

**Family Newsletter**

October 2016

* Remind your student of free services offered at many campuses, including tutoring, advising, disability services, counseling services, career services, advising centers, language labs, and writing centers. There is no shame in asking for help.
* Encourage your student to get involved in school activities. There are hundreds of student organizations they can join. Many campuses also have volunteer centers. Encourage them to get a job. Every activity they are in forces them to become better time managers. But, caution them about getting over-involved, too!
* Are your students prepared to solve problems on their own? Can they navigate roommate issues? Can they make their own doctor’s appointments? Do they know that they can still call you for advice?
* Help them to realize that things might be changed at home when they return. You might have given their room to another sibling, they might have lost a family pet, you might have trashed their baseball glove from 3rd grade because they’ve surely outgrown it. Help them make adjustments to their new lives as adults.
* If you are able, send them $10 in a card. It could be pizza money. Homemade cookies are great too. It’s an awesome way to make new friends.
* Visit them if you can, but not too often. Be sure to call first. You might be surprised if you don’t!

Having your child go away to school might also mean some big adjustments for you. It might be a little more lonely around the house for a while. Try not to entice them to come home too often. They will still have projects and assignments due. Every time they come home, that is less time they have to connect with their new friends and new activities they have committed to. Use this time to read a book, engage in a new hobby, or travel if you can. If this is your last child going to college, you might experience the “empty nest” syndrome for a while. Generally, time will help the adjustment period for both you and your child. Cell phones with Skype or Facetime can provide virtual visits with one another. Use of technology can help keep those family connections strong.

**Getting your student prepared to be a college student**

Going to college is a marvelous experience, as some of you may know. Still, some things have changed since we have been college students ourselves ☺ For other parents, this could be a scary time, since your child might be the first in the family to go away from home. Here are a few hints to make the experience better either way.

* Keep a folder of important information. Make sure you keep copies of bills, receipts, class schedules, and other university related materials all in one place.
* Work with you student to understand when they need to be at school, when breaks are, what the on-campus housing policy is over breaks, degree requirements, and grading. Most of this information can be found in a university’s bulletin.
* Remind your student that requirements in college courses are going to be very different than what they are accustomed to in high school. While there might not be assigned homework, there are still reading expectations. Tests might cover 3-5 chapters, as opposed to one chapter.
* Studying requirements or habits may need to change. Perhaps they didn’t need to study much before, but now there is a lot of reading. Perhaps I already mentioned that. A good rule of thumb is to plan on 2-3 hours of study for every class.
* Valuable lessons for your students to know are to attend class, sit in the front, participate in discussions, make sure to have pen and paper in every class, keep up with reading, don’t miss tests or exams, and know the expectations and deadlines for assignments. Generally major assignments, tests, and class requirements will be listed on a syllabus. Make sure your student refers to it all the time. Professors don’t often remind students of due dates.

**6 Tips Women Need for Successful Career Growth**

*Adapted from Six Tips Women Need for Successful Tech Careers. DiversityInc Winter 2015-15, p 36*

Many fields are male-dominant and it may take a little more work for a woman to feel like she fits in. Below are some tips that I’ve modified to fit any career goals you may have. Be sure to share these tips with your daughters.

1. Make sure people know what your dreams/goals are.

If you want to achieve something great in your career, share those thoughts and ideas. When others hear what you are thinking about, they can help support you. Someone might have an article to share with you. Someone else might have a friend or relative who is doing something similar at another work place and be willing to talk to you about it. (That’s how easy networking is). Still another person may know of a conference or workshop that could help you out. So, you’ve got to be willing to share.

1. Ask for help.

I know from experience that this is something hard to do. We may need to ask for help with everyday projects. Or, we may need help to tackle those daunting projects. Either way, we often feel like we should be able to do things all on our own. Again, this is part of our networking abilities and a way to lighten the load we are carrying. Really, it’s ok to ask for help, or advice, or even an opinion. Work smarter, not harder.

1. Seek out advisors.

Similar to asking for help, this might be a hard thing to do. You may have a colleague or friend at work that you talk to about things now. Ask what they would do in certain situations. Find that mentor or peer coach whose opinion you value. And, that person doesn’t have to be at your current worksite. At different stages of our lives and careers we may have several different mentors.

1. Become a leader.

All too often we get so involved in our day-to-day activities that we forget that we have important things to share and many causes that we are passionate about. Find ways where you can be the leader. Are you good at organizing things? Can you convince people to do things? Do you have a great idea to share, but need help to pull it all off? Then take the lead. People will follow.

1. Have fun.

What’s the sense of doing anything if you’re not having fun at it? Make your worksite a friendly, fun place to be. Take some time for yourself, too. So, if you need time off to start or raise a family, do it. If you want to train to run a marathon, do it. If you want to read 50 books in the next year, do it. Just. Have. Fun. Life is short; enjoy it. You can return to the workforce after a break and still be very successful.

1. Find your own path.

There is more than one way to reach your goal, make your dream a reality, or to climb to the top of that corporate ladder. Some people take the most direct route, and that’s fine. Others may follow a more meandering path, but get to their end goal just the same. Explore new opportunities when you can. As cliché as it sounds, stop to smell the roses or take the path less traveled, if that’s what’s right for you. This is your career. This is your life path. Just believe in yourself.

**Senior Year Reference: Two-Year College or Tech School**

**Application Process**

*Applications are completed after the first of the year for fall admission.*

1.  Have your student show you College/Tech school websites and go to “Admissions.”

2.  Download paper application (or complete on-line application and then notify your school counselor).

3.  Submit paper application along with application fee to your school counselor.  Your counselor will mail your application, fee and transcript to the College/Technical School.

a.  All other community colleges and Tech Schools: you will receive communication from the school indicating when you can take the accuplacer/placement test and meet with an advisor to choose courses.

b.  Explore specialty programs (Nursing, Nuclear Medicine, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Sustainable Energy Technology, etc.) to determine admission requirements\*

\* You may need SAT or ACT scores

**GETTING YOUR SENIOR READY FOR COLLEGE**

1.  Help them to narrow their college choices to 5-8 schools.
2.  Encourage them to go to the School Counselor and let him/her know which schools they are applying to. (Remind them to tell their School Counselor if they are using the Commonapp for any colleges).
3.  On the calendar, write the deadlines for the college applications.
4.  Be sure they are asking at least three (3) teachers for letters of recommendation.
5.  Have them show you colleges websites, click on Admissions/Undergraduate Admissions and help them complete applications on-line.
6.  Make sure your student has requested official scores from SAT.
7.  Once their applications are complete, prompt your student to tell their School Counselor to send their transcript and letters of recommendation.
8.  Go to [www.FAFSA.ed.gov](http://www.FAFSA.ed.gov) and create a PIN number. Both you and your student will need one. You will need this PIN number many times. Perhaps take a picture of it with your phone, so you always have it.

9.  Go back after Oct 1 and help your student complete their FAFSA. This is a new date change from previous years. FAFSA dollars are disbursed on a first-come-first-serve basis, so complete this as soon as you can.
10.  If colleges send emails or letters saying items are missing, have your student call the admissions offices to double check.
11.  Once your student receives his/her admission letter, get them to send in their “Intent to Register” notification along with their housing deposit.

Even though they might not admit it, they may be missing you as much as you are missing them. Today, there are many ways to stay in touch from phone calls, texts, Skype or other programs, to Facebook. Don’t worry if they don’t want to “friend” you on Facebook, because they may be reserving that space for friends, not parents. You can always send them mail, especially if it contains money. Care packages of cookies or even pizza coupons are always welcome.

Keep in mind that while it is healthy to sit down and have a good cry as they leave the driveway, it isn’t normal to continue having crying jags. If you find yourself in this situation, or feeling depressed or anxious, you may want to seek out some counseling and/or therapy. Try getting involved in outside activities that you had put off “until the children are older.” Talk with your friends who have also sent their kids off to school. Remember to stay in touch with your spouse or partner. This could turn out to be the time you’ve been waiting for. Perhaps you can travel, go to the movies, or indulge in other favorite activities now that you have more time and don’t have to worry about the kids. And think of all the money you will be saving by having smaller food bills, water bills, electric bills. And no more sharing a bathroom! Perhaps you will even rekindle that romance with just the two of you at home.

**Empty Nest Syndrome: Is it Real?**

If the student you are sending off to college next fall is the last one at home, you might experience what is commonly called *Empty Nest Syndrome*. And it is a very real thing. Empty nest syndrome is a psychological condition that people experience. Research shows that more women than men are affected by this, and it may be because women tend to be the primary care givers in the household. Some common symptoms include feeling depressed, sadness, and even grief. Generally speaking, more people experience this effect in the fall when students typically leave for college, but you might also experience it if your child gets married and leaves home. In either case, that child no longer needs you on a day-to-day basis.

There are a few things you can do to prepare for their departure and to lessen the pain of separation. You will feel better if you know you have prepared them to take care of themselves. Have you taught them about doing laundry, cooking, creating a budget and living within it, how to pay bills, when to get the oil changed in the car, how to work out problems with friends and/or roommates? If not, you still have this year to impart this knowledge. If they are going away to college, it will be just a few months until they come home again for the holiday break.

Remind your shy child that this is a great adventure for them as well as a time to mature. They will find new friends and take part in activities, discussions, and experiences that will surely broaden their horizons. The child that returns from their first semester will have grown and changed in the few short months they were gone.



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