Greetings from the Office of Parent Services (OPS)!

February is a busy time, with Black History Month celebrations, fall housing selection, and a range of experiences and opportunities for all. This issue includes information on academics, internship and job fairs, fall room selection, Commencement, and more.

Celebrating Black History Month

It's Black History Month, and the UMass community is invited to learn about the rich history and culture of African Americans in Massachusetts, the United States, and our own campus by exploring the UMass Black Presence website and experiencing some of the university’s many educational and social events.

Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships can increase wellbeing and reduce stress. If your student is concerned about making friends and fitting in, experiencing roommate issues, or having difficulty balancing school and relationships, these relationship skill builders can help:

- Just Talk to Me – learn communication and healthy boundary setting in romantic relationships
- **Understanding Self & Others** – practice self-acceptance and explore new ways of relating
- **Tuning In to Your Emotions** – identify and communicate your emotions to increase connection with yourself and others
- **Overcoming Social Anxiety** – learn to cope with self-criticism to make friends, start conversations, and maintain relationships
- **First-Year Support Group** – create community and address feelings of isolation with people who get it
- **Check In Before Checking Out** – learn grounding techniques to help you stay present

For more healthy relationship resources, visit the [Center for Counseling and Psychological Health](#) and [Center for Women and Community](#).

### Career Development

**Career Development & Professional Connections** consists of a central office and career centers within schools and colleges. They help students with self-assessment, career exploration, writing resumes and cover letters, interviewing, and more. Whether your student is just starting to explore or ready to launch their career, encourage them to **meet with a career advisor** to plan their next steps.

#### Explore Career Resources

- **Handshake** – Find jobs, internships, and co-ops; connect to recruiting events, fairs, workshops and career resources!
- **Career and Internship Fair Calendar** – Search upcoming career events, including [Career Blast 2022](#) Virtual Job and Internship Fair, Wednesday February 23
- **Connect UMass** – An alumni network for conversations, mentoring, job referrals, and more.

### Get to Know UMass Education Abroad

- Check out their [Getting Started Guide](#).
- Take the program matching quiz on the new [UMass Abroad Portal](#).
- Visit the [Advising Center](#) during drop-in hours or by appointment.
- Attend the [Education Abroad Fair](#), Thursday, February 24.
- Explore info sessions for countries including Australia (borders are opening for fall), New Zealand (opening spring 2023), and Fiji.
- Submit UMass Abroad applications for summer, fall, and next academic year by April 1.

**Commencement 2022**

We look forward to celebrating our spring 2022, summer and fall 2021 graduates at Commencement, May 12-14. All family members and friends are welcome to attend. No tickets are required, and seating is first come, first served. See the full schedule of events and subscribe to Commencement email updates to stay informed and get ready for the big weekend.

Preorder a yearbook

For the first time in 16 years, UMass Amherst’s student yearbook, The Index, will be available in a hardcover print edition. Preorder your copy by March 15 for $30.

**Five Ways to Find Balance at UMass**

College wellbeing starts with balancing exercise, stress management and a healthy diet with academics and social life. If your student is feeling out of balance, these tips can help:

1. Work out, take classes or join spring intramurals at Campus Rec (students have free access)
2. Attend a student event or res hall activity
3. Build time management and study skills with a Success Toolkit workshop
4. Get a nutritional consult or wellbeing assessment
5. Pet dogs at the next Paws Program event, Monday February 28

**Housing Selection: Fall 2022**
Living on campus

Campus options include apartments, suites, shared rooms, singles, and economy triples. The deadline for applying to live in a Defined Residential Community is February 20. For all other spaces, including CHCRC, students must request a room selection appointment by March 21. Students who miss these deadlines may not be able to get campus housing for next year.

Living off campus

Students who plan to live off campus can:

- Visit the Off Campus Housing website to find apartments, roommates, and an updated list of local rental rates.
- Shop for housing, get deals and prizes, at the Off Campus Housing Fair, Thursday, March 31 from 11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. in the Campus Center Auditorium.
- Find emergency planning, fire safety, renter’s insurance, and budgeting resources on the Off Campus Life website (and follow @umassocso).
- Visit the Off Campus Student Center to use the fridge, find a quiet place to study, and attend great events: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., 103 Bartlett Hall.
- Learn about Good Neighbor Registration and the new Good Neighbor Grant program.
- Watch for Team Positive Presence and Walk this Way street outreach teams for tips and giveaways.

Residence Halls Close for Spring Break

Except for break housing, residence halls close 10 a.m. Saturday, March 12 until 10 a.m. Sunday, March 20. To inquire about break housing, email living@umass.edu.

Tips for your student:

- Pack carefully! You won’t be able to return over break for items you forget.
- Leave on time – late departures will be assessed a $150 fee.
- Bring home extra clothing and items you won’t be needing this spring.

Family Weekend 2022
Family Weekend is an annual fall tradition: a time to connect with your student, the university, and the local community. This year’s dates are Friday, October 14 – Sunday, October 16. Undergraduates and their families, including siblings, extended family, and supporters, are welcome. Details will be available in August. Mark your calendar and make your hotel reservation.

Conversation Starters

Supportive and consistent messages and discussions about college life can play a significant role in a student’s college success and development. Here are some questions to continue meaningful conversations with your student:

- What are your plans for spring break?
- Have you attended events that challenged your thinking or exposed you to a new culture or social view? What did you learn?
- Have you considered applying for a leadership position?
- Have you thought about where you would like to live next semester?

February Polling Question

Which of these Advocacy, Inclusion and Support services are you familiar with? Participate in the poll and view previous results on the OPS website.

Important Dates

February 21: Presidents’ Day (no classes)
February 22: Monday class schedule followed
February 23: Career Blast 2022: Virtual Job and Internship Fair for all majors, noon – 6 p.m.
February 24: Education Abroad Fair, 4-6 p.m., Campus Center Auditorium
March 1: FAFSA priority deadline
March 12: Residence halls close for spring break at 10 a.m.
March 13-20: Spring recess
March 20: Residence halls reopen at 10 a.m.
March 21: Classes resume
March 29: Mid-semester date (last day to drop with “W” and select “P/F”)
March 31: Off Campus Housing Fair, 11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m., Campus Center Auditorium

Links to UMass Amherst Websites

Events Calendar
Koru Mindfulness Course
Registered Student Organizations
Student Veteran Resource Center

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 to navigate college 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, Director
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In case of a campus emergency, visit the university’s homepage at umass.edu. The site will display a distinctly colored banner at the top containing status updates and emergency information.