**Family Connections**

**A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS OF MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MANKATO STUDENTS**

**Re-applying for Financial Aid for 2008-2009**

Jan. 1 was the first day that students planning to attend college next fall may submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and begin the financial aid application process. Students and families should submit their FAFSA early to reduce the amount they spend out of pocket to pay for college.

The federal government, state governments and higher education institutions each award financial aid -- which includes need- and non-need-based grants, scholarships, work-study and student loans -- to students and rely on the student's FAFSA information when making award determinations. By submitting the FAFSA before state and institution deadlines, students maximize their chances of receiving all of the gift aid -- financial aid that does not have to be repaid, such as grants and scholarships -- to which they are entitled.

Students and families who are looking to cover the cost of higher education first to determine what they can contribute from college savings and current income, and then to follow its 1-2-3 approach to paying for college. Students and their parents can complete the application on the Web in as little as an hour or two gathering relevant documents and information, before going online to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to complete the application.

Students need to submit a FAFSA every year they are in college. Students who are already attending college and who submitted the FAFSA last year may submit a Renewal FAFSA after Jan. 1. The Renewal FAFSA form is streamlined to reduce the number of questions the student must complete, and many answers are pre-populated with information from the student's previous FAFSA. A few tips when looking to pay for a college education.

1. **Find free money first.** Apply for financial aid that does not have to be repaid, such as scholarships and grants, by completing the FAFSA.
2. **Exhaust federal student loans.** Consider borrowing under the federally subsidized student loan programs, which provide the most consumer-friendly loan rates, benefits, and repayment options for students and parents.
3. **Use private student loans as a last resort, and only to fill any remaining funding gap.**

For more information on applying for or re-applying for financial aid visit the Student Financial Services webpage at: [www.mnsu.edu/campushib](http://www.mnsu.edu/campushib) or the FAFSA website at: [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

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**Long Distance T.L.C.**

Offering advice and assistance to your student when they are away at college can be challenging. What happens when your student calls to tell you they don’t feel well? How can a parent provide TLC when you and your student are separated by many miles?

You can begin by encouraging your student to keep basic self-care items on hand:

A first aid kit should include bandages, antibiotic ointment, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and medications for a cold. It’s also a good idea to have a digital thermometer and a cold pack (to reduce swelling after a fall).

It’s common for college students to get several upper respiratory infections each year and the TLC you provided your child when they were young will still work—they just need to apply it themselves. Remind your student of the things they can do to feel better:

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Be sure to get enough sleep
- Stay warm and use a humidifier
- Soothe a sore throat by gargling with warm salt water or drinking warm water with lemon and honey
- Try chicken soup to break up chest and nasal congestion

Consider sending your student a TLC care package that includes sore throat lozenges, instant soup packets, crackers, honey-lemon tea, etc.

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**Rental Life: The Real Story**

JANUARY 2008
Mavericks Making a Difference through Campus Kitchen

Sammie Eckerson-Campus Kitchens Coordinator

The Campus Kitchen Project is a groundbreaking initiative that brings colleges and universities together with student volunteers, on-campus dining services professionals, and community organizations to combat hunger in cities across the United States.

Campus Kitchen Mankato serves over 300 meals per week to the 19% of Mankato families, adults, and children in need. Mankato community partners include the ECHO Food Shelf, Salvation Army, Partners for Affordable Housing, The Theresa House, and The Welcome Inn. The Campus Kitchen Project is led by over 3,000 college student volunteers—who truly make CKP tick.

MSU student volunteer Eric Lain-left says “Campus Kitchen is an absolutely amazing program. It has given me an excellent opportunity to volunteer my time delivering food to families. This is the most rewarding community service I have ever done.”

“Campus Kitchens is one of the most helpful programs we have on our campus. We are not only helping people in the community but we are helping students become better people. It has made a difference in my life. Just think about everyone else!”

– MSU Student Volunteer

“The students who volunteer their time each week to help members of the local community are gaining experience and knowledge that cannot be learned by simply sitting in a classroom.”

– MSU Service-Learning Student Jenny Strese.

Perhaps this Chinese Proverb offers the best food for thought:

“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

Study Abroad—Yes, You Can!

Caryn Lindsay-Director of International Programs

Study abroad no longer means only a full semester or year away studying in a foreign language. MSU students can participate in international summer internships, short-term programs led by MSU faculty during semester breaks, two week to four month language intensive programs or the traditional student exchange for a semester or a year. Where has your student dreamed of going? We can make it happen safely and in line with your budget.

Did you know that students who study abroad are more likely to graduate within four years than other students? It’s true! An overseas study experience requires planning ahead for classes both on campus and overseas. This translates into a well-chosen path towards graduation that integrates a unique and incredible learning opportunity.

Why should you and your student consider study abroad?

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Study Abroad—Yes, You can

It can give your student an edge in the employment market.
Employers identify confidence, flexibility, problem-solving experience, as well as language and cultural understanding, as key characteristics they look for in potential employees. Study abroad has been proven to increase students’ skills in each of these areas. Returning MSU students have shared with pride the satisfaction they feel after learning to maneuver through the Paris Metro, or the ancient streets of Rome! Such skills are perfect for adapting to a new workplace: learning when and how to ask questions, what paperwork needs to be completed, how to recognize differing expectations, etc.

International study exposes students to new people, places and ideas.
Watching local news makes it clear that Minnesota is no longer protected from the potential impact of a bumper Brazilian soybean crop, unrest in West Africa or the rise and fall of the dollar’s value. A first-hand experience with this new reality at an early age can change a student’s understanding of the world and its complexities forever. Plus, travel is never cheaper than when one is a student and can take advantage of significant discounts offered around the world.

Important facts:

● MSU international programs are all credit-bearing experiences.
● All financial aid can be applied and increased financial aid can be requested to cover additional costs.
● Foreign language skills are not required.

What is the next step?
Come visit the International Center in CSU 250 to begin exploring how we can turn this possibility into a reality for your student! We look forward to meeting you!

The Dish from Dining Services

The Red Carpet where students will receive the “star treatment” from the moment they enter the dining room through the V.I.P entrance until they leave with some great prizes; students will feel as though they’ve just been to the ultimate Oscar party.

February is the ideal month to recognize the people, heritage, cuisine and culture that is New Orleans. A celebration of the Crescent City, along with Black History Month, is the perfect way to give our students a little release from the pressures of college life.

March marks the arrival of Spring Break as well as National Nutrition Month, and what better way to celebrate than with a little salsa and sunshine? Salsa in South Beach is the perfect event to get students to eat right and exercise while they enjoy some of the South Beach lifestyle.

Students can look forward to an array of healthy menu options that are sure to refresh and refuel after an exciting evening of salsa, salsa, and more salsa. We think a Picnic in the Park is the perfect way to celebrate another fantastic year of good and fun events which will take place in April.

We invite our students to experience the great outdoors with some great games, prizes, and more. In addition, students can look forward to a menu of delicious, picnic-style foods as part of the experience.

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For more information about University Dining Services please visit our website at www.mnsu.edu/dining.
Long Distance T.L.C.

extra-soft tissues, antimicrobial hand gel, lip balm, and a healthy treat. Think about items your student would appreciate and include them in the care package (I always loved my mom’s Special K bars).

Your student will have to navigate some of the demands of college life when sick so you may want to remind them to:

- Seek out the help and support of others such as roommates, friends, or their Community Advisor.
- Email professors to let them know if they will miss class due to illness. This can be extremely helpful for both the professor and student (a note from a parent doesn’t work anymore!).
- Call employers. This is a necessary courtesy if a student works and employers appreciate the chance to find replacement workers.
- Bring insurance information if they seek medical help. Sometimes an upper respiratory illness requires more than good old-fashioned TLC. Your student should seek professional medical advice if he/she:
  - has difficulty breathing
  - feels faint
  - has a severe sore throat
  - has a cough that produces a lot of phlegm
  - has a fever of 102°F or higher with a cold, or 104°F or higher with the flu
  - has symptoms for more than 10 days
  - has a fever with shaking chills
  - has a sharp chest pain when breathing deeply or coughing
  - suffers from a condition that puts them at risk for complications

If it turns out that your student needs medical attention, Student Health Services at Minnesota State can provide illness and injury diagnosis, treatment, and pharmacy services. Students can call 507-389-6276 to schedule an appointment.

In an emergency, students can call 911 or Campus Security at 2111.

Parents, You’re Not Done Yet!

Although teens sometimes seem to have one foot out the door, parents STILL MATTER and you can help your student make decisions not to drink, smoke, or use other drugs. Nobody said parenting was easy. The more independent your student gets the more you may feel yourself caught between wanting to hold on and getting ready to let go.

Many parents feel that their student’s drinking is no different than the drinking they did as a young adult. That isn’t necessarily true. We are seeing increased blood alcohol levels and trends such as energy drinks mixed with liquor that enable higher, more dangerous blood alcohol levels in young people.

The City of Mankato and Minnesota State University, Mankato are working hard to address excessive alcohol use. With recent ordinances passed on drink specials and social host laws, Mankato has spent the last year gathering data on what will work in this community.

MSU has received federal funding to implement a comprehensive social norms campaign coupled with alternative activities to help change perception and gives students fun alternatives to do late at night. But we need your help.

What Can You Do About College Drinking?

Set Expectations — think through your own expectations about your teen’s behavior in college. Be clear about your stance on alcohol and other drugs, including any consequences you will impose if your rules are broken. Try to avoid posing restrictions like putting off paying their tuition. They are asking for help, and removing access to education isn’t going to get them the help they need. Be sure your expectations are reasonable, well thought-out, and convey trust and support. Communicate these expectations to your student well before he or she leaves for college.

Discuss some of the misperceptions your teen may have about college.

Drinking — Make sure your student knows that many college students DON’T drink and that there are plenty of other ways to get involved on campus without copious amounts of alcohol. More information can be found at www.katoparty411.com.

Party Hosting — While you may think you’re protecting your son or daughter by allowing drinking at home or offering to host parties where alcohol is being served, you’re not. Not only are you condoning illegal behavior you’re sending a mixed message to your child.

In Minnesota, you can be held accountable for serving alcohol to a minor. There are two ways you can be held liable for hosting underage drinking parties - criminal and civil liability. Criminal liability involves a statutory prohibition enforced by the State through criminal proceedings that can lead to sanctions such as fines or imprisonment. Civil liability involves an action by a private party seeking monetary damages for injuries that result from permitting underage drinking on the host’s premises.