Greetings from the Office of Parent Services!

Family Weekend is less than a week away - we hope you'll attend. We are getting ready for a wonderful weekend full of informative and engaging activities and a memorable experience for everyone. We've also nearly reached the mid-semester date. This message includes information on academic resources to help your students with mid-semester stress, room assignment changes, upcoming breaks, the Family Weekend Amherst Survival Center Food Drive, and much more.

Last day to drop a class with a 'W'

Thursday, Oct. 20 is the last day students can drop a course with a 'W' (for withdraw). If your student is considering withdrawing from a course, remind them to maintain a full-time status and strongly encourage them to meet with an academic advisor before withdrawing from any of their courses. Full-time status means your student is registered for a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester. Anything below 12 credits can impact their financial aid, athletic eligibility, health and car insurance benefits, graduation timeline, etc. Meeting with an advisor, meanwhile, helps ensure that they stay on track for graduation. Visit the Registrar's website for more information on academic policies.

Academic advising

Encourage your student to get to know their academic advisor and seek out help. Advisors are an excellent source of information on academic regulations, career exploration, and life after college, and can help your student find answers to any of their questions. Students often turn to their advisors for career advice, academic counseling, or letters of reference for scholarships, internships, or employment. Students can find their assigned advisor and contact information through SPIRE.

Mid-semester resources

As the middle of the semester approaches, some students may start to feel additional stress from coursework and midterm exams. There are many resources on campus that support students and can help them cope with stress.

- First-Year students have access to live-in Peer Mentors and academic support services at their Residential Academic Success Center (RASC).
- The Center for Counseling and Psychological Health offers individual and group support for students feeling stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed.
- The Center for Health Promotion (CHP) offers programs and events related to health and well-being. The CHP’s Peer Health Educators help students relax by bringing therapy dogs to campus during midterms and finals. The next Paws Program is Wednesday, October 19, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Student Union Ballroom. As with previous Paws events, there will be a few dogs on the W.E.B. Du Bois Library main floor as well.
- The Learning Resource Center in the W. E. B. Du Bois Library offers a regular tutoring schedule and supplemental instruction.
- The Writing Center provides resources to help students of all levels and all disciplines become better writers. Staff members help with all aspects of the writing process including brainstorming, refining ideas, and grammar.

Majors Fair

The annual Majors Fair is Wednesday, Oct. 26, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Representatives from more than 100 UMass departments come together at the Campus Center so undergraduates can explore their options. Whether your student

is seeking to declare a major, thinking about changing a major, or interested in exploring another subject area for a certificate, minor, or double major, encourage them to attend.

**Fight the flu – get vaccinated!**

Flu season is soon approaching, and now is the time for your student to get vaccinated! University Health Services offers walk-in flu clinics around campus and at the health center now through early December. Vaccinations are also available upon request during scheduled appointments. Immunizations are billed to your student’s health insurance; remind them to bring their plan ID card with them.

**Residential Life updates**

**Thanksgiving closing**

Residence Halls will close for Thanksgiving Break on Saturday, November 19 at 10:00 a.m. Students who have not vacated by 10:00 a.m. are subject to the $150 Unauthorized Occupancy fee. You can find all of the opening and closing times on the Living at UMass site. We encourage students and families who need to secure a plane or bus ticket to begin making travel plans now.

If your student is interested in remaining on campus in a Temporary Break Housing assignment, please have them contact Residential Life Student Services as soon as possible! Spaces are limited and will fill quickly!

**In-semester room assignment change**

Students have several options to attempt to change their room assignment during the semester: They can complete a person-for-person swap, a roommate pull-in, or submit a preference application to move to a vacant space on campus.

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**Family Weekend Countdown**

Have you registered for Family Weekend? If you have not registered yet, you can still do so online. Starting October 15, the registration fee will be $40 per family. The fee covers program materials, refreshments, and all non-ticketed events including the parents reception, late night movie, mini golf, laser tag, tours, wagon rides, pumpkin decorating, and trolley rides. We look forward to welcoming you back to campus.

**Family Weekend Food Drive to benefit the Amherst Survival Center**

The UMass Amherst Parents Association will hold its 3rd Annual Food Drive to benefit the Amherst Survival Center’s Food Pantry during Family Weekend Registration, on Friday, October 21 and on Saturday, October 22. The UMAPA’s goal is to collect 2000 pounds of non-perishable food. Please bring donations to the Campus Center Concourse.

The drive is especially seeking items for special Thanksgiving boxes including instant mashed potatoes, stuffing mix, and canned cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie filling, sweet potatoes, and soups. We are also accepting other essential items such as canned meats (tuna, chicken, salmon); canned and boxed meals (soup, chili, stew, macaroni and cheese); peanut butters and other nut butters; canned or dried beans and peas (black, pinto, lentils); pasta, rice, cereal; canned fruits and vegetables, 100% fruit or vegetable juice (canned plastic or boxed); coconut milk; and cooking oil. The Survival Center cannot accept items in glass jars or bottles. All donations will go directly to the Amherst Survival Center. Let’s continue our Family Weekend Spirit and hit our goal! We are grateful for your help.

**October Poll Question**

What are your student's goals for the fall semester? Participate in the poll and view previous months' results here.

**Important dates**

October 21-23: Family Weekend
October 20: Mid-semester; last day to drop classes with a 'W'
October 26: Majors Fair, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., Campus Center Auditorium
November 7: Spring 2017 registration begins
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, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We're more than happy to assist you.
In case of a campus emergency, always check the university's main webpage 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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Treating Our Parents as Partners