccine

Influenza (flu) is on campus and in our community. It's not too late for your student to get flu vaccine if they haven't already. Vaccines are available at University Health Services (UHS); students can call (413) 577-5101 for an appointment. Students can also request shots 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, or by following us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#). If your student isn't feeling well, but worried about a long wait in our Walk-In-Care clinic, they can text "clinic" to (413) 944-8562 to text into our virtual waiting room. They can wait in the comfort of their own room before being called in to be seen by a provider.

Coming soon: Telehealth

Telephone consultation with a nurse practitioner will be available starting February 17 within our walk-in clinic to provide evaluation and treatment of non-medical emergencies. Over the telephone, students will speak with a board certified nurse practitioner who can assist with a variety of health concerns, such as urinary tract infections. When indicated, lab specimens can be drawn within UHS, and prescriptions can be filled at our in-house pharmacy. Most appointments will be completed in less than 30 minutes!

"Get Well" items solicitation for Student Care Supply Closets

The Student Care Supply Closet is in dire need of "Get Well" supply for cold and the flu season including hand sanitizer, tissues, and Lysol. Please visit the [Amazon wish list](#) to donate what you can. Wish list purchases are delivered directly to the Dean of Students Office for distribution to students in need. We appreciate your generosity!

Income tax preparation assistance

The Isenberg School of Management is currently offering income tax preparation assistance to domestic students (U.S. citizens and U.S. resident aliens) and international students (non-resident aliens). Students can visit the [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance website](#) to learn more. Assistance is on a first-come, first-serve basis—they do not take appointments.

Upcoming spring career activities

Internships and part-time jobs are great résumé builders and now is a good time for students to look for opportunities. UMass uses an online platform called Handshake for students to find both summer jobs/internships and full-time professional positions for soon-to-be graduates. UMass hosts many on-campus career fairs and employer networking events for students of all levels and majors. To view upcoming events, students can go into Handshake or visit the [Career Development Hub website](#). Here are a few: Career Blast

Campus-wide Job & Internship Fair on Feb. 19, Diversity Networking Reception with Employers also on Feb. 19, Public Health & Health Sciences Fair on Feb. 24, and Earth & Sustainability Fair, on Mar. 9.

If your student needs help with their résumé or with focusing their search, have them check with their College Career Center, as most offer walk-in services and all offer individual appointments.

Undergraduate Commencement Ceremonies

2020 Commencement Ceremonies will take place May 7-9. Please visit the [Undergraduate Commencement website](#) for the latest information and for tips to plan your trip to campus. We look forward to seeing you at the [Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony](#) which takes place on Friday, May 8 at McGuirk Stadium at 4:30 p.m., as well as at the [Senior Recognition Ceremonies](#) held on Friday, May 8 and Saturday, May 9. These ceremonies are organized by school or college. Please visit the Commencement website for more information or check with your graduate's college for details. If you are unsure which school or college your graduate is part of, you can find out by locating the major within the [Undergraduate Programs](#). Students are encouraged to read all emails regarding commencement or senior recognition ceremonies to stay current with information and opportunities. No tickets are required at any of our ceremonies. Congratulations to our graduates, families, and friends!



How to help your student decide on a major

Choosing a major is a big step toward graduation, but the process will vary from student to student. Some may choose a major in the first year, while others may change their major(s) multiple times. As a parent or family member, it may be difficult for you to step back and allow your student to make this decision. It may take some trial and error before your student settles on something concrete, and it might not be the major you have in mind for them. Regardless of your student's situation, it's important not to pressure them to make a decision sooner than necessary. Also, please keep in mind that choosing a major is not the same as choosing a career; your student's choice does not necessarily determine their future.

Suggest that they explore subjects that would be a good fit for their interests, values, skills, and goals. Their passion for a particular major shouldn't be the only thing that drives them—they should also feel passionate about the required classes, know why they want that particular major, and have ideas of how they plan to use it in the future.

If your student does not have any specific major or career path in mind, they should set up an appointment with a [career advisor](#) in their college/school to assess their interests and abilities and learn about different career options.

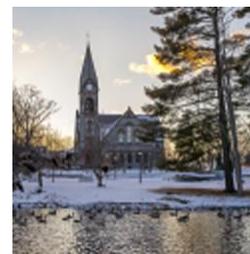
Making the most of the UMass college experience

College is a place where students will mature intellectually and socially if they embrace particular behaviors and attitudes. As you communicate with your student, encourage them to fully engage in their college experience and operate with a growth-mindset. Here are some insights to share with them and ways you can show support.

- We are a community of learners and everyone has something to contribute and something to learn. Encourage your student to be respectful, embrace the world around them, and welcome other people's points of view.
- It takes a while for some students to transition to college life. Successful college students are those who ask faculty, mentors, advisors, classmates, and friends for help. Challenges should not be seen as failures, but as opportunities to learn, grow, and develop new skills.
- No one should go through their college years regretting not taking full advantage of the college experience. Whether it is courses, guest lectures, student activities, community service, organizations, or field trips, remind your student to try something new.
- Establishing new friendships in college is important, but students should choose thoughtfully and find friends who will help them succeed.
- While UMass maintains a healthy and safe environment, with resources to help students succeed at all levels of their development, it is ultimately their responsibility to take advantage of these and behave responsibly.

Living on and off campus for Fall 2020

Now is the time to start talking to your student about on- and off-campus housing for next year. There are many living options across campus in apartments, suites, shared rooms, and single rooms. The on-campus option your student is looking for will determine which of our three [Online Room Selection](#) processes they use. Be sure your student is familiar with the upcoming timelines. Missing a deadline will significantly limit the options your student has for on-campus housing. For more detailed information visit [Fall Room Selection](#) OR [join us on Facebook LIVE, February 19 starting at 12:30 p.m. for a short presentation followed by Q&A. Please feel free to submit questions by February 14.](#)



February 16 – last day to submit an application for a [Defined Residential Community](#)

March 2 – last day to request an appointment in SPIRE for the [North Apartment](#) group selection process

March 4 – last day to request an appointment in SPIRE for rooms in the [Commonwealth Honors College Residential Community](#)

March 23* – last day to request an appointment in SPIRE for [single and shared rooms](#) across campus

*Students who miss the last appointment request deadline may not be able to get on-campus housing.

Students who plan to live off campus next fall should:

- Log onto the [Off Campus Housing website](#) to find a place to live and/or someone to live with.
- Shop for off-campus apartments and get special deals and prizes at the Off Campus Housing Fair, Wednesday, March 25, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Campus Center Concourse.
- Access resources for off campus issues on the [Off Campus Student Life website](#), including emergency planning, fire safety, renter's insurance info, and budgeting.
- Visit the [Off Campus Student Center](#) to use the fridge, grab free coffee, use pay-to-print printers, and attend great events: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m., 103 Bartlett Hall.

Residence halls close for spring break

All undergraduate residence halls, except [break housing halls](#), will close Saturday, March 14 at 10 a.m. and reopen Sunday, March 22 at 10 a.m. Students and families are encouraged to make travel plans accordingly. Those who do not vacate their residence hall by closing time will be assessed a \$150 unauthorized occupancy fee. Students who require on-campus housing over break can email Residential Life Student Services at living@umass.edu.

February polling question

If your student was to express a concern about available services, what would be your first reaction? Participate in the poll and view previous results on the [OPS website](#).

Important dates

February 17: Presidents' Day (no classes)

February 18: Monday class schedule followed

February 19: Career Blast Fair: campus-wide job and internship fair, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Campus Center Auditorium

February 26: Paws program, 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Campus Center Auditorium and W.E.B. Du Bois Library

March 1: FAFSA priority deadline

March 14: Residence halls close for spring break at 10 a.m.

March 22: Residence halls reopen at 10 a.m.

March 23: Classes resume

March 24: Mid-semester date (last day to drop with "W" and select "P/F")

March 25: Off Campus Housing Fair, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Campus Center Concourse

Links to UMass Amherst websites

[Events Calendar](#)

[Mindfulness](#)

[Registered Student Organizations](#)

[Veteran Student Resource Center](#)

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,
Rose M. Boulay, Assistant Director
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University of Massachusetts Amherst
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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](#) • [Stand United . Fight Hate](#)
• UMass Amherst [Family to Family blog](#) and [Facebook group](#) • [Foster Care Student Success Fund](#)
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