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

We’re almost halfway through the semester and spring break is soon approaching. As students welcome spring and plan for the second half of the semester, we want to share some tips for your student’s spring break itinerary, remind you of Fall 2019 course registration and housing selection, and provide info on May Move-Out and Commencement.

**Spring Break Plans**

Residence halls close for spring break at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 9. Whether your student plans to travel, work, go home to family, visit friends, or participate in volunteer or service projects, have an open conversation with them about alcohol and safety, especially if they are traveling. It’s also a great time to discuss expectations for responsible decision-making and planning. Here are some important sharable tips:

- If your student is traveling, they should share and confirm their travel itinerary with a family member, including hotel, plane, and rental car reservations.
- Encourage them to plan a budget and stick to it.
- When traveling abroad, remind your student to keep their passport secure and check with the U.S. Department of State for current travel warnings and updates.
- Keep in mind that being in another country means students are bound by the local and country laws as well as the UMass Code of Student Conduct.
- Encourage them to always bring an insurance card, possibly change their cell phone plan to include international calls, and keep important telephone numbers handy at all times. They should use caution with credit cards and be aware of the potential for identity theft.
- Remember false identification cards, including fake driver’s licenses, are illegal and especially subject to review and sanctions during spring break.
- Discuss your expectations regarding alcohol consumption. Recommend that they learn about the alcohol laws of their destination, be aware of what they are drinking, and do not use alcohol with other intoxicants. If they choose to drink, advise them to do so responsibly and in moderation, and refuse drinks and rides from strangers.
- Stress that they should think twice about what they post on social media.
- Advise them to travel with others, stay together, always use the buddy system, and always keep a charged cell phone with them.
- Remind them to remain aware of their surroundings. Emphasize safety on balconies, limiting sun exposure, avoiding dehydration, locking hotel room doors, and not swimming/climbing alone.

We hope they travel safely and return with many wonderful memories and photos.

For students staying in Amherst, the W.E.B. Du Bois Library and Campus Recreation Center will have limited hours of operation. The Dining Commons, with the exception of Hampshire, will be closed from March 9-16. Support services, including University Health Services (UHS), the Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH) and the Center for Women and Community (CWC), will be on call 24/7 throughout spring break. Please check each office’s website for spring break hours.

**Fall 2019 Course Registration and Advising**

Course Registration for Fall 2019 begins April 1. It’s what we call priority registration—the early registration period for currently enrolled students. For a speedy and productive registration process, students should:

- Meet with their academic advisor to prepare for registration and to be sure they are on track with requirements. They can view their advisor’s information in SPIRE, which includes the location of
the Advising Centers as well as a link to their college website. They can also review the course catalog and see their enrollment appointment on their SPIRE account.

- **Check SPIRE to make sure there are no holds** on their accounts. If there is a hold, they should contact the corresponding office ASAP to clear it up and avoid unnecessary issues with course registration.
- **Declare a major by the end of their third semester** on campus. If your student is ready to declare a major or wishes to change majors, study abroad, or do an internship for academic credit, they should discuss their decision with their current advisor. Some majors are open to current students, while others have restrictions or application processes that students must complete before they can declare the major. Your student’s advisor can help determine what steps to take.

You’ll find more information on the [University Registrar’s website](http://example.com).

**Fall 2019 Housing**

*Online Room Selection* is underway! Now is a great time to check with your student to make sure they understand their next steps to secure on-campus housing and to remind them about important deadlines.

- **Apartment and Suite Selection**: Students participating in this process have until Thursday, March 7 at 4 pm to select an assignment.
- **Defined Residential Communities**: Students participating in this process have until Thursday, March 7 at 4 p.m. to select an assignment.
- **Single and Shared Room Selection**: Students planning to participate in this process have until Monday, March 18* to request an appointment on SPIRE.

*Students who miss this appointment request deadline may not be able to select on-campus housing for fall and should contact Residential Life Student Services as soon as possible.

**May Move-Out**

It’s not too soon to start thinking about May Move-Out! We want your student’s Move-Out to be as simple and stress free as possible, so we compiled some tips you can pass along.

- Going home for spring break? Bring home items you no longer need and bring back packing supplies like bins and boxes.
- If you need storage space, start looking now because local facilities fill up quickly.
- Start thinking about what you won’t need next year and consider donating to [New2U](http://example.com), the student run collection and tag sale.
- Residence halls close at 8 p.m. on Thursday, May 9. Be sure you give yourself plenty of time to be out before halls close.

On Monday, April 1, visit the [Move-Out website](http://example.com) for more information about traffic pattern changes on campus, loading zones, and maps.

**Reporting Maintenance Concerns in Residence Halls**

If your student tells you about a maintenance concern in their residence hall, please encourage them to submit an [iService Request](http://example.com) online. Please note, these requests must be submitted from the network on campus. The iService system sends the request directly to the appropriate facilities staff and allows your student to track its progress.

**Financial Aid Update**

Financial Aid Services sends notifications to students’ university email. These email notifications may include requests for information required to complete the financial aid application process and/or notifications that the student’s financial aid award is ready to view. Please remind your student to check their university email account and their To Do List in SPIRE for notices and information requests from Financial Aid Services.

Financial aid award emails for Fall 2019 will begin going out in early June. Visit the [Financial Aid Services website](http://example.com) for additional information.
Fall 2018 Dean's List
The Fall 2018 Dean's List is now available. Congratulations to everyone whose student made the list! For more information on finding the Dean’s List in your local paper, visit News and Media Relations.

Commencement 2019 Updates
If your student is graduating in May, we look forward to seeing you! Please visit the 2019 Commencement Website for the latest information!

- **Personalized graduation announcements from Print Services**
  UMass Amherst Print Services offers personalized graduation announcements. For information on pricing or how to order, graduating seniors should visit Print Services.

- **Privacy Holds & Commencement Program Listings**
  Students who have a FERPA privacy request on file will not be listed in the Commencement program. To release this hold, your student needs to contact the Dean of Students Office no later than Friday, March 29.

- **Cap & Gown and Professional Photography Opportunities**
  Ultimate Exposures® will be on campus to take cap and gown photos as well as professional photos from May 1 – May 9. Although walk-ins are welcome, please encourage your graduating student to make an appointment today by visiting Ultimate Exposures®.

March Poll Question
Where does your student plan to live in Fall 2019? Participate in the poll and view previous poll results here.

Important Dates
March 9: Residence halls close for spring break at 10 a.m.
March 17: Residence halls reopen at 10 a.m.
March 18: Classes resume
March 19: Mid-semester date: Last day to drop a class with a record of “W”
April 1: Registration begins for Fall 2019

Helpful Links
Off Campus Student Services
Office of the University Registrar
Residential Life

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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Knowlton Hall
691 North Pleasant Street OFC
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Amherst, Massachusetts 01003-9399

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
Treating Our Parents as Partners