

# **PARENTS**

## **GUIDE TO SURVIVING THE FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE**



**University of Louisville  
Office of Student Affairs**

WELCOME to the University of Louisville family! We are delighted that your student has chosen UofL as the next step in his or her education!

As part of the UofL family, we encourage you to become an active partner with us as we engage your student in the pursuit of excellence in and out of the classroom. During orientation, you will receive information about academic and campus life programs in which your son or daughter will have the opportunity to participate. We are proud to offer many educational, leadership, and social opportunities in which your student can become involved at the University. We know from our research that students who are actively involved not only in the classroom experience but also in programs and organizations offered by our Campus Life Departments are the most satisfied with their overall college experience and have more academic success than students who choose not to become involved. Please encourage your student to get involved in programs of interest to them!

Feel free to ask any and all questions that come to mind while you are going through the parent orientation program. We have faculty, staff and current students available to discuss all aspects of your student's enrollment. Please do not leave campus without having all of your questions answered!

Our UofL community would like to extend a warm welcome to you and your student, and we look forward to meeting each of you during orientation.

## PARENTING A COLLEGE FRESHMAN

Your student, along with two million others, is about to enter a time that is both exciting and frightening, a period of joy, pain, discovery and disappointment all at once. These students are beginning an important four years of their lives. You are also entering this transition period with your son or daughter. You'll experience the same successes, joys, happiness – and defeats - as they do—second hand, but just as vividly.

We have provided in this document some guidelines that will assist you as your student embarks on this important journey. We are certain these guidelines will assist you with the transition as the relationship with your son or daughter continues to grow and enrich your lives.

The following suggestions are:

A. Purposely subjective

B. Written by a recently graduated student who thinks she knows everything about college, and therefore doesn't.

C. Based mostly on careful observations of mistakes and/or breakthroughs made by her parents and the parents of her friends.

### **Rule No.1—Don't Ask Them if They're Homesick**

The power of suggestion can be a powerful message. The first few weeks of school are activity-packed, and the challenges of meeting new people and adjusting to new situations takes a lot of time and energy. Unless they are asked about homesickness, they will most likely escape the feelings of loneliness during those first weeks. Even if they don't mention it during those first few weeks, they do miss you.

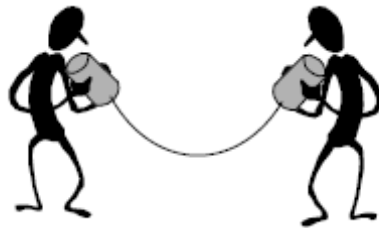
### **Rule No. 2—Write (Even if They Don't Write Back)**

Although freshmen are typically eager to experience all the away-from home independence they can in those first weeks, most are still anxious for family ties and the security those ties bring. Although most freshmen do not admit it, they enjoy some news of home and family. There is nothing more depressing than a week of empty mailboxes. Warning—do not expect a reply to every letter that you write.

### **Rule No. 3—Ask Questions (But Not Too Many)**

College freshmen are “cool” (or so they think) and may have a tendency to resist interference with their newfound lifestyle; however, most desire the security of knowing that someone still loves and supports them, and is there when they need them.

Parental questions can give relief and support or alienate, depending on your approach. Honest inquiries and other positive communication and discussion will do a great deal to further the parent-freshman relationship. The “I-have-a-right-to-know” approach should be avoided.



### **Rule No. 4—Expect Change (But Not Too Much)**

Your student will change. It is part of the student development process. It's natural, inevitable, and it can be inspiring and beautiful. At the same time, however, it can be difficult for both you and your student. College and the experiences associated with it can affect changes in social, vocational, and personal behavior and choices. You can't stop change, you may not even understand it, but it is within your power to accept it.

Remember that your freshman will basically be the same person you sent away to school, Don't expect too much, too soon.

### **Rule No. 5—Don't Worry (Too Much) About Depressed Phone Calls or Letters**

Often troubles become overwhelming for a freshman: a disappointing test grade, a relationship that has ended, and a shrunken UofL red T-shirt that turned all of their white laundry PINK -- all in one day! The only place to turn, write, or dial is home. Often, unfortunately, this is the only time that the urge to communicate is felt so strongly, so you never get to hear about the “A” paper, the new boyfriend, or the great student organization that he/she has joined.

During these “crises,” your student may want to unload troubles or tears, and, usually after the initial impact, will return to routine, relieved and enlightened. Be patient with those nothing-is-going-right-I-hate-this-place-phone calls or letters. You're providing a real service as an advice dispenser, sympathetic ear or punching bag. Parenting can be a thankless job—so hang in there.

### **Rule No. 6—Visit (But Not Too Often)**

Visits by parents (especially when accompanied by shopping sprees and/or dinners out) are another part of the first-year events that freshmen are reluctant to admit liking, but would appreciate greatly. Pretended disdain of these visits is just another part of the first year experience.

These visits give the student a chance to introduce some of the important people in both worlds (home and school) to each other. Additionally, it's a way for parents to become more familiar with and more understanding of their student's activities, commitments and friends.

### **Rule No. 7—Do Not Tell Your Students That “These Are The Best Years of Their Lives”**

Freshman year (and the other three as well) can be full of indecision, insecurities, disappointments, and most of all, mistakes. They're also full of discovery, inspiration, good times, and people, but it's not always the good that stands out. Parents who perpetuate and insist upon the “best years” stereotypes are complicating their child's already difficult self-development. Those who accept and understand the highs and lows of their student's reality are providing the support and encouragement where it is needed most.

### **Rule No. 8—Trust Them**

Finding oneself is a difficult enough process without feeling that the people whose opinions you respect most are second-guessing your own second-guessing. One of the most important things my mom ever wrote me in my four years at college was this: “I love you and want for you all the things that make you the happiest; and I guess you, not I, are the one who knows best what those things are.” Please believe this, mean it, and say it at every opportunity.

### **Rule No. 9 – Think about Finances**

Talk about money now. Be realistic, ask other parents what they give their student, and develop a financial plan. Be willing to change the plan as your freshman changes. A good way to start is to think about what your son or daughter spends now and add to that shampoo, soap, snacks, and all of the things that you purchase for the household. If it is necessary for your student to get a job, make sure to stress time management skills.



### **REFERENCE**

Adapted from: National Orientation Directors Association. (1992). Parent and family orientation programs. In M. Dannells (Ed.), *Orientation director's manual*, Kalamazoo: National Orientation Directors Association.

## COMMON ADJUSTMENTS FOR STUDENTS

As you already know, college life will present many new challenges for your son or daughter. He or she will make some big adjustments in growing to meet these challenges. Although each student's concerns vary, the most common adjustments and concerns faced by students during their college years include those on the following list:

### *Freshman/Sophomore Years*

- Making it Academically
- Peer Group Acceptance
- Concern About Roommate
- Learning About the Campus
- Parental Pressure
- Homesickness
- Culture Shock
- Money Management
- The Dating Game
- Status/Popularity
- Decisions about Alcohol/Drugs
- Sharing a Room



### *Sophomore/Junior Years*

- Sophomore Slump
- Getting Involved on Campus
- Clear Focus/Direction
- Commitment in Relationships
- Monogamy
- Sexual Disease – Prevention
- Choosing a Major – Vocation
- Transferring to Another College

### *Junior/Senior Years*

- Closure on College
- Graduation and Leaving College
- Separation from Friends
- Pursuing a Career
- Panic
- Developing a New Lifestyle
- Fear of Failure
- Clarification of Values
- Increase in Tolerance
- Selective Involvement
- Sense of Greater Purpose
- Goal Setting

## **CELEBRATIONS AND CHALLENGES ON THE PHONE OR FROM 10 TO 2,000 MILES AWAY**

One thing to remember about your son or daughter is that you have helped him/her make decisions for the past 18 or so years; you have served as his/her role model; and you have done an outstanding job! Now, it is time to trust that you did a good job and turn your role into that of a coach.

While at college, your son or daughter will experiment with values, develop and redevelop dreams, and change majors or maybe even hair color! Your student will also face many challenges, challenges he or she can tackle! As a parent, there are several recommendations we can make to help you support your son or daughter.

### **1. Understand your son or daughter's changes and uncertainties.**

As your student explores, some questions may arise. Try to be patient and listen to those concerns.

### **2. Trust that you have taught your son or daughter to make good decisions.**

You have given your student a strong set of values and decision-making skills; trust him or her to use them effectively.

### **3. Try not to do anything for your student that he or she can do alone.**

As hard as it will be, **help your student to help himself or herself**. When problems arise, **empower** him or her to figure out a solution and implement it.

### **4. Sharpen your listening and clarification skills, and know when to use them.**

Sometimes your son or daughter may just want to vent. Learn to figure out when to give advice and when a kind ear is more appropriate.

### **5. Learn to operate in a "well."**

The "well" is where you can go to retrieve questions to help your son or daughter understand what is going on. For example, when your son or daughter calls and says that he or she has to move out of the residence hall room because a roommate is too weird, you can answer, "**Well**, that does sound odd, but have you talked to your resident assistant? Perhaps there is another alternative."

### **6. Understand your son or daughter's strengths and weaknesses.**

As much as you hate to admit it, your son or daughter is not perfect. Help your student learn his or her strengths and weaknesses and how to capitalize on their strengths.

**7. Use the Month by Month Guide in this guidebook to understand when difficult times may occur.**

If you receive calls during the stressful times, you won't be caught off guard.

**8. Shift the responsibility to your student to help him or her effectively deal with life changes.**

For example: develop a budget with your student and hold him or her accountable for its management.

**9. Enable your son or daughter to be whatever he or she wants (and can) be.**

You may have certain goals for your student, but try hard to let him or her discover his or her own dreams. Your student will probably pursue goals with a lot more vigor if he or she is responsible for creating them.

**10. Let go.**

By letting go, we do not mean you should not be involved in your son or daughter's life. We simply mean it is your student's turn to make decisions, and he or she is capable of making positive ones. The University and our parents can serve as partners in the process of student success. Our goal is to work together to assist each and every student to be as successful and he/she can possibly be.

## ISSUES THAT COULD DERAIL YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER'S SUCCESS

We have designed certain portions of Orientation to discuss issues college students may face. Some of these issues are due to decisions students make themselves, and some become issues due to choices others make. Regardless, it may be helpful for you to answer these questions, discuss your perceptions, and help your student decide where to go on campus for assistance.

Please complete the following questions by circling true or false. Refer to the answers on the following pages for resources, as well as national and U of L specific statistics.

1. True    False            After September or October, I will have little influence on my son or daughter.
2. True    False            The overall success of my son or daughter will directly relate to his or her involvement in and out of the classroom.
3. True    False            My son or daughter knows how to manage a mature dating relationship.
4. True    False            My son or daughter will make choices that will ensure his or her safety.
5. True    False            My son or daughter needs to have a reasonable understanding and knowledge of safe sexual practices.
6. True    False            My son or daughter has already experimented with alcohol or other drugs and knows the consequences of his or her actions.
7. True    False            My son or daughter's health and fitness will have a positive effect on his or her grades.
8. True    False            My son or daughter will leave college with the same values as he or she had upon entrance.

## QUIZ ANSWERS

### **1. After September of October, I will have little influence on my son or daughter.**

With most families, this is false. The best way to gauge this for your family is to think about the amount of control or influence you have with your son or daughter now. Even though your son or daughter may be far away, what you have to say still means a lot, even if your he or she doesn't admit it now.

Students are in the process of developing their own habits and skills that will guide their future. You have taught and shown your student a great deal as a parent. The influence you once had with curfews, who your son or daughter dated, and car and phone privileges may change to class schedules, homework, eating habits, setting priorities, spending money, and balancing all of the demands of a college student. Many students deal with these newfound responsibilities very well. Others do not do so well. Sometimes you may not know how your son or daughter has performed academically until after the first semester. Just remember, you do have a lot more influence than you think.

### **2. My son or daughter's overall success will directly relate to his or her involvement in and out of the classroom.**

This is also true. Many students come to campus and think they have to study 20 hours a day to make A's. This is not the only way. Students need to be involved in the classroom, ask questions, sit in the front of the room, go to class, do their homework, and read what is assigned. They also need to be sure to take breaks, get involved in some type of organization, and develop time and stress management skills. Studies show that students involved (not overly involved) outside of the classroom tend to perform better and are more satisfied with their college career. Help your student choose his or her involvement wisely, develop good time management and study skills, and remember to always go to class.

### **3. My son or daughter knows how to deal with a mature dating relationship.**

Overall, most students have the skills to develop strong, mature relationships. However, many students do not realize their relationships are unhealthy. Having healthy relationships involve communication and respect for people. It is important to remember that students are still mentally and emotionally growing throughout college.

### **4. My son or daughter will make choices that will ensure his or her safety.**

U of L strives to make our campus a safe one, but your student is also responsible for making his or her environment safe. No college campus is immune to crime. Simple acts such as locking doors and not walking alone at night on campus can serve a student well. Take the time to help your student remember that in order to keep our campus safe, the entire community must work together. For specific information on the Department of Public Safety, please visit <http://www.louisville.edu/admin/dps/>.

**5. My son or daughter needs to have a reasonable understanding and knowledge of safe sexual practices.**

This statement is true. Based on past studies, 34 percent of women and 46 percent of men have had sexual intercourse in high school. These same studies suggest that students having sex are not emotionally prepared to do so. The standards for dating and sex on college campuses in 1950 were very easy to understand. Students had roles that were easy to fit into and understood the succession from dating to marriage. In 2004, there are no steadfast rules. Whether or not your son or daughter chooses to be sexually involved, there are some resources on campus where he or she can find information. For more information, contact:

Counseling Center  
2207 South Brook St.  
Louisville, KY 40292  
502-852-6585

Student Health Center  
2207 South Brook Street  
Louisville, KY 40292  
502-852-6480 (24 hr. hotline)

**6. My son or daughter has already experimented with alcohol or other drugs.**

The biggest factor in trying new things is peer pressure. College students often find themselves experimenting with alcohol/drugs because of their new found freedom. We want students to understand that drinking by persons who are under age 21 and using any drug is illegal – on or off campus. Coming to college does not eliminate the rules, and violations can affect your student's status at the University. Again, feel free to contact the Counseling Center for more information or resources.

**7. My son or daughter's health and fitness will have a positive effect on his or her grades.**

Overall, this is true. Students who maintain healthy habits (such as exercise, nutrition, and effective stress management) will achieve better grades than students who choose not to follow such practices. The Student Activities Center is available to all students and is well used by most. There are racquetball, basketball, and volleyball courts available, as well as aerobics classes, weight rooms, intramural sports, and a variety of other options. Encourage your son or daughter to check out the possibilities!

**8. My son or daughter will leave college with the same values as upon entrance.**

Generally, this statement is true. Your student's interests, skills, and knowledge will be impacted in numerous ways throughout the college experience, but your student will still be the same person with their basic values intact.

## Inside Your College Student's Mind.... A Month-by Month Guide

The following are approximate times many college students and their parents experience stress during the academic year. Although your student or you may not experience all of these, it might be helpful to understand when some common stressors occur.

### Before Arrival

Encourage your son or daughter to sit down and talk seriously about the college experience before arriving on campus in August. Consider discussing some of these topics.

- ▶ What are you excited about?
- ▶ What are your concerns?
- ▶ Family finances and your college budget
- ▶ Decisions about alcohol use
- ▶ Do you have all your immunizations?
- ▶ Do you know your insurance company and policy number?
- ▶ What will you do if you get sick?

*Is Your Student a Commuter?* Students who live at home and commute to college face different challenges than new students living in the Residence Halls. Although they do not face the challenge of living in a completely new environment, they do have to manage new classes, meet new people, and possibly fit in a part-time job. Encourage your student to get involved on campus in order to make a connection with campus life. Motivate your son or daughter to take risks – eat lunch at the cafeteria with a new classmate or spend some time playing pool or ping-pong in the Student Activities Center. As a parent, you need to be aware that changes will take place although your child is living at home. Your patience and support are very important as your freshman turns a new page in the story of his or her life.



## **AUGUST/SEPTEMBER**

When your son or daughter goes off to college, you may feel a sense of relief and pride, mixed emotions, or even a sense of emptiness. Your freshman may feel the same thing – excitement, homesickness, loneliness, and anxiety. He or she may test new-found freedom or make frequent calls or visits home. It is crucial at this stage to keep communication lines open. Have a listening ear and be supportive. These are some questions your student may ask themselves during this time:

### **► Did I make the right decision to attend U of L?**

Consistently support your student's decisions and encourage utilization of campus resources to help find answers to this tough question.

### **► Can I handle college life?**

Your son or daughter may display some fear of the unknown responsibilities associated with being a college student.

### **► How do I get involved with the various activities U of L offers?**

Was your student involved in high school? Is there an interest in having the same level of involvement? Staying on campus when possible opens up a lot more opportunities to get involved. Students often meet in one of our libraries, the cafeteria, the Student Activities Center game room or academic buildings to discuss academic requirements or just hang out.

### **► My friends are all about trying new things: Should I?**

Your student may be experiencing things never encountered before. There may be feelings of peer pressure and stress in trying to find a niche at U of L.

### **► Can I manage my time between schoolwork and friends and be successful?**

Time management is one of the most crucial skills for any college student to have.

### **► How am I supposed to study?**

The first round of tests are just around the corner. Your student will soon discover which study method best suits his or her learning style. Encourage your student to utilize services at REACH (Resources for Academic Achievement), which includes free tutoring in all classes, study skills, and time management training. (Strickler Hall, W126; 502-852-6706; <http://www.reach.louisville.edu>)

## October

At this point in time, you are probably wondering how your student is handling new responsibilities. The first trip home may be during Fall Break, and both you and your student will be excited. An important fact to focus on at this time is to let your student know that you have the utmost trust in him/her and also in his/her judgment. Here are some questions that may be running through your student's head:

### Midterms?!? Ahh!

Yes, it's that time of year. It's extremely important to have good time management skills. Don't forget to suggest REACH for academic assistance.

#### ► How do I handle an issue with my roommate?

Living with someone new is always a challenge. There are many resources on campus to help your student in dealing with a roommate. Encourage your student to talk to the Resident Assistant if he or she is experiencing problems with a roommate. Our Counseling Center also offers an excellent program entitled PRISM, **Providing Resources for Innovative Student Mediation**. A certified counselor will meet with the students and help them resolve the issues themselves by teaching them conflict resolution skills.

#### ► I'm starting to experience the consequences of some poor decision making. What do I do?

With so much new freedom, it's likely your freshman may want to test the waters. Bad grades, no sleep, and little money in the bank account can result from too much freedom and not enough time management.

*As midterms draw closer, keep in mind that **successful students...***

- Know what their professors require.
- Are prepared for every class.
- Complete and turn in assignments on time.
- Write papers/projects before due dates.
- Identify when they need help and seek it.
- Study daily and in a place where they can gain the most from reviewing the material. This will help reduce stress and anxiety related to school work.
- Make appointments to see professors during their office hours.

## November

### **This is the time to start thinking about University housing for next year.**

The holidays are approaching and you may miss your son or daughter during this time of preparation. Your student is probably also facing some excitement or anxiety about the upcoming break. Now that the weather has gotten colder and the academic expectations have increased, your student may experience health issues. Encourage him/her to visit the Student Health Center when signs of a cold or other illnesses occur.

### **► Is it time to select spring classes already?**

Your student may be confused about what classes to take next semester. Make sure your student uses his/her advisor wisely. Advisors are one of the most valuable resources at the University. If your student does not know his/her advisor's name, this could be a warning sign that he/she is not participating in the academic planning process that is required of all freshmen.

### **► Could I be anymore overloaded?**

Professors tend to have a lot of assignments due right before or directly following the Fall or Spring break. Encourage your student to visit our outstanding academic resource center, the REACH Center. Questions about class assignments can be answered by meeting with professors. Even if the professors seem intimidating, they are here to assist students in achieving their goals and should be contacted by your student if he or she has questions.

## DECEMBER

The semester is winding down. You may notice a higher level of stress in your student with final exams around the bend. You may be excited about your student's return home, but he or she may feel some sadness about leaving new friends. Some things weighing on your student's mind may be:

### **► What grade do I need on my final exam to get the class grade I want?**

We are sure you have encouraged your student to adopt good study skills all along. However, students sometimes find it necessary to cram for exams. Keep in mind that final exam time is also cold and flu season. The additional stress of exams can contribute to illness. A visit to Health Services may be needed so he or she can perform the very best possible on finals.

## January

### **Financial Aid: It is the time to start thinking about applying for financial aid for next year (FAFSA)**

This semester could be your son or daughter's "fresh start." A student may even feel relieved to be back at school and with their friends. You, on the other hand, may feel a renewed sense of loss and emptiness (or on the other hand, glad to have the house back to yourself!). What might your student be thinking?

**► Have I been away that long?**

Readjusting to school might be difficult, so keep the support lines open!

**► Am I sure that U of L is the right place for me?**

If your student did not do as well as expected during the Fall semester, he or she may be having second thoughts about their college choice and may be thinking of transferring. Your freshman may also be considering a change in major. Advisors and professors are wonderful resources for students. Encourage meetings to discuss their career interests. Also, encourage your student to visit the University Career Development Center where they can find many resources to assist them in their career development.

**February/March**

**Time to make an appointment with an advisor to discuss next Fall and/or Summer classes**

You may feel a loss of control or influence in your student's life now that they have been away for a while. Your student may have spring fever when the temperature starts to rise, and you may wonder why he or she is never in the room when you call. But until that point, the cold and dreariness of winter may put a damper on his or her mood, and yours! These are some things that may be on the student's mind:

**► Could school be anymore boring?**

Your student may have developed a routine in his or her daily schedule. Although this routine can mean good time management, students may find the "old routine" boring after a while.

**► I can't believe that I am taking exams again?!?**

It's that time of year again. Your son or daughter should have the hang of it by now!

**April/May**

One year is almost over! Your son or daughter will be home soon. You may have some concern about grades, a summer job, and the whole curfew issue. Spring is finally here, and that may make finishing the semester a difficult task for your freshman. Of course there will also be anxiety over final exams and sadness over leaving new friends. One important realization both you and your student may have by now is that college plays an extremely large part in influencing life decisions. Encourage your student to begin thinking about whether he or she will take classes and/or work during the summer months.

**► What classes should I take for the fall?**

As mentioned previously, the advisors plays a critical (not to mention, mandatory for freshmen) role at the University. One important things that advisors do is teach students how to plan their academic schedule. Encourage your student to meet with his or her advisor, ask questions and take responsibility for his or her academic planning.

**►How can I enjoy the warm weather and still stay on top of my schoolwork?**

With year- end activities conflicting with studies, excellent time management skills have never been more important.

**Summer**

**►What am I going to do this summer?**

Summer session is a great opportunity for your student to bring up grades if needed, or to simply take additional hours to get ahead of the game. Financial aid may or may not apply to these classes. The summer is also a great time for internships, co-ops, and study abroad trips.

# **YOU WANT TO DO WHAT!?! FIVE TIPS FOR PARENTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS**

## *Choosing a Career/Choosing a Major*

Security vs. Adventure? Accountant, Peace Corps volunteer, journalist, college professor... Ultimately, your son or daughter should make the choice. Of course, you may want to suggest factors to consider: the job market demand, salary ranges, long-range opportunities, skills required, etc. Just because a particular field is hot now doesn't mean it will be in 10 years or that your student has the aptitude or motivation for it.

## *Obtaining Marketable Skills*

Some employers put more emphasis on skills rather than on a major. Encourage your son or daughter to develop strengths in at least two or three of these general skill areas:

Computer skills (programming, word processing, spreadsheets, database management, email, Internet)

Quantitative skills (accounting, statistics, economics)

Communication skills (written and oral)

Marketing/selling skills (sales, publicity, fund-raising)

Scientific skills (lab skills, scientific research)

Foreign language skills (especially Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and Russian)

Leadership skills (supervisory, extracurricular leadership roles, teamwork/team leader)

## *Leadership Activities*

Many employers rate leadership activities as important as the GPA. Students who were very active in high school activities may be less involved in college. However, employers regard high school as ancient history for a college senior. It is more valuable for a student to be involved in a few meaningful leadership roles than to be a member of numerous clubs.

## *Work Experience*

You may want your son or daughter to work in your hometown every summer. However, working as a lifeguard or in an ice cream shop does not compare as favorably as an internship (paid or unpaid) in the career field he or she aspires to enter. As you know, future employers will seek relevant experience. Some

students have little to write on their resume if summers were spent in school, traveling, or working at non-career specific jobs.

We strongly suggest students seek career-related experiences during the summers of their sophomore and junior years, even if they must live away from home or accept an unpaid internship. (Suggestion: Those needing financial support can combine an unpaid internship with a paid job such as waiter/waitress, etc.)

### ***Planning for Graduate/Professional School***

About 88 percent of the nation's entering college freshmen indicate they plan to attend graduate or professional school. Yet only about 24 percent actually enter graduate school within a year of completing their bachelor's degree. Students who want to go to graduate or professional school should: 1). Be clear about the reasons they want to further their education, 2). Research the qualifications required for admission and be realistic about their chances of acceptance, 3). Always have a back-up plan in case they are not accepted. **Before** their senior year arrives, students should talk to academic advisors and the college's graduate or professional school advisor (such as the pre-law or pre-med adviser) to discuss their interest in graduate/professional school. It will be very helpful to get advice and guidance from these different perspectives.

Many students want to take time off after graduation from college before attending graduate school or beginning their career. Future employers will want to know how the student spent the intervening time. Do activities during this period demonstrate relevance to future career goals and a good work ethic? While short-term travel may be personally rewarding, it does not increase a student's marketability to employers, unless it is seen as career-related. Therefore, this choice may result in a longer job search. Management trainee programs often begin shortly after graduation and may be filled by the time your student is ready to begin a job search.

### **REFERENCE**

Adapted from *The Parent's Crash Course in Career Planning* by Marcia B. Harris and Sharon L. Jones (VGM, Lincolnwood, IL, April 1996)



## I WAS JUST WONDERING...COMMON QUESTIONS PARENTS HAVE ABOUT COLLEGE

### *What are my Student's Rights and Responsibilities?*

University of Louisville students are treated as adults and are expected to comply with state and federal laws, as well as the regulations in the **Student Handbook** at <http://campuslife.louisville.edu/policies/studenthandbook/> and the **Student Code of Conduct** at <http://campuslife.louisville.edu/policies/studentconduct.html/>. U of L encourages freedom of speech, including constructive criticism, expression of grievances, or petition for redress of wrongs (real or fancied) so long as those rights are exercised in a lawful and peaceful manner.

### *What if My Student is Having Trouble with Classes?*

Encourage your student to ask questions in class and to meet with the professor at the first indication of trouble. Should problems continue, your student should visit the REACH Center, which provides services such as tutoring, study skills, academic advising, and other academic support. Remember, tutoring is for **all** students, not just at-risk students.

### *Will I Receive a Copy of My Student's Grades?*

No. All parents of college students and parents should be aware of federal regulations and University policies dealing with the privacy of college students' records. University of Louisville recognizes and acts in full compliance with the regulations set by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). A student may have access to all of their records maintained by the University. The student is the only person entitled to view the educational record, unless the student signs a specific waiver. It is important for parents to establish expectations with students that include sharing information about grades. A list of questions and answers regarding FERPA may be accessed at <http://library.louisville.edu/uarc/stupriv/guidpriv.htm>

### *What Advice Should I Give My Student?*

First, encourage your student to develop a daily schedule that includes no less than two hours of study for each hour of class attendance, time for regular physical activity and actively participate in one student club and/or social organization. Second, encourage your student to make appointments and meet with his or her professors and advisor within the first three weeks of school. Personal contact is very helpful. Third, encourage your student to become familiar with the University's scholastic regulations and expectations, which are spelled out in the undergraduate catalog.



### ***What Are the University Rules on Alcoholic Beverages?***

For students at least 21 years of age, UofL explicitly counsels only low risk use and condemns the misuse and abuse of alcohol. U of L supports the following statements related to the consumption of alcohol by students:

1. It is acceptable not to drink alcohol and each individual should make a personal and informed choice, keeping in mind:
  - A. by law, you must be at least 21 years of age to drink alcohol,
  - B. if you are at least 21 years of age and choose to drink alcohol you should do so in a low risk manner,
  - C. consumption of alcohol should not be the main focus of any event you attend.
  
2. Accurate information about the consumption of alcohol and alcohol assessment referral is available through the Counseling Center.

Consumption or possession of alcohol is allowed for students 21 years of age at functions registered in advance as specified by University guidelines and policies. Students are responsible for their actions at all times and are expected to follow all University regulations, local laws and ordinances, and state and federal laws.

### ***What are the University Policies on Harassment?***

Harassment is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, based upon race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, age, disability, status (i.e. military veteran) that unreasonably interferes with the person's work or educational performance or creates an intimidating or hostile work or educational environment. U of L's Code of Student Conduct defines a harassing behavior to be "engaging in intentional conduct directed at a specific person(s) which seriously alarms or intimidates such person(s) and which serves no legitimate purpose. Such conduct may include, but is not limited to: explicit or implicit threats, including gestures which place a person in reasonable fear of unwelcome physical contact, harm, or death; following a person about in a public place or to or from his or her residence; making remarks in a public place to a specific person(s) which are by common usage lewd, obscene, expose a person(s) to public hatred or that can reasonably be expected to have a tendency to cause acts of violence by the person(s) to whom the remark is addressed; communicating through electronic mail or other electronic means, or anonymously by voice or graphic means or making a telephone call whether or not a conversation ensues."

Accordingly, it is the policy of the University of Louisville that harassment of any kind, as defined above by employees, students, or non-employees will not be tolerated. Students who feel they are victims of harassment should submit notification of the incident in writing to the Campus Life office.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We hope this guide will help make the transition smoother for both you and your student. Here are a few "top picks" suggested by our colleagues at Centre College in Kentucky.

***Letting Go: A Parent's Guide to Understanding the College Years. Karen Coburn & Madge Treeger.***

Recommended by deans and college officials across the country from both large and small schools. Easy to understand. Covers a wide range of topics. Excellent list of print and web resources in the back of the book. Extremely well-written and very comprehensive overview of college life today. Very insightful descriptions of what a freshman actually confronts in that first year. Gives good suggestions for appropriate parental responses to almost any situation.

***Don't Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money: The Essential Parenting Guide to the College Years. Helen Johnson & Christine Schellhas-Miller.***

Another top pick, especially for parents. This book provides practical advice for parents beginning the college process and goes through job searches. It has useful and fun examples. It also gives parents ideas to better communicate with their students. This book covers it all and would be well worth the investment for all four years and multiple children.

***You're On Your Own: (But I am Here if you Need Me). Marjorie Savage.***

In this book, Savage, stresses the role of mentoring, not just parenting. She emphasizes how the adult relationship between student and parent changes during the college years. This book also covers the time slot of the graduation and "senior summer." She also addresses college graduation time, and specific concerns for each year of college.

***Getting Ready for College: Everything You Need to Know Before You Go. P. Berent.***

This book is an easy-to-read, step-by-step guide. It's loaded with extra reminder tips for students, like take your vitamins, stay away from diet pills, don't live on Diet Coke, and get a calendar. This book also hits tough topics such as sexual assault, going Greek, roommate issues, and all the way up to career planning. This is a good book for both students and parents.

***College Rules! How to Study, Survive, and Succeed in College. S. Nist and J. Holschuh.***

A great book for incoming students. This is an easy-to-read, "get ready for college" book. It describes who a professor is, how to work with your advisor, good stress and stress, note-taking tips, how to really read a text book, time management, motivation, studying smarter, and final exams.

*Been There, Should've Done That: More Tips for Making the Most of College.*  
*S. Tyler.*

The perfect graduation gift! Small easy-to-read book with helpful insight from current students and recent grads from all over the country.

Adapted from Ann Young and Mona Wyatt's 2004 CPAK Presentation.

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Please visit our Student Affairs Parents Website at  
[www.louisville.edu/student/parents/](http://www.louisville.edu/student/parents/) for additional information, including a  
comprehensive list of resources exclusively for parents.

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Created by Cori Cusker, 2004 Graduate Intern for the Office of New Student Programs

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Edited May 2006 by Becky Clark, Executive Director of Planning and Assessment, Office of Student Affairs, University of Louisville