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

It’s amazing how quickly the fall semester is approaching! In about a month, our students will start moving in and campus will be alive again. We are all excited to interact with students again and this time fully in person. Below are some tips for both new and returning students as they prepare for their first semester or their return to UMass.

Who we are
The Office of Parent Services (OPS) is dedicated to helping families like yours get connected to university resources to support your student’s college experience. We share information and offer advice to families and caregivers via monthly e-newsletters and social media during the academic year, host a series of events, and are always available for individual communication (through email). We are your first point of contact for questions and concerns. We hope to continue to partner with you to provide your student with the support they need to be successful.

Before your student arrives this fall…

COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement
Holds have been placed on the accounts of students who are not in compliance with the university’s COVID-19 vaccination requirement. Students who do not resolve their non-compliant vaccination status by August 16, 2021 will be withdrawn from the university. Check in with your student and urge them to complete their vaccination series and/or submit missing documentation if they have not already done so. More information on this requirement is available on the University Health Services website.

Enrollment Verification
Students needing verification of full-time enrollment for insurance coverage, financial aid, or other purposes can request it through SPIRE’s Student Center. Using the “Other Academic” drop-down menu, your student should select “Enrollment Verification,” and follow the instructions. For questions, contact the Office of the University Registrar, 413-545-0555.

Become an Authorized Payer
SPIRE, the university’s secure online student information system, is where students register for classes, sign up for on-campus housing, manage their university finances, and more. Be sure your student is staying up to date on their holds, “to-do” items, financial aid awards, and payments through their SPIRE account. If you’re contributing financially to your student’s education, be sure you’re an authorized payer in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). For information on how your student can complete the FERPA Privacy Waiver to allow the university to discuss their Bursar billing, financial aid, and housing information with you, visit the Office of the Bursar.

My UMass App
Download the My UMass app for iPhone and Android before Move-In. It’s packed with important information including reservation instructions, a detailed family/caregiver checklist, and weather and traffic updates. Once the app is downloaded, you can select the “Parent/Family” persona to receive information and notifications specifically for families. The app includes the directions to check-in and location-based maps for Move-In day. Please do not use your GPS to get to campus. Local road closures will be in place for Move-In and you will be rerouted if you take a different route to check-in.

Move-In
Beginning Wednesday, August 11, every student with an on-campus housing assignment must complete a Move-In Reservation and print their boarding pass for Move-In. Residential Life’s Move-In website has the information you and your student need, including the reservation schedule, video tutorials, guides and checklists, driving directions, and more.

Luggage Program for International and Out-Of-State Students
International and out-of-state students may mail belongings before arriving on campus. For more information, please read the Luggage Program information on our website. Need help with transportation to and from regional airports? Check out our Visiting Amherst website.

What to Bring
Visit the Your Room page for an overview of items your student will need. Still looking for XL twin sheets and room décor? Check out the Linens Program for all your room needs and have them shipped directly to campus. Considering a mini fridge or microwave? Rent a MicroFridge by August 1 and your unit will be in your room on Move-In day! Don’t know your assignment yet? No problem. You do not need to fill in the assignment information to place an order. Just be sure to update them once you find out your student’s assignment on August 6.

Mail and Package Delivery
The Residential Service Desks will process mail and packages for your students beginning August 20. Please note that mail delivery will be suspended from August 27-30 due to Fall Move-In. Normal package delivery will resume on August 31.

Commuter/Off Campus Students
If your student will be commuting to campus this year either from home or an off campus apartment, remind them to

- familiarize themselves with the best route to campus to get to class and appointments on time. If they will be taking the bus, they should familiarize themselves with the bus schedule, including alternative routes.
- get a parking permit with Parking Services. This is required for all vehicles that will be parked on campus.
- consider getting an off-campus meal plan (if possible) for those long days on campus.
- visit Off Campus Student Life to learn about resources available to commuter/off campus students.

Student Health Insurance
Students taking five or more credits in a semester are automatically enrolled in the Student Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) and charged on the semester’s tuition bill. Students may be eligible to waive the plan if they’re staying on a family plan. To do so, they must complete the waiver before the end of the add/drop period (09/08/2021). Information about SHBP, waiver eligibility guidelines, and instructions are on the University Health Services website.

Student Employment
The Student Employment Office (SEO) website is a great place to find part-time and seasonal job opportunities. Students beginning their first job at UMass Amherst must complete several forms and provide specific types of identification before starting work. A driver’s license AND social security card or a passport on its own are common acceptable forms of ID. Find a complete list of acceptable documents on the SEO website and contact them for assistance.

UMass Amherst Alerts and Emergency Contacts
Check with your student to ensure they’ve enrolled in UMass Amherst Alerts, the campus emergency text messaging system. Subscribers receive immediate updates on ongoing emergencies and campus closures, along with instructions on staying safe. It’s quick and easy to sign up: from the SPIRE menu, choose UMass Amherst Alerts > Cell Phone Info.

Encourage your student to update emergency contact information as well. On SPIRE, go to Main Menu > My Personal Information > Emergency Contacts. Students should check their UMass Amherst Alerts and emergency contact information once a semester to make sure it’s up to date.

Books by eCampus
Books by eCampus is our official online bookstore. Students can easily order course materials for the upcoming semester through SPIRE by following these instructions. We offer students access to low-cost textbooks and course materials with several purchasing options, including used, rental, marketplace, and eBook. Students can also take advantage of free two-day shipping to the on-site Campus Center location or a residence hall. UCard payment accepted. Additionally, students can explore free textbooks and educational materials through UMass Libraries’ Open Education Initiative.
For new students...
New Student Checklist
There are several items new students need to complete prior to the start of the semester. Please help your student stay on task by asking if they’ve completed their New Student Checklist available via Your UMass Guide. To access Your UMass Guide as a guest to view the student checklist, go to orientation.umass.edu, click on guest login, create a guest account under “First Time Here,” complete the form, and under “Guest Type,” select “Family Member.”

Parents, Family, and Friends Orientation Recordings
Thank you to those who participated in our online Parents, Family, and Friends Orientation program! Orientation materials along with recorded sessions will remain on the New Student Orientation and Transitions (NSOT) website and the OPS YouTube channel until the end of September. Happy viewing for those who couldn’t attend. Please contact us for assistance if needed.

The sophomore experience
The Class of 2024 had a very non-traditional first-year experience. Many are coming to campus for the first time this fall and the experience of those who were on campus was limited due to COVID-19 safety restrictions and compliance. The university is committed to informing our sophomores about opportunities designed to help them acclimate to campus. Sophomore students will be invited to participate in Fall Welcome events with the goal of providing an opportunity to meet other students and feel connected to UMass. Please remind your students to check out their UMass email and the Fall Welcome website for events and opportunities.

PART and Wellness 203: one-credit courses teach self-care skills
Two one-credit fall courses help students learn effective coping skills and stress management strategies: the Positivity and Relaxation Training (PART) program was Developed at the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine (BHI) at Massachusetts General Hospital. Wellness 203: From Stress Buster to Strength Builder is based on the mindfulness work of Dr. Ginny Chandler. Students can register for either class in SPIRE. To register for a special CMASS section of Wellness 203, email wjp@umass.edu.

Advisory Council application
The UMass Amherst Parent Advisory Council is in the process of recruiting new members for the 2021-2023 term. The council represents UMass Amherst parents/family members by taking an active role in the experience of undergraduate students and advising the Office of Parent Services and other departments on matters of concern to all parents and family members of undergraduates. To learn more about the council and to complete an application, visit the council’s website. Applications are due Tuesday, August 31. We’ll review all applications the following week.

Save the date for Family Weekend 2021!
Family Weekend is October 1-3. OPS is excited to again offer a very fun and memorable weekend for your student and extended family members to enjoy. Along with home football and hockey games, we’ll again offer our annual family reception and BBQ, campus and building tours, hiking trips, our signature student performance showcase, Sunday jazz brunch in the dining halls, and much more. Continue to review the newsletter for more information on the schedule and registration. Some hotel room blocks are available on our website.

We have moved
Our mailing address has changed. We’re now located in Bartlett Hall, 130 Hicks Way, #280. Please update your address book.

August polling question
What are your student’s goals for the fall semester? Participate in the poll and view previous results on the OPS website.

Important dates
August 6 - Housing assignment posted on SPIRE
August 10 - Tuition bills due for fall 2021
August 11-18 - Move-in reservation process begins
August 27 - Last day to complete YIS and AlcoholEdu (new students only)
August 27 - First-year Move-In  
August 28 - Transfer and Sophomore Move-In  
August 28 - September 6 - Fall Welcome for first-year, sophomore, and transfer students  
August 29 - August 31 - Multi-year Move-In  
September 1 - First day of classes  
September 8 - Last day to add/drop classes, waive the Student Health Benefit Plan, and change meal plan for the fall semester.

**Links to UMass Amherst websites**
- Residential Life Student Services  
- Student Employment Office  
- University Health Services

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 questions and concerns.

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, Director  
Office of Parent Services  
Bartlett Hall  
130 Hicks way, # 280  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Amherst, MA 01003-9269

**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 2021. University of Massachusetts Amherst

Manage your preferences | Unsubscribe