

A NEW CHAPTER

FUTURE LOADING



Fitting
in to Your
Student's
Life at
College



MURRAY STATE
UNIVERSITY

We are Racers.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

There are likely great expectations for the next chapter in your student's life. It is typical for you to wonder – and worry – about all that is to come!

The months of visiting campuses, discussing potential majors and dreaming of all the future holds have brought you here. We are thrilled that your student has decided to pursue an educational journey here, and that you have entrusted us to offer a path filled with rewarding experiences and a complete education.

It is normal to experience a mixture of complex and multi-layered emotions as you enter the “college years” together. And, although we can't offer you a crystal ball that will show you all that's to come, there *are* some things that you can expect from the college experience, such as...

- An academic environment that offers our best, and expects a best effort from our students
- Experiences that challenge and support students
- Freedom to learn from mistakes and develop autonomy
- Caring and committed faculty and staff who support student growth and development in and outside of the classroom



- A welcoming and safe campus community that fosters the development of responsible, healthy adults
- Multiple, accessible avenues to seek help and support when needed
- Exposure to new ideas, people and perspectives

Communication Connections

Just because your student is in college now, it doesn't mean you can't still be an involved parent. There are so many ways to stay connected with campus happenings. Beyond just updating your wardrobe with new school colors, you can stay informed of opportunities to support and share with your student by checking out our...

- College website
- Facebook page
- Twitter feed
- Other social media outlets
- Parent and family office
- College newspaper/magazine
- Career services resources
- Athletic events
- Campus events calendar

GROWING, SHIFTING RELATIONSHIPS

Interactions with faculty, roommates, classmates, rideshare buddies... these are just some of the special bonds made during the college years. Relationships are a priority for college students and are sure to shift, evolve and adapt over time.

STUDENTS STILL NEED – AND WANT – YOU

Don't worry, even though students are now in college, they still want – and dare we say – need your wisdom, guidance and continued love. They also need space to “test the waters” on their own and learn from their mistakes. Actively listen, keep communication lines open, offer advice – when asked – and offer a safe place to land when needed. These are things college students find most helpful.

SIBLING BONDS

The absence of a brother or sister – whether students are living at or commuting to campus – can be a tough transition for those at home. Dinner conversations, family outings, even simple daily interactions may soon be limited to a random weekend visit or Snapchats. For students living away from home, promote sibling lunch dates, fun texts, Facetime chats or handwritten notes. If your commuter student has siblings at home, encourage dedicating 30 minutes a week that is time just for them to connect – simply walking the dog together or going for ice cream can have a huge impact.

FRIENDSHIPS – OLD & NEW

Your student will be meeting some new – potentially lifelong – friends on campus. Many students have success maintaining and balancing multiple friendships with people on campus, back home, across state borders and overseas. Connecting with others strengthens their support system. An added bonus... you will get to meet some incredible new people through your student's expanding friendships!

EVOLVING STUDENT/FACULTY RELATIONSHIPS

College offers many avenues for students and faculty to work and learn together. Our faculty aim to help students reach their fullest potential by challenging and supporting them in many facets of their college career.

THE FACULTY CONNECTION

Here are some ways that students can take full advantage of connecting with faculty beyond the classroom...

- Office Hours
- Internships
- Research Projects
- Lab Work
- Advising
- Student Organizations
- Campus Events

SUPPORT FROM THE SIDELINES

A college education involves much more than classroom learning. It is also about discovering who you really are and want to be. College gives students space and time to explore the impact of choices, decisions and actions made.

One of the hardest parts of parenting a college student is knowing when to extend a hand and when to support from the sidelines. Empowering students to find their own way has many long-term benefits, including...

- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Enhanced resilience and coping skills
- Personal satisfaction and independence

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

Here on campus, we expect students to be positive, contributing members of our community and to take responsibility for...

- Their behavioral choices
- Respecting rules and policies
- Academic honesty and persistence
- Personal integrity and care
- Treating others respectfully and well
- Seeking out assistance as needed
- Keeping others safe from disease by following campus protocols

THE BALANCING ACT

So how do you successfully support from the sidelines? It is hard to stand by and watch someone we love struggle. But incredible growth occurs when students find solutions to their own pain points; it is where independence will truly start to bloom.

Letting students know that you have faith in their abilities moves them in the direction of self-responsibility. What might this look like? Some potential ideas are...

- Encourage students to schedule their own personal appointments
- If roommate conflicts develop, ask how they plan to resolve them
- Ask them to draft a personal budget plan for their college expenses that you discuss together
- Coach them in talking to an instructor or seeking additional help on campus to address personal or academic struggles

In a nutshell, next time your student asks you to do something that an adult can do, or you have the urge to fix problems that you are not directly involved with, pause and consider the benefits of *empowering* versus *doing* for your student.

"In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or to step back into safety."

— Abraham Maslow

DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPERIENCE

New and different ideas. Discussions that challenge current opinions. Exposure to diversity within people, places and perspectives. For some students, college may be the first time they have had multiple interactions with people who think, live and believe differently than they do.

Students who are open to learning about and celebrating diversity tend to...

- Create productive, mutually respectful relationships
- Be more creative, innovative and collaborative
- Excel in today's fast-paced, global environment
- Try new things
- Be critical thinkers and increase their knowledge base
- Be sensitive to life experiences that differ sharply from their own

EXPOSURE TO DIVERSITY = MARKETABILITY

Employers – in all fields – are seeking graduates that can work within an expanding global workforce and market. They notice things like...

- Ability to relate to different people and personalities
- Experience navigating unfamiliar territory
- Demonstration of civic engagement
- Familiarity with foreign language
- Openness to difference

College life will rouse questions and curiosity about others different from your student. Whether it be through a political classroom debate, a service trip, attending a religious service or visiting a college friend's hometown, chances are that students are going to be positively impacted by the differences all around them. We aim to create a campus climate that appreciates, respects and celebrates human differences. Together we can all support students in leveraging the many opportunities available here to explore the world beyond their current view through...

- Diversity speakers, panel discussions and events
- Humanities courses
- Student organizations and clubs
- Volunteer opportunities at local not-for-profits
- Campus and community government
- International study
- Service trips
- Language partners

SAFE SPACE

We see the differences present on campus as one of our greatest institutional strengths. The diversity of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives contributes to our collective growth as individuals and as a community. We make intentional efforts to create safe spaces for open dialogue about differences as well as to create a safe environment for ALL students.

A WEB OF SUPPORT

The faculty and staff on campus want to help students find success here! With that idea in mind, we have created a web of support aimed at helping them thrive, learn from mistakes, experience triumphs, and stay safe and healthy in the process.

This web certainly includes you! There are many ways you can show students support...

ACADEMIC LIFE

- Ask what new things they are learning
- Focus more on work ethic – less on grades
- Promote academic honesty and integrity
- Applaud enrollment in classes that introduce completely new content and ideas
- Tout the many academic resources available... *advising, tutoring, study groups and instructor office hours, to name a few*

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- Plug the benefits of a well-rounded diet, proper sleep and consistent exercise
- Share stress relief habits you use to stay emotionally healthy
- Process what they're feeling due to the pandemic and its effects
- Discuss the personal rewards gained through volunteer, spiritual, recreational and outdoor activities
- Ask how they are contributing as a member of the campus community
- Encourage talking to a campus staff member if things start to feel overwhelming... *we take emotional issues seriously and are available to help!*

PERSONAL SAFETY AND CHOICES

- Be open and honest when talking about alcohol, recreational and prescription drugs, consent and sexual activity
- Discuss the importance of being aware of their surroundings
- Warn about the risks involved with texting or wearing earbuds while walking
- Empower your student to say “no” to anything that doesn’t feel right
- Encourage reporting any behavior of concern... *we aim to foster a community of people that serve as active bystanders, rather than doing nothing*

CAREER AND VOCATIONAL SUPPORT

- Understand that most college students change their major at least once
- Encourage the exploration of new interests, passions and career options
- Support internship, practicum and job shadowing opportunities
- Walk through their “digital profile” (i.e. anything on social media) and discuss the impression it could leave on future employers
- Promote regular visits to career services... *we have valuable resources available to students at all phases of their career development!*

A WEB OF SUPPORT

DISABILITY SUPPORT

- Extend responsibility for their own academic concerns and limitations
- Encourage a visit to disability support services, if needed, to develop a plan for managing their educational and personal life, and obtaining reasonable accommodations
- Promote consistent communication with instructors
- Explore living options together that will meet unique needs
- Boost their confidence to ask for assistance whenever needed... *our staff truly want to help students reach their fullest potential*

RESIDENTIAL/OFF-CAMPUS LIVING SUPPORT

- Relish stories shared involving late night pizza, study sessions, philosophical discussions and more
- Avoid the urge to solve roommate problems when conflict arises
- Respect housing policies and procedures, knowing they were developed with a diversity of needs – including safety for all – in mind
- Promote empathy and understanding in sharing limited space with multiple people
- Encourage involvement in hall and campus activities while honoring social distancing measures... *students who are involved in campus life are more likely to stay in school and do well academically!*

ADULT AND COMMUTER STUDENT SUPPORT

- Make it okay for students living with you to be home less as they balance a new schedule of classes, involvement and possibly work
- Promote building positive campus connections through campus involvement
- Encourage your student to check out all the resources designed for adult and commuter students on campus
- Discuss available transportation resources and expenses – car costs, public transportation, parking fees, etc.
- Mutually agree upon “home rules” that promote independence... *consider negotiating things like living expenses and chores that support their new responsibilities*

FERPA Facts

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of students’ education records. Once a student enters college or turns 18 years old, parental rights under FERPA transfer to the student. Information from student records is typically not shared unless that student is a dependent, gives written permission, or there’s a health or safety emergency.

Institutions are required to post an annual FERPA notification, so check out the school website — or just ask.

Source: Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education

FAMILY CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Your student will be adding something special to our campus community and we look forward to supporting all students through graduation! We recognize that there may be times when a question, concern or issue arises in which a direct campus contact would be helpful.

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

- Website:
www.murraystate.edu/studentaffairs
- Office: Wells Hall, Room 425
- Phones: 270.809.6831
Toll free: 1.800.909.1507
- Emails:
msu.studentaffairs@murraystate.edu
or msu.success@murraystate.edu

RACER FAMILY

The Division of Student Affairs is committed to the care and well-being of your student. We want them to have a positive campus life experience, be successful academically and graduate. Your involvement in their college success is important to us. We welcome you and your student to become a valued member of the Racer Family.

GOT QUESTIONS?

Find contact information and more at:

- Division of Student Affairs
www.murraystate.edu/studentaffairs
- Family Resources
www.murraystate.edu/family

EMERGENCY

If your student is in a situation that you believe requires emergency attention, please call: 270.809.2222 or 911

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Be Our Guest...

We hope you will join your student in enjoying some of the special family focused events we have scheduled *each* year.

Fall Events:

- Family Weekend – Find out more at www.murraystate.edu/familyweekend
- Homecoming – Find out more at www.murraystate.edu/homecoming

Spring Events:

- Campus Lights – Find out more at www.murraystate.edu/campus/traditions
- All Campus Sing – Find out more at www.murraystate.edu/campus/traditions



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