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**Dear Reader,**

We are strong believers in the importance of a student’s support system as they tackle the challenges and opportunities of college. Whether you are the parent, grandparent, stepparent, guardian, family friend, counselor, coach, or mentor of a college student, you can have a positive impact on the student you care about and their success.

This guide touches on many important and helpful topics. There are additional resources on CollegiateParent.com.

**Sincerely,**

CollegiateParent

**CollegiateParent provides print and digital resources for families of college students via our website and in partnership with colleges and universities across the US. Please visit COLLEGIATEPARENT.COM to get our latest tips, sign up for the Loop (our parent eNewsletter), and connect with us on social media.**

**INSIDER CONTENT (PART 2–PART 4) BY:**

Amy Baldwin, Ed.D., Rob Danzman, MS, NCC, LCMHC, Mindy East, Kate Gallop, Vicki Nelson, Cambria Pilger, LaTrina Rogers, Suzanne Shaffer, and CollegiateParent staff. To learn about our contributors, visit their author pages on COLLEGIATEPARENT.COM.

**DESIGNED BY:**

Kade O’Connor

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Greetings UCLA Parents and Families,

The Parent & Family Association (PFA), housed within UCLA Alumni Affairs, is committed to helping parents and families participate in their student’s experience at UCLA. We believe an informed and supportive family plays an integral role in a student’s educational success. To that end, our office is the first stop for all your UCLA questions and needs. We offer resources for you to understand your student’s experience at different stages in their collegiate career and communicate regularly with families via our helpline, Bruinlink digital newsletter and social media channels.

Throughout your student’s time at UCLA, you will find that they are not the only ones who will grow and learn; parents and family members can gain so much from being involved at UCLA as well. There are many great opportunities for parents and families to become directly involved with the UCLA campus community. We invite you to consider volunteering and even applying to become a member of the Parents’ Council, PFA’s premier volunteer organization for which applications open each spring.

However you choose to get involved during your student’s time at UCLA, know that it will be a great way to personally experience the spirit, energy and optimism of the Bruin community!

We also understand the changing family dynamics as your student becomes more independent. Knowing that UCLA is a large institution, with a vast number of resources that can be daunting for a student to navigate on their own, we want to ensure you have the tools and information to be the best resource for your student. To stay informed, learn about PFA resources, find advice on a broad range of topics related to parenting a college student, and more, we encourage you to visit the Parent & Family Association website at parents.ucla.edu. Additionally, contact the Parent & Family Helpline at (310) 794-6737 or email at mybruinis@ucla.edu for any inquiries or concerns you may have.

We look forward to meeting you during your student’s time at UCLA, and we wish your family a wonderful UCLA experience!

UCLA Parent & Family Association
Key CAMPUS RESOURCES

Alumni Affairs
James West Alumni Center
325 Westwood Plaza
(310) 825-2586
alumni.ucla.edu

Career Services
Strathmore Building
501 Westwood Plaza
(310) 206-1915
career.ucla.edu

Arthur Ashe Health & Wellness Center
221 Westwood Plaza (Bruin Plaza)
(310) 825-4073
studenthealth.ucla.edu

Bruin Resource Center
Student Activities Center
Suite B44
(310) 825-3945
brc.ucla.edu

Center for Academic Advising in the College
A-316 Murphy Hall
caac.ucla.edu

Campus Safety
601 Westwood Plaza
(310) 825-1491
Anonymous Reporting Line:
(310) 794-5824
police.ucla.edu

Center for Accessible Education
A255 Murphy Hall
(310) 825-1501
cae.ucla.edu

Center for Scholarships & Scholar Enrichment
233 Covel Commons
(310) 206-2875
scholarshipcenter.ucla.edu
Counseling & Psychological Services
221 Westwood Plaza
(310) 825-0768
counseling.ucla.edu

Dashew Center for International Students & Scholars
106 Bradley Hall
(310) 825-1681
internationalcenter.ucla.edu

Financial Aid & Scholarships
A129 Murphy Hall
(310) 206-0400
financialaid.ucla.edu

First Year Experience
205 Bradley Hall
(310) 825-3401
firstyearexperience.ucla.edu

Housing Services
360 De Neve Drive
(310) 206-7011
housing.ucla.edu

New Student & Transition Programs
201 Covel Commons
(310) 206-6685
newstudents.ucla.edu

Office of the Dean of Students
1104 Murphy Hall
(310) 825-3894
deanofstudents.ucla.edu

Recreation
John R. Wooden Recreation and Sports Center
(310) 825-3701
recreation.ucla.edu

Registrar
1113 Murphy Hall
registrar.ucla.edu

Residential Life
205 Bradley Hall
(310) 825-3401
reslife.ucla.edu

Student Accounts (BruinBill)
1121 Murphy Hall
(310) 825-9194
finance.ucla.edu/business-finance-services/student-accounts

Student Legal Services
A239 Murphy Hall
(310) 825-9894
studentlegal.ucla.edu

Transfer Student Center
Kerckhoff Hall 128
(310) 206-3552
transfers.ucla.edu

Transportation & Parking
555 Westwood Plaza
(310) 794-7433
transportation.ucla.edu
Navigating Campus

Visit the following links to aid in getting around the UCLA Westwood campus!

- Interactive Campus Map
- PDF Campus Map
- Campus Accessibility Map
- Westwood Campus Parking
- BruinBus Route Map

Maps & Directions
Top Tips for Successful Students
AND THE FAMILIES THAT SUPPORT THEM
Success in college means many things. First-year students want to get good grades and enjoy what they’re learning, but they also want to make friends and have fun and hopefully keep their busy lives in balance so stress doesn’t overwhelm them.

They can do it all if they manage their time wisely and make the most of the resources available on campus. Here are tips for your student, and you too!

**Successful Students...**

### Spend Enough Time Studying

Sounds obvious, huh? Spending quality study time is one of the most important skills your student needs to master, but it’s not as simple as it sounds.

High school students spend most of their time in class and just a few hours daily on homework. College flips that equation. The general rule is that, for each hour spent in the classroom, college students should spend two to three hours on outside-of-class work. That means a student taking five three-credit classes (15 hours a week in class) should be spending 30 additional hours on work outside of class.

Many new college students haven’t grasped this expectation and are shocked when they realize how much study time is required to stay afloat. There’s no need to panic. There are enough hours in the day; it’s all about how your student uses them.

### Build Good Habits

This is a process. Adjusting to college life involves trial and error, mistakes and even failure. That said, your student makes choices every day that can make the difference between flailing and thriving. Here are tips to share.

- **Keep a time journal for a few days.** You’ll see how much time you actually spend studying, socializing, sleeping, scrolling, at a campus job or club activities, etc. Identify the “time stealers.”
- **Put your planner to good use.** The increase in free time in college doesn’t mean it’s really “free” — it just means you control how you spend it. Take charge. Block out study times in your planner and stick to the plan. Don’t underestimate how much time big assignments will take. Put everything in your planner, including study breaks, meals, socializing, and exercise.
- **Figure out where and when you do your best studying.** Even night owls will need to fit in some study time during the day, and get out of the residence hall if it’s too distracting.
- **Limit phone time.** It takes practice, but turning off your phone during designated study time will help you be more focused and efficient.
- **Spend time with friends who study.** It’s easier to put in the time when the people around you are too. For your hardest classes, find an accountability partner who will help you stay on track, and join or form a study group.

### Create a Support Network

Independence doesn’t mean handling everything on one’s own. As your student takes responsibility for their new life, they must learn to ask for help and use campus resources.

This includes professors and academic advisors (learn more on page 21), librarians, writing and STEM centers, tutoring, residence hall staff, the career...
center, and health and counseling services. Encourage your student to visit all these buildings even if they’re not ready to make an appointment.

Seek Balance

A good way to feel refreshed is to find the hidden gems on campus and in the surrounding community. One of them may turn out to be your student’s happy place. Encourage them to explore! They may discover:

- A quiet lounge or out-of-the-way corner of the library for studying, thinking or napping
- A local park or trail
- An art gallery or museum
- A music practice room or empty concert hall
- A chapel or meditation room
- A coffee shop or the town library

How Can Family Members Help?

Expect the first semester to have ups and downs.

Keeping this in mind will help you prepare for whatever comes your way. For example, The Phone Call (or possibly a whole series of them). A few weeks or months in, after the initial honeymoon of loving EVERYTHING about college, your new student may express a pronounced dip in enthusiasm. Lots of things might be happening.

- Roommate problems can start to surface.
- Coursework gets harder; midterm grades can be an unpleasant reality check.
- Students grow exhausted by the effort it takes just to function. Completing daily living tasks (getting to class on time, doing laundry, juggling school work with social life and a job) can feel overwhelming.
- Some of your students’ first new friends may peel off and head in different directions, and they may not yet have found true friends who matter.
- Homesickness can bubble up at any point. Students miss family, old friends, and their significant other from high school (if they had one). Everything at college is still so strange.

Be their sounding board and cheerleader.

Students and family members alike should remember that college is a marathon, not a sprint. When you keep the big picture in mind and expect bumps in the road, you won’t be jolted by the occasional pothole.

Your job is to listen and help your new college student maintain perspective. Sometimes they’ll call just to vent, but in other cases they may need help coming up with an action plan. You can discuss what good conflict management skills look like, and the importance of confronting uncomfortable situations, whether with a roommate or in a class where they’re struggling. Remind them of the resources available to them, and express your confidence that they can solve their own problems. They can do this, and so can you.
Getting Involved
ON CAMPUS

Colleges have clubs for everything. Whether your student wants to get involved in sports, volunteering, advocacy, cultural groups, Greek life, or something related to their academic interests, there’s a club or organization ready to welcome them — or they can start their own!

Clubs are a great way for new students to extend themselves, make friends, continue the activities they love, and find new ones.

When I arrived on campus as a first-year student, everything felt so new. I woke up in a new room, found new classrooms, learned from new professors, ate new food, and met new people. It was exciting but also unsettling to be starting over completely. Each day I grew more used to my routine, but a few weeks in, something still seemed to be missing.

Then I attended an activities fair. I wandered around tables and wrote out my name and email possibly too many times. I followed up with clubs that looked interesting and went to a few first meetings. Before I knew it, I had joined the Club Basketball team. Playing a sport again helped me meet people who shared the same interest, fall into a healthy and comfortable routine, and feel more at home on campus. Greek Life, community service and mental health advocacy also drew me in.
Here are ideas to share with your student as they acclimate to their new campus community this fall:

**Do Initial Research**
In addition to activities fairs, your student can find a list of clubs with a short description and contact information by searching “campus life” or “student life” on the college website.

**Ask Questions**
When considering which groups to join, be sure to understand their expectations for members. This includes what the joining process is like, the time commitment, how lenient they are about attendance, and whatever else you’re curious about. This will help you anticipate if the club will be a good fit. It can be tempting to sign up for a ton of clubs — make sure you’re excited about each one you join.

**Reach Out at Any Time**
If you stumble upon a club that sounds fun, don’t be afraid to reach out, no matter how far into the semester it is. Some groups only accept new members at the start of the term, but contacting them will help you be aware of when you can join and your interest will be appreciated. My roommate emailed the photography club halfway through fall semester and attended her first meeting the very next week. And don’t be shy! Everyone’s new and in the same boat. Put yourself out there!

**Support Other Activities**
Supporting friends in their activities throughout the year is a great way to feel connected on campus. I attended improv comedy sketches, a cappella concerts, and fundraisers. Going to events around campus helps you meet new people, and you may even find something you want to join. Look at posters, follow student activities on social media, and ask around!

**Don’t Try to Do It All**
My first year in college, I felt pressure to find all the groups I wanted to join immediately. Looking back, I could have paced myself better. Activities are a great way to meet people but there will be time to try new things and get more involved as the semesters go by.

**More Benefits of Campus Involvement!**

1. **Have Fun While Saving Money**
   Many campus activities are subsidized by student fees, meaning the charge for off-campus trips may be affordable even on a student’s budget.

2. **Get Better Grades and Persist to Graduation**
   Students who get involved on campus tend to have higher rates of retention and graduation, as well as higher GPAs. Juggling classes, homework, and outside interests requires good time management skills (a key to college success), and building meaningful connections can make all the difference to your student’s well-being.

3. **Create a Network with Little Effort**
   Everyone your student meets has the potential to change their life, whether it’s their fellow students or, in the case of organizations with national chapters (such as Greek life and volunteer groups), a much larger network of people who can open all kinds of doors.
It is natural to worry about the safety of your students when they are on campus, especially if they live in the residence halls rather than commuting from home.

Rest assured that colleges and universities prioritize student safety. The campus police department works closely with the town/city police department, and security officers are available 24 hours a day to respond to student concerns. The entrances to residence halls can only be opened by the students who live there, using their ID cards as a key. Pathways and public spaces are well-lit.

Talk to your students about ways to protect their personal safety and belongings.

- Register laptops and bikes with the campus police department.
- If driving to campus, never leave valuables in the car and lock it at all times; in general, leave expensive items at home.
- Lock the dorm room at all times.
- Sign up to receive emergency “campus alert” text messages from the college in case of a weather or other emergencies (this may be an option for parents, too).
- Attend campus trainings on sexual assault prevention and bystander intervention — use the buddy system when going out at night and keep track of friends at parties.
- Take a self-defense class if one is offered on campus and consider buying a keychain alarm or pepper spray. (Note: Pepper spray is not legal in some states, so check the law.)
- Use campus police department late-night escorts and safe-ride programs.
- Ask your student to share their roommate’s contact information (phone, email) so you have it in case of an emergency.
The pace of college life is invigorating, but it can also be exhausting. Whenever you have the chance, take time to mentor your student in healthy life habits. Here are tips to share and discuss!

Managing Stress
Stress in college doesn’t have to be a given. There are many proven ways to manage stress.

- Cardio exercise, yoga and meditation lower stress levels and calm the body and mind. Integrating these practices takes discipline initially but pays off big-time in the long run.
- Combating stress involves a daily spiritual practice, being in nature, spending quality time with a friend, or journaling.
- Staying organized and managing time are also key in combating stress.

Talk with your student about what has worked for them in the past, and about people you both may know who do a good job leading balanced lives. Encourage your student to integrate at least one stress-busting practice into their daily routine.

Eating for Optimal Health
In college, students may not eat as well as they did at home. Some talking points:

- Remind your student that eating fast foods, drinking too much caffeine and consuming lots of sugar will only make them feel sluggish and can weaken the immune system, leading to illness.
- Encourage your student to seek fresh fruit and veggies, eat breakfast and try not to skip meals.
- Keeping healthy snacks on hand—cheese, nuts, seeds, protein bars—can help them maintain normal blood sugar levels and stave off binge eating.
- Taking daily vitamins and drinking plenty of water are also good nutritional habits.
Sleep is Key
It’s normal for students to experience disruptions to their sleep schedule in college. There are ways to facilitate a good night’s sleep and a productive day:

- Establish a bedtime routine.
- Work at a desk instead of the bed.
- Turn off screens.
- Limit caffeine, alcohol, soda and hardcore snacking before bed.
- Limit all-nighters.

Abstain or Limit Alcohol Intake
Drinking is a major health concern on college campuses and increases the risk of accidents, sexual assault, violence, unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and poor academic performance. Talk with your student about drink limits. If they are underage, encourage them to wait to drink as there are legal consequences for underage drinking.

Help your student establish healthy boundaries and talk about alternatives to drinking alcohol.

If your student chooses to drink, educate them on the dangers of binge drinking — for females, that’s four or more drinks and for males, five or more drinks in a short period of time. Pre-gaming is a common practice on college campuses that can lead to all sorts of unfavorable outcomes for students. The more they know about drugs and alcohol, the more likely they are to make wise choices. Know your resources. College campuses offer health and resource centers to address most of your student’s needs. If you can visit the campus, familiarize yourself with where everything is and what’s offered, and browse the website. Talking with your student about what is available can empower them to reach out and get help if needed.
Move-in day is here, and along with it the reminder that our kids eventually grow up and leave home.

Though a few will breeze through the college years, many will struggle at some point along the way. Below I share suggestions on how to parent college students whether they’re experiencing challenges or just anxious about the big transition.

Organization

Encourage your first-year student to fight the urge to slide casually into college life. It’s essential to set academic and personal expectations — start with more structure and back off as the semester proceeds if it’s going well.

And talk about calendars. Calendars and planners are a foundation for success and counteract a lot of mental health symptoms. Missing an advisor meeting, forgetting about a counseling session, or completely blanking on a big assignment are good ways to have a bad semester.

The start of fall semester is also a great time to introduce the concept of incrementalism. I’ve worked with students with a 4.0 high school GPA coming into freshman year who spun out by November. The overstimulation and lack of restraint became a disaster. Check in early and often at the beginning with a focus on what’s measurable. Small wins add up to big wins.

Counseling

Have your student schedule an initial appointment with the college counseling center, often referred to as Counseling and Psychological Services or CAPS, before or immediately after they get to campus. Even if they have no intention of going regularly, it helps to know where the center is and have that personal connection. Students are more likely to use CAPS if they’ve been before.

If your student needs ongoing counseling, CAPS may not be enough. I recommend that you help your student find a community-based clinician before the October rush. For students who’ve been working with a therapist at home and want to meet with someone at school, ensure the therapists coordinate to provide a smooth hand-off.

Don’t forget to have your student sign a release of information. You don’t need details from each session but a general sense of how things are trending.
Family Communication

Agree on how regularly you’ll talk. It’s incredible the way loving, engaged kids disappear once they move to campus. I’ve also worked with students who called home too much. Having a general idea of when you will catch up frees students from feeling pressure to respond to every text and gives parents a sense of relief.

Don’t be lulled into a false sense of security as the semester cranks up and things quiet down. Situations that blow up in December result from the smallest dark clouds forming on the horizon in September and October.

Self-Care for Parents

The way you parent when your child is out of the house requires a serious examination of your distress-tolerance skills. Consider working with a therapist if you’re anxious about your student’s well-being even after you’ve done all the above. You encourage your student to take care of themselves — you need to do the same.

And remember: Most situations in which our kids find themselves are not as good or as bad as they believe them to be. Set a calm, intentional tone at the beginning of the semester with regular check-ins throughout — and enjoy the ride.
Choosing a Major
6 TIPS FOR GUIDING YOUR STUDENT

Every parent wants their student to find their “calling” and click with a major that will help pave the way to a career. Students want that, too! But the process of declaring a major can be scary as well as exhilarating.

“Am I making the right choice?” they wonder anxiously. “Will I be able to find a job after graduation?” And then there is the classic question from well-meaning family and friends: “What are you going to do with that?”

For students whose majors are clear pathways to careers (think nursing, or accounting), the last question can be answered easily. However, for undecided students worried not only about choosing the “right” major but also about how their degree will prepare them for employment someday, the question can increase their self-doubt. And with self-doubt comes even more anxiety.

Amy Baldwin, Ed.D.
Luckily, there are stress-reducing ways to support and guide students who are at this juncture. Here are six tips:

1. Relax.
No need to make this experience more traumatic than it already is. Remember that it’s normal for the journey from major to career to twist and turn. Make an effort to keep things in perspective and you’ll be able to share this attitude with your student.

2. Have them reflect on their past to figure out their future.
One of the best strategies to use with college students is to encourage them to reflect on what they liked when they were younger, what they did in their spare time for fun, and what activities they participated in and why. Their past holds clues about the kinds of majors that might interest them. For example, someone who counseled their friends through difficult times may find themselves interested in psychology or social work. An athlete might gravitate to sports management or sports medicine.

3. Encourage them to focus on what they want to learn, not what sounds good.
The best way to erase self-doubt is to find a subject they like and that will help them build transferable skills. Ask what kinds of classes interest them the most and which classes challenge them to think and grow. Their answers should give them an idea of what they want to spend several years studying. A student who says they want to major in business “so my parents will leave me alone” is not a student who will be happy for long with their choice.

4. Suggest they compare degree plans and course descriptions.
Reading through the college’s course catalog is another way to narrow their choices. The course catalog and degree requirements can be found on the school’s website. If your student is choosing between economics and education, for example, suggest they read through the degree requirements, such as internships or foreign languages, to see which plan appeals to them more. Have them browse the course descriptions as well. They will spend a lot of time in their major courses and should be intrigued by the topics that await them in that department.

5. Remind them to speak regularly with an academic advisor and a career counselor.
The academic advisor will help them navigate the process of completing a degree, and the career counselor can help them develop a plan to translate what they’re learning to workplace needs. Meeting with both throughout college can keep your student on track and help them make any needed adjustments along the way.

6. Suggest they interview recent college graduates.
Some of the best advice about college majors comes from recent graduates. New graduates are likely to say that the skills they acquired in college (e.g., critical thinking, written communication, appreciation for diversity) are more important than the content knowledge they gained from their major. At the very least, their advice may lower the pressure to make a “right choice.”
What if my student wants to change their major?

Students change majors for a variety of reasons and it is perfectly normal. In some surveys as many as 80% of students have switched majors at least once.

But it can still be worrisome to parents, who wonder if their student will be able to graduate on time. In addition to discussing what led them to this new direction (was it a single fabulous course or professor? a new career goal?), here are a few questions you can ask to help your student make the best decision:

- **How many additional courses do you need to take?** The earlier the change is made, the less likely your student will need to take lots of additional courses.
- **Will you need to take more credit hours per term or take summer classes to stay on track?** In some cases, an additional course per term or a couple of classes during the summer may be all that’s needed to graduate in four years.
- **What other requirements does the new degree plan include?** Some degree plans require internships or practicums that must be taken into consideration. As always when working toward a degree, your student should consult with an academic advisor to ensure they are completing required courses in the right sequence.
The student-professor relationship is one of the most important to cultivate. Academic advisors are also key players in a student’s successful adjustment to college and can guide them all the way through to an on-time graduation.

You can encourage your student to create open lines of communication with their professors and make the most of every advising appointment. Here are tips and talking points.

**Coach Your Student to Communicate With Professors**

1. **Establish a relationship early.**

Professors will be happy to get to know your student before a problem arises. Any time during the semester (with the exception of the day before the final) is a good time to reach out, but the sooner the better.

Your student should take cues from the syllabus about the best way to communicate. Is the professor available to meet in person or is email or an online meeting better? It goes without saying — if the professor prefers email, then use email and check it often.

When your student meets with the professor for the first time, they should have a list of questions ready. Here are a few that can help your student learn more about the professor’s expectations:

- "I want to learn as much as I can in your class. What can I do to succeed?"
“I usually [fill in usual study practices]. What will work best for this class?”
“I want to be sure I start off with solid work in your class. Can I come see you before an assignment is due to make sure I’m on the right track?”

2. Seek immediate feedback after graded work.

If your student gets a low grade, or lower than anticipated, even if they think they know why, it’s good to check in with the professor as soon as possible. Here’s how to open a conversation:

- “I reviewed my work. Can we go over what I did wrong so I understand what to do differently next time?”
- “I’m bummed I messed up that assignment. Would you help me see where I made mistakes?”
- “Can we talk about how this low grade will affect my progress in the course? I want to be sure to make the improvements I need to raise my grade.”

Because students share this fear with me, it’s worth telling you: Yes, professors really want to talk with students who’ve failed an assignment. No, they don’t think their students aren’t smart enough to pass their class.

Professors want their students to learn and to earn good grades. Your student shouldn’t be ashamed to speak to a professor about a class they’re failing. Reaching out demonstrates a willingness to improve.

Make the Most of an Advising Appointment

Academic advisors help students register for courses and keep track of credits and degree requirements. But that’s not all an advisor can do. Advisors can help your student connect with resources if they are having academic, personal or financial challenges. Your student should view their advisor as a guide, coach and support system. Here are three steps to follow.

1. Plan the visit with the advisor.

Students should prepare ahead of time for every appointment. The advisor needs to know what your student needs as soon as they get there.

- **Create a list of questions or a goal to share.** For example: “I’m here to talk about what classes to take next semester and what would happen if I change my major.”
- **Look up policies, forms or other information that will improve the conversation.** Your student may want to read course descriptions or download a copy of their degree plan.
- **Be ready to take notes.** Will your student handwrite notes, type, or record the session? They’ll need notes about what was discussed and what steps to take next.
2. Role play the conversation.

I know from professional experience, and also from my own son who’s a college student, that many students don’t know what to say in the moment even with a list of questions in their hand. That’s why it’s important to practice the conversation ahead of time.

You don’t have to know the ins and outs of college advising — you just need to help your student learn how to ask questions and follow up with additional questions. Here’s a sample script:

Advisor Role: What can I do for you today?

Student: I need help registering for classes and I want to talk about changing my major.

Advisor Role: First, what classes are you thinking about taking? Then, tell me what’s motivating you to change your major.

Help your student identify what preparation they still need to do before their appointment and clarify what they want from the meeting.

3. Follow up if needed.

A single advising appointment probably won’t answer all your student’s questions. They may need a follow-up meeting or even multiple meetings.

Encourage your student to check in regularly with their advisor even if there isn’t a pressing issue. Other reasons to meet with an advisor include:

- Your student’s progress in a course or courses is in jeopardy and they need to know what will happen if they fail a class.
- They can’t get into a class that’s required for their degree plan.
- They may not graduate on time.
- They want advice on a different major, a minor or a career pathway.

Advisors can’t solve all of your student’s problems, but they can do a lot more than help with course registration. In fact, if your student cultivates a solid relationship with their advisor, they will have a coach and cheerleader all rolled into one.
Support DURING MIDTERMS AND FINALS

The weeks between Thanksgiving and winter break are tough on students. They are buried in work: reading, exam preparation, final projects, paper writing.

Some first-year students experience another wave of homesickness after Thanksgiving. Seniors are extra stressed as they work on theses and capstone projects while applying for jobs and graduate school. Oh, and it’s cold and flu season!

During this stressful time, you may not hear from your student much, or at all. This is natural and most likely okay. They need space — but they also need encouragement and support. When you do talk, or in a letter or a text exchange, you can reinforce strategies for getting through finals healthy and whole. Here are tips to share.

Maximize academic support

- As soon as final projects and papers are assigned, break them into smaller pieces and get started.
- Put all these tasks into a master calendar or your planner and prioritize in order of importance.
- Attend all available study sessions, faculty office hours, etc.
- Get individual tutoring in subjects where you’re struggling.
Take care of yourself. This means:

- Get enough sleep.
- Take short, frequent study breaks (you can put these in your planner).
- Exercise — including outdoors in natural light if possible.
- Spend quality time with friends (again, you can schedule this).
- Eat healthy meals.
- Stay hydrated (try not to rely too much on caffeine).

Encourage your student to keep their eye out for finals support events on campus at the student union, library, health center, etc. and reach out for stress relief through the counseling center.

What else can family members do?

Understand that your student may not have time for the usual phone calls. Send an occasional text/social message that doesn’t require a response. Check in to confirm their travel plans and offer to help if needed. And they’ll welcome a finals care package:

- Healthy snacks (nuts, dried fruit, protein bars)
- Fidget or stress relief toy
- Cozy hat, gloves, scarf or slippers
- New headphones or earbuds
- Gift card for coffee shop or restaurant they like in town
- Calming teas
- Vitamin C drops or Emergen-C