Greetings from the Office of Parent Services!
We are off to a great start with the 2016-17 academic year. The enthusiasm, intellectual curiosity, and diversity of culture and thought among our students inspire us all. As they settle in, your students should take note of the important information below. This newsletter also includes updates on the UMass Amherst Parents Association, Residential Life information, our alcohol and drug policies, important deadlines, and much more.

UMAPA calendar and key fob
We hope you like the 2016-2017 UMass Amherst Parents Association (UMAPA) calendar and that you have found your key fob located on the front cover. Remember to bring your key fob with you on visits to Amherst so that you can take advantage of the many discounts offered by local vendors. Our website includes a complete listing of these. Learn more about the UMAPA at the annual meeting at Family Weekend, October 21–23.

Settling into the residence halls

- **Assignment changes**
  There are two processes students can use to attempt to change their fall housing assignment and both start this month. Students use the preference application to attempt to move into vacant spaces, or the swap process to change assignments with another student. More information is available on the Residential Life website. Students can also call Residential Life Student Services, (413) 545-2100, Monday – Friday.

- **Mail and packages**
  On-campus residents are assigned a mailbox and receive regular mail at their residence halls. Students can find their mailbox combination in SPIRE under Main Menu>Housing>Assignment Notification. Large packages are held at your student’s Residential Service Desk. Students can also send Amazon@UMass orders to the central pickup location in the Campus Center. Many orders will arrive within one day. More details on mail delivery, including how to address student mail, are on the Residential Life website.

- **Room maintenance**
  Students with routine maintenance needs can complete an online i-service request on the Residential Life website. This form is only available on devices connected to the UMass wireless network. Emergency issues such as lock or key problems, flooding, or broken windows should be reported to the Residential Service Desk. Find more information on maintenance and hall services on the Residential Life website.

Water conservation
As a result of the severe drought affecting communities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Town of Amherst has issued mandatory water restrictions, which means that everyone in the UMass community will need to take action to conserve water. As you communicate with your student, encourage them to:

- **Limit showers to less than 5 minutes.** A 5-minute shower uses 12 gallons of water.
• **Turn off the faucet** when drying their hands, brushing their teeth, combing their hair, or putting on makeup. Leaving the water on while brushing teeth can waste a gallon of water.

• **Only wash full loads of laundry.** One load of laundry uses 15–50 gallons of water.

• **Report leaks** such as dripping faucets and pipes, running toilets, or pooling water by calling 413-545-0812 for residence halls. In academic/administrative buildings, call 413-545-6401 or use the [online service request form](#).

• **Off-campus students living in the Town of Amherst,** should follow the mandatory restrictions listed on the town’s [website](#).

For more information on the status of the drought in Massachusetts, visit the Commonwealth’s drought management [website](#). For the latest campus news about the drought and water saving tips, your student can visit [UMassSavesH2O](#) and monitor the university’s social media channels.

### Residence Hall Guest Policy

In an effort to ensure the safety and security of all residents and guests, the university will adjust the [residence hall guest policy](#) on upcoming Homecoming and Halloween weekends.

### Alcohol and drug policies

We take your student’s health and safety very seriously, and as members of the UMass Amherst community, we all share responsibility for creating an environment that reduces dangerous and risky drinking behaviors. All students are expected to comply with our alcohol and other drug [policies](#). Encourage your student to review the document and learn about the policies and the social, physiological, and psychological impacts of alcohol and drug abuse. We also invite you and your student to read the UMass [Student](#) and [Family](#) guides to learn about actions students can take to protect their own health and safety and that of their peers. For more information about alcohol and drug prevention, encourage your student to contact the [Center for Health Promotion](#).

### Getting involved

The more students view college as an opportunity to broaden their horizons and develop their interests, the more likely they are to succeed. After all, part of experiencing college life is to be involved and active outside the classroom. Students develop interpersonal and leadership skills through extracurricular activities, which are qualities often sought by future employers. With more than two hundred registered student organizations on campus, chances are good that one will match with their interests and talents! The Student Activities and Involvement Office and the Civic Engagement and Service-Learning Office sponsor programs throughout the year that build students’ networks, help them discover themselves, and help them get out of their comfort zones. To find out about student groups, encourage your student to visit [campus pulse](#); for details about campus activities, they can click on **Events** on the University’s main page.

During the semester, students also receive a weekly e-newsletter with timely information on activities, events, and involvement opportunities in the area. Encourage them to read this as well; it’s a great way to start exploring.

### Your student’s career starts now

Meeting with a Career Services representative at UMass Amherst can take place at any point in your student’s college career. Whether your student just enrolled or will graduate within the next year, encourage them to meet with a Career Services representative to clarify their interests and abilities. They should also attend one or more of Career Services’ fairs and internship information sessions throughout the year. Career Services offers a full range of career development and job-search support and can help your student develop the skills they need for a successful career after graduation. Encourage your student to check Career Services’ [online calendar](#) often for upcoming events.

Career Services is open Monday–Friday and offers walk-in peer assistance weekdays, 1–4 p.m. in Goodell 511. Students who need help with a resume or cover letter are welcome to stop in for a 15-minute session. No appointment necessary.

### Project Protect

Project Protect is a UMass Police Department initiative that allows students to register their valuable items and increase the chance they can be returned if lost or stolen. Once items are registered, students receive decals to place on them. Decals act as theft deterrents, alert finders of lost property that the item is
registered, and help police return recovered property. More information, including helpful tips, is available on the Project Protect webpage. Project Protect is only a small part of helping students to secure their valuables. Students should not leave laptops, smartphones, or other devices unattended in public areas. They should also get in the habit of locking their residence hall and apartment doors when they’re away, even if it’s for a few minutes.

UMAPA Advisory Council membership applications are due
The deadline to complete and email, fax, or mail your UMAPA Advisory Council membership application is Friday, September 30. Your active participation in the Council is a rewarding way to learn more about UMass and share in your student’s college years. We hope you’ll consider serving on the Council to help increase parent and family engagement at the University. Your involvement and participation in sponsored programs and services will help shape and improve your student’s undergraduate experience. Members serve a two-year term, attend two meetings per year, and participate in sponsored projects and volunteer activities. For more information about the Council and to complete the form, visit our website.

Don’t miss out on Family Weekend!
The 2016 Family Weekend is scheduled for October 21-23. This fun-filled, event-packed, memory-making weekend includes a variety of activities for the whole family. It’s a great opportunity for you to connect with your student. It’s also a way for you to continue to develop that same love and pride for UMass that your student has. Registration for this event is now open. Families who register after October 15 will be charged a late fee. For more information, or if you have questions, contact our office at familyweekend@umass.edu or 413-577-4444.

Follow us on Facebook
There are several ways for you to connect with our office and other UMass Amherst families. Through the Office of Parent Services Facebook page, you’ll receive helpful tips once a week and learn about our local vendors participating in the vendor discount program. Join the Family to Family Facebook group. If you wish to network with other UMass Amherst parents and families, share stories, ask questions, organize meetups, and lead discussion topics.

September Poll Question
What are you most interested in doing when visiting your student? Participate in the poll and view previous months’ results here.

Important dates

- September 24 – Mass Impact Day of Service, 8 a.m. – 5 p.
- September 30 – UMAPA Advisory Council membership application deadline
- October 1 – Homecoming
- October 10 – Columbus Day
- October 11 – Monday class schedule followed
- October 11 – Education abroad spring semester application deadline (click here for exceptions)
- October 21–23 – Family Weekend

Helpful links

- Academic calendar
- Campus Pulse
- Family Weekend
- Mail delivery in the residence halls
- Residential Life Student Services calendar
- Student Activities and Involvement
- UMass Amherst events
As always, if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the Office of Parent Services. Our office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. We are more than happy to assist you.

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.

Sincerely,
Jeanne Horrigan, Director
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UMass Amherst Family to Family blog and Facebook group

Treating Our Parents as Partners