

IMPORTANT
DATES TO
REMEMBER:

- Sept. 10
Job Fair
- Sept. 22-27
Homecoming
- Oct. 13
Spring Semester course
schedule available online
- Oct. 17-19
Family Weekend
- Oct. 22
Majors Fair
- Oct. 24
No Classes
- Nov. 10
First day of spring term
registration
- Nov. 12
Deadline to withdraw
from individual course
- Nov. 26
Deadline for withdrawal
from University
- Nov. 26
No night classes
- Nov. 27-28
No Classes-Thanksgiving
- Dec. 8-12
Final Exams
- Dec. 14-Jan. 11
Winter Break

QUESTIONS,
COMMENTS
OR
CONCERNS?

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PARENT SERVICES

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Family Connections

A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS OF MINNESOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY MANKATO STUDENTS

Handling Homesickness

The start of college is filled with mixed emotions. Students are both excited and anxious about the prospect of the first year and its many challenges. This year, as in year's past many of us at Minnesota State are helping students deal with homesickness. So as a parent what's the best way to handle homesickness?

Here are some ideas:

- **Allow your student to be/feel homesick.**
Recognize that being homesick is a natural and normal process that occurs during the transition to college. Students are often embarrassed by the emotion of homesickness, viewing it as a sign of immaturity. Major life changes can be traumatic, so remind your

student that they will get through this major life change.

- **Remind them to keep busy.**

If students have activities and events to keep them busy, they have less time to miss home. Finding things to do at MSU will not be difficult. Each Wednesday night in the residence halls there will be an event to attend. Students should watch for postings on bulletin boards in their residence communities or check out www.boredboard.com for a list of upcoming campus events.

- **Encourage them to make friends.**

It may take awhile for your student to meet people they truly bond with, but in the meantime, they should make an effort to get to know as many people as they can.

..... Adapted from Suite 101.com

- **Encourage good roommate communication.**
Roommates do not need to be best friends, but they do need to communicate what they need from each other. Ask your student about their roommate relationship and remind them that they'll need to work at being a good roommate.
- **Stay in touch with your student.**
Family members are still (and will always be) a major part of a student's life. Call and email your student and let them talk about how they are feeling. Send care packages. A visit home can help with homesickness, but don't encourage your student to come home too often (no matter how much you miss them). Frequent visits home will only.....**continued on pg.2**

Supporting your New Adult

Rochelle Ament, Parent Services Coordinator

Today's college students welcome their parents into their college experience.

Research compiled by the National Survey of Student Engagement revealed that almost 40 percent of freshmen have had a parent or guardian intervene on their behalf to

solve a problem at college.

Parents of first-year students are often confused about how to respond when their student calls with a problem.

Should they just listen and offer support? Should they get on the phone and call the

dean? Should they visit campus and seek immediate relief?

As college administrators, we help first-year parents understand their new roles as a mentor or facilitator — listening, providing encouragement, ..**continued on page 2**

Handling Homesickness

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cause your student to have trouble integrating into their new life.

- **Make sure your student knows their community advisor.**

Each floor in the residence communities has a student in charge who can help students get adjusted to college. If your student feels overwhelmed, they should stop by for a chat.

- **If needed, try having your student talk to a counselor.**

If homesickness is making it difficult for your student to function in college, take advantage of the Counseling Center. Homesickness is a very common problem, and professionals at the

Counseling Center know how to help.

- **Decorate.**

Pictures, mementos and other reminders of home are great ways to decorate the residence hall room and add a touch of home.

- **Try to encourage your student to avoid rash decisions.**

When people are depressed or overwhelmed, they sometimes make big decisions that are unwise. This is not the time to drop out, transfer to a different school, end a long term relationship, or anything else of major consequence.

Encourage your student to wait until the homesickness period passes before they make major and life changing decisions.

- **Give it time.**

It may take a semester or even more for a student to stop feeling homesick. It takes time to adjust to major life changes like this one. Support them and encourage them to hang in there!

Parents should know that they can always call the Parent Services Coordinator, Rochelle Ament, to brainstorm further ways the university can assist their student in managing and overcoming homesickness.

Advice for Living with a Roommate

Torin Akey, Associate Director for Residential Life

(Reprinted from Sept. 2007 Family Connections Newsletter)

Living with another person is always an adjustment. Attending college is an adjustment. And, since living with someone else in a residence hall room combines both elements, it is likely that there will be days when your student is "getting along great" with their roommate and days they wished their roommate moved out.

What should you do if your student is describing their current roommate experience as less than ideal?

Listen with the intent of listening rather than problem solving.

Conflicts are inevitable as both students adjust to this living experience and have different

needs, values, likes and dislikes. Your student may simply want to vent to you or the experience they are sharing is simply a "sound byte" of their day or week. Avoid volunteering to intervene; your student may tell you less about their experiences in the future if that is your first reaction. **Continued on page 3.**

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Supporting your New Adult

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brainstorming options and putting responsibility for decision-making on the student. This role is in stark contrast to the "quick fix" approach, where the parent takes command of a situation and seeks an immediate resolution.

Parents can help their students by striking a balance between appropriate involvement and interfer-

ence.

Have confidence in your parenting skills and realize you have set the foundation for your student to go on to the next stage of life. By sharing with your student your expectations and the potential consequences of the choices your student makes about personal safety, alcohol, and dealing with new freedoms, you can have an effect on your student's development well be-

yond the college years.

Minnesota State has many support services available — tutoring center, counseling and career development center, student health — but many first-year students are reluctant to seek them out. One of the most important things parents can do is encourage students to identify and use campus resources.

When colleges and parents work together to create a positive climate of parental involvement, students benefit.

Family Weekend Oct. 17-19, 2008

Join us for Family Weekend, October 17 – 19!

We have a variety of activities planned for all interests – academic college events, student presentations, a 5k fun run/walk, movies, Family Olympics, a family-friendly comedian, tours and much more! Visit www.mnsu.edu/familyweekend for a complete schedule and hotel information. You can also let your student know you are coming (or just to say “hi”) by sending a virtual postcard!

For maps and directions to campus, visit www.mnsu.edu/maps/directions/. Free parking will be available in any gold, purple or green lot starting at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, October 17.



A Reminder from Student Health Services:

All students are required to have updated records for the mumps, measles, rubella, tetanus and diphtheria vaccines. Health Services also recommends students get the following vaccinations:

- Flu
- Meningitis
- Gardasil (females)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- TDaP (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis)

Student Health Services can also provide allergy shots and travel vaccinations.

Contact Student Health Services for more information at (507) 389-6276.

Advice for Living with a Roommate

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Ask your student how they have brought this conflict to the attention of their roommate.

Instant Messaging or sending an email is not an effective way to deal with conflicts. Encourage your student to share face-to-face with their roommate their concern and what they need in this shared space to be successful.

In my experience, most reoccurring roommate conflicts occur when students choose not to talk about their concerns with their roommate or try to be “too nice” when discussing their individual needs. At the beginning of the year, your student received a roommate agreement and they were encouraged to engage in a dialogue about these common sources of conflicts. Some students completed them while others threw them away. When you are hearing of a conflict, encourage your student to revisit the agreed upon expectations or, if they didn’t complete a roommate agreement, encourage them to

pick up another one at the front desk of their residential hall.

Ask your student how you can help.

Do they want to practice their roommate conversation with you? Do they want your advice and guidance? Do they want you to ask them how the conversation went next time you talk? Recognize that how you want to help and how they want you to help them may be different. “Letting Go” and “Letting (your student) Grow” is difficult at times; however, helping your student to develop conflict resolution skills will provide them benefits in many future environments.

Ask your student what resources they know about.

The Community Advisor (CA) can help mediate roommate conflicts and the Complex Director can help when the conflict involves a policy violation. Room changes also can give your student a “fresh start” in a different environment. Students can find out what rooms are available by speaking with the Administrative Assistant at the front desk of their residential hall.

As you help your student navigate their college transition and find yourself stuck, needing advice, or wanting to know a “next step” please contact the Residential Life Office at 389-1011.

