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

February is a very busy month on campus, with housing applications, a multitude of career events appropriate for all students, and an enormous range of opportunities for learning and experience across campus. We hope your student continues to work hard and get all they can out of the next few months. This issue includes information on academics, internship and job fairs, fall semester room selection, Commencement, and more.

Health, safety, and code of conduct communications

At UMass we take students’ health and safety very seriously and we want to collaborate with you to help ensure their well-being and success. As a parent or family member, you play an important role in influencing your student’s health and safety choices and identifying warning signs. Several emails were sent to students last month to address health and safety and our community standards on these issues. We encourage you to talk to your student about personal safety and behavior and point them to the many resources on campus.

Flu and Meningococcal B (Bexsero or Trumenba) Vaccine

Influenza (Flu) is on campus and in our community and many students have not completed their Men B vaccinations. It’s not too late to get flu and Meningococcal B vaccines if they haven’t already. Vaccines are available at University Health Services (UHS); students can call (413) 577-5101 for an appointment. Students can also request shots during scheduled appointments. Costs are billed to insurance; remind your student to bring their insurance card to the visit. Learn more about staying healthy now and throughout the semester on the UHS website.

Spring career activities

Internships and part-time jobs are great résumé builders and the spring semester is a good time to look for summer positions. UMass uses an online system called Handshake for students to find opportunities. We also host many career fairs for students of all levels, majors, and interests to meet employers seeking to fill both full-time job and internship positions. For upcoming events, including the Career Blast Job and Internship Fair (February 13, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.) and the Summer Jobs Fair (March 6, 12 noon–3 p.m.), students can go into Handshake or visit the Career Services website.

We appreciate partnering with you in encouraging your student to take advantage of any career events that interest them. Students should dress professionally and bring an updated résumé to these events. Central Career Services offers walk-in résumé reviews, Monday–Friday, 1–4 p.m. in Goodell 511; no appointment is necessary.

Undergraduate Commencement Ceremonies

Come celebrate the accomplishments of our graduating seniors May 9–11! Events include the 149th Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony, Senior Recognition Ceremonies, ROTC Commissionings, and more. Eligible graduates (all Spring 2019, Summer and Fall 2018 graduates) are welcome to invite family and friends. Seating is based on a first come, first served basis. No tickets are required. Visit the 2019 Undergraduate Commencement website for the latest information.

How to help your student decide on a major

Choosing a major is a big step toward graduation, but the process will vary from student to student. Some may choose a major in the first year, while others may change their major(s) multiple times. As a parent or family member, it may be difficult for you to step back and allow your student to make this decision. It may take some trial and error before your student settles on something concrete, and it might not be the major you have in mind for them. Regardless of your student’s situation, it’s important not to pressure them to make a decision sooner than necessary. Also, please keep in mind that choosing a major is not the same as choosing a career; your student’s choice does not necessarily determine their future.
Suggest that they explore subjects that would be a good fit for their interests, values, skills, and goals. Their passion for a particular major shouldn’t be the only thing that drives them—they should also feel passionate about the required classes, know why they want that particular major, and have ideas of how they plan to use it in the future.

If your student does not have any specific major or career path in mind, they should set up an appointment with a career advisor in their college/school to assess their interests and abilities and learn about different career options.

Making the most of the UMass college experience
College is a place where students will mature intellectually and socially if they embrace particular behaviors and attitudes. As you communicate with your student, encourage them to fully engage in their college experience and operate with a growth-mindset. Here are some insights to share with them and ways you can show support.

- We are a community of learners and everyone has something to contribute and something to learn. Encourage your student to be modest and respectful, embrace the world around them, and welcome other people’s points of view.
- It takes a while for some students to transition to college life. Successful college students are those who ask faculty, mentors, advisors, classmates, and friends for help. Challenges should not be seen as failures, but as opportunities to learn, grow, and develop new skills.
- No one should go through their college years regretting not taking full advantage of the college experience. Whether it is courses, guest lectures, student activities, community service, organizations, or field trips, remind your student to try something they have never done before.
- Establishing new friendships in college is important, but students should choose thoughtfully and find friends who will help them succeed.
- While UMass maintains a healthy and safe environment, with resources to help students succeed at all levels of their development, it is ultimately their responsibility to take advantage of these and behave responsibly.

Living on and off campus for Fall 2019
Now is the time to start talking to your student about on- and off-campus housing for next year. There are many living options across campus in apartments, suites, shared rooms, and single rooms. The on-campus option your student is looking for will determine which of our three Online Room Selection processes they use. Be sure your student is familiar with the upcoming timelines. Missing a deadline will significantly limit the options your student has for on-campus housing.

February 17 – last day to submit an application for a Defined Residential Community
February 28 – last day to request an appointment in SPIRE for Apartments and Suites
March 18* – last day to request an appointment in SPIRE for Single and Shared Rooms

*Students who miss the last appointment request deadline may not be able to get on-campus housing.

For more detailed information visit Fall Room Selection.

Students who plan to live off campus next fall should:

- Log onto the Off Campus Housing website to find a place to live and/or someone to live with.
- Shop for off-campus apartments and get special deals and prizes at the Off Campus Housing Fair, March 20, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Campus Center Concourse.
- Access resources for off-campus issues on the Off Campus Life website, including emergency planning, fire safety, renter’s insurance info, and budgeting. Follow us on social media at UMassOCSC.
- Visit the NEW Off Campus Student Center to use the fridge, grab free coffee, use pay-to-print printers, and attend great events: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m., 103 Bartlett Hall.
- Stop by Bartlett 103 to pick up a free UMass Academic Planner with important dates and resources for students planning to or already living off campus.
- Watch for Team Positive Presence/Walk this Way, the OCSC street outreach team with timely tips and giveaways.

Residence halls close for spring break
All undergraduate residence halls, except break housing halls, will close Saturday, March 9 at 10 a.m. and reopen Sunday, March 17 at 10 a.m. Students and families are encouraged to make travel plans accordingly. Those who do not vacate their residence hall by closing time will be assessed a $150 unauthorized
occupancy fee. Students who require on-campus housing over break can email Residential Life Student Services at living@umass.edu.

**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 13:** Career Blast fair: campus wide job and internship fair, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Campus Center, lower level
- **February 18:** Presidents’ Day (no classes)
- **February 19:** Monday class schedule followed
- **February 27:** Paws program, 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Campus Center Auditorium and W.E.B. Du Bois Library
- **March 1:** FAFSA priority deadline
- **March 6:** Summer jobs and internship fair, noon – 3 p.m., Goodell Building, 5th floor lounge
- **March 9:** Residence halls close for spring break at 10 a.m.
- **March 17:** Residence halls reopen at 10 a.m.
- **March 18:** Classes resume
- **March 19:** Mid-semester date (last day to drop with “W” and select “P/F”)
- **March 20:** Off Campus Housing Fair, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Campus Center Concourse

**Links to UMass Amherst websites**
- Events Calendar
- Mindfulness
- Registered Student Organizations
- Veteran Student Resource Center

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, Assistant Director
Office of Parent Services
Knowlton Hall
691 North Pleasant Street OFC
University of Massachusetts Amherst
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.