

October 31, 2018

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

Another Family Weekend is in the books. More than 4,000 family members attended and we collected 1,148 pounds of non-perishable foods for the Amherst Survival Center. You have made the event an absolute success and we hope you had as much fun as we did. A very big thank you to all the families who volunteered with us. We look forward to hosting you again next year.



November is here and it's a busy month for UMass. Spring course registration and Thanksgiving break are right around the corner. This email includes important steps students need to take before the semester ends.

Talking to your student about their academic progress

It's common for students to struggle to find balance between their academic and personal lives, especially if they are new to campus. For some students, this becomes apparent when they receive their first grade for an exam or project. For others, it can take a while. Talk with your student about their academics, the lessons they've learned thus far, and how they are managing their time and improving their study skills. Try these questions to begin the dialogue:

- What do you like best or least about your classes?
- Which of your classes is most or least interesting to you and why?
- Have you found a good place to study?
- What are some strategies you're using to manage your course workload?
- Are you aware of academic resources such as the Learning Resource and Writing Centers?
- What classes are you planning to take next semester?

Spring registration is here

Registration for Spring 2018 starts next week, on November 5. Encourage your student to continue working on their academic plan and to make an appointment with their academic advisor. They should prepare for their meeting with the advisor by mapping out a tentative schedule and generating a list of questions. Students can see their specific registration period or enrollment appointment (the date they can sign up for classes) on SPIRE.

Note: It's extremely important that students take the necessary steps to clear up any "To-Dos" or holds before registration begins. Failure to do so can impede registration. On the Hold Item page in SPIRE, your student can find information about registration holds (e.g. health education holds such as AlchohoEdu and YIS: Your Intervention Strategies for new students, parking tickets, library books, advising, etc.), which office placed the hold, steps to take to have it removed, and who to contact for more information. To-Do items do not affect registration, but may turn into holds if they're not completed.

New from Information Technology

IT has recently implemented a new feature in SPIRE allowing students to create guest wireless accounts for family and friends visiting campus so they can log on to the UMass wifi network without the student sharing their username and password. More information, including instructions on how your student can request a guest account through SPIRE, can be found on the IT [website](#).



Election Day: voting and class policy

All scheduled classes will be held on **Election Day** (Tuesday, November 6). University policy does not excuse absences for voting, so students should plan to vote early, by **absentee ballot**, or **before or after class** on Election Day. Students registered in Amherst can **vote early** at Town Hall, 4 Boltwood Avenue, November 1 – 2, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Those registered in other towns can find early voting options [here](#).

Thanksgiving and winter break

The Thanksgiving holiday is quickly approaching. If your student is returning home for the break, confirm departure and travel arrangements with them and encourage them to clean out their closet and bring home their summer clothing. If they are staying on or near campus, consider sending them a **care package**, hand-written note, an **e-postcard**, or set a time to video chat with them.

Please note, the residence halls will close for Thanksgiving break on November 17 at 10 a.m. and reopen November 25 at 10 a.m., for students who are not in break housing. All students must vacate the residence halls by the published closing time or they will be charged a \$150 improper check-out fee, no matter how long they've overstayed. Students in need of on-campus housing over break should contact Residential Life Student Services (413) 545-2100. For more information, review the [Residential Life closing website](#).

Transportation options for the holidays

During Thanksgiving break, demand for public transportation to and from the university increases significantly. Encourage your student to make travel reservations early and to arrive at the departing location 30 minutes to one hour prior to their scheduled departure time (depending on the mode of transportation). Peter Pan Bus Lines offers daily express service on certain routes and at certain times to major metro areas such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, with paperless boarding. Please visit the [Peter Pan website](#) for information. Amtrak rail service is also available from Northampton. UMass Transit, operated by the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority, offers free transportation from Amherst to Northampton with a valid UMass Amherst student ID. For more transportation information, visit the Office of Parent Service [transportation page](#).

Spring room selection

Students who are interested in making a change to their housing assignment have two options: 1) Spring Online Room Selection or 2) Spring Pull-In. If your student is considering an assignment change for spring, they can find more information on the [Residential Life website](#).

Host international students for Thanksgiving dinner

The International Programs Office (IPO) invites you to join their Thanksgiving Dinner Host Program once again. Many international students stay on campus during the Thanksgiving holiday and would love to have the opportunity to enjoy a traditional American Thanksgiving dinner with a UMass Amherst family. It's a great way to share our culture and for international students to strengthen their ties to our community. If you would like to host an international student on Thursday, November 22 for Thanksgiving Dinner, contact Pamela Dutta, Associate Director for International Students and Scholars Success, at dutta@umass.edu and please indicate the maximum number of students you can host. We appreciate your consideration and hospitality!



November polling question

Which of these academic resources have you encouraged your student to use? Participate in the poll and view previous results on the [OPS website](#).

Important dates

November 4: Daylight Saving Time ends
November 5: Spring 2019 registration begins
November 6: Election Day
November 11: Veterans Day
November 12: Campus closed (no classes)
November 14: Monday class schedule followed
November 17: Residence halls close for Thanksgiving break at 10 a.m.
November 25: Residence halls re-open at 10 a.m.
November 26: Classes resume

Links to UMass Amherst websites

[CMASS Success Coaching and Mentoring](#)
[Office of the Registrar](#)

Student Affairs and Campus Life
Student Employment Office

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,
Jeanne Horrigan, Director
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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

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