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

Happy New Year from Western Mass. Current families, we hope you had a great time catching up with your student. New families, welcome to the UMass community! The semester is about to begin: we look forward to students’ arrival on campus and all the accomplishments the new semester will bring. Below are some important dates and useful information for new and returning families.

**Inclement Weather Policy**
There is always potential for freezing rain, snow, or sleet around this time of the year in New England. Please be mindful of the weather forecast as you and your student make plans to return to campus. You can find information on closings or delays on:

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

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

**Spring Move-In**
Residence halls open for the spring semester on Sunday, January 23 at 9 a.m. Students checking into a new assignment will pick up the room key at Residential Service Desk between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. Newly admitted students for spring 2022 will be emailed to their UMass student email address by Residential Life with specific instructions about their move-in. Any student interested in Early Arrival may contact Residential Life Student Services at 413-545-2100 or living@umass.edu to move in as early as Friday, January 21. All students must receive approval to move in early, and will be charged a $120 Early Arrival fee.

Please allow additional time on Sunday to complete your student’s move in. Travel routes on campus will be altered in high traffic areas that day. Review the Move-In website for more information before arriving.

Students returning to the same assignment for spring need to bring their key and UCard. Students who have lost either or both should immediately contact Residential Life Student Services at (413) 545-2100 so arrangements can be made to order a lock core. Students should contact the UCard office immediately at (413) 545-0197 if they have lost their UCard and need a replacement. Students who are returning to the same room will be expected to complete a Spring Check-In on SPIRE to confirm they have arrived to campus and have their room key.

**FAFSA form reminder**
All students who hope to obtain financial assistance must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year. The form is available online at https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa. Students
should file their FAFSA by mid-February to meet the March 1 priority deadline. Refer to the Guide to Understanding Financial Aid for more information and share this resource page with your student. For questions or concerns, please connect with Financial Aid Services.

Taxes and the 1098-T
As tax season arrives, be sure your student has access to tax forms. To assist students and families in filing their 2021 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 2021 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.

Strategies for a successful spring semester
Hopefully your student had a successful fall semester. If they struggled with academics, have an honest conversation with them to determine why there were problems, and encourage them to access campus resources early in the spring semester. It is common for college students to experience one semester of academic difficulty, but with careful planning, they can improve. The beginning of the semester is a great opportunity for students to develop such plan and strategy for their spring coursework, such as reviewing syllabi and identifying key dates in the semester, attending classes regularly, and participating in class. Building a strong academic network with instructors, academic advisors, tutors, and developing strong study habits from the start will prevent students from playing catch-up. A few questions to ask:

- How are you feeling about your new schedule and classes?
- What are you concerned about as you start this semester?
- Do you know who or where you can find support? Have you heard of the Student Success Office, the Learning Resource Center (LRC), and the support courses LRC offer?
- What are you most excited about this semester?

The college transition process continued
Spring semester is an opportunity for students, regardless of their academic classification, to start fresh. As your student starts their UMass journey or returns to campus, encourage them to continue to:

- Take advantage of campus resources and build rapport with their advisor and professors. They can visit the Learning Resource Center for tutoring, the Student Success office for help with study skills, personal finance, and more, and the Writing Center for help writing papers. To find information on coping with anxiety, depression, homesickness, and more, they should visit the Center for Counseling and Psychological Health’s website. University Health Services is also available if your student is ill, and Disability Services can help secure appropriate accommodations.
- Get involved in student organizations, athletics, and student events this spring to interact with others, expand their horizons, and build leadership skills.
- Talk to their Exploratory Track (ET) advisor, if they haven’t declared a major. ET advisors offer a wealth of useful information for students who are undecided or considering changing majors.
- Talk to their school/college career advisor to learn more about opportunities in their field of study and how to apply and prepare for jobs and internships.

New year - New and smarter goal setting
Spring semester is a great time to reflect upon successes, challenges, and what will help students accomplish new goals in the areas of academics, involvement, health, relationships, and more. As you help your student think about their 2022 goals, remind them to:

- Set realistic and attainable/achievable/measurable goals
- Think through how they will prioritize goals
- Write down goals or share with others to create a sense of accountability
- Set deadlines and to-dos and re-evaluate as needed
- Ask for help when encountering setbacks
- Celebrate small achievements and be proud

Some questions to facilitate the discussion:

- What are your academic/campus/health goals for this semester?
- What potential barriers will stop you from accomplishing your goals? And how do you prevent them from happening?
- What campus resources will help you accomplish your goals?
- How would you celebrate your successes and learn from your setbacks?

For families of new students
Welcome to the U invitation to new students
Encourage your student to join New Student Orientation & Transitions for Welcome to the U, beginning January 23rd. These programs will include New Student Bingo, a Masquerade Ball, and Fire & Ice: A Winter Celebration. A full schedule of events will be available soon at umass.edu/newstudent.

OPS is here for you
Whether you live down the street, across the country, or overseas, the Office of Parent Services (OPS) is here to help you at every stage of your student's college career. Every month during the academic year, OPS will send this e-newsletter to highlight key events and offer tips, advice, and UMass Amherst news relevant to you. Please visit the Office of Parent Services website for a list of resources including e-postcards, volunteer form, and places to stay when you are in the area. 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 Facebook Group for opportunities to network with other families and share ideas and information. The group is administered by the Parent Advisory Council
- Family to Family blog for advice from experienced families

We hope you'll stay connected!

January polling question
How do you feel when you notice changes in your student's core values? Participate in the poll and view previous results on the OPS website.

Important dates
January 15: Immunization record deadline
January 17: Martin Luther King Jr.’s Birthday (campus closed)
January 23: Residence halls re-open for the spring semester at 9 a.m.
January 23-February 1: Welcome to the U activities for new students
January 25: First day of classes for Spring 2022
January 31: UMAPA Advisory Council spring semester application deadline
January 31: Last day of add/drop period
February 4: 2022 Student Commencement Speaker proposal submission deadline
February 7: Health insurance waiver deadline

Links to UMass Amherst websites
Bursar's Office
Office of the Registrar
Residential Life
UCard Office

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 problems and concerns.

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

Sincerely,
Rose M. Boulay, Director
Office of Parent Services
Bartlett Hall #280
130 Hicks Way
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Amherst, Massachusetts 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.