Important Upcoming Dates

- Monday, October 26 through Friday, November 20: Spring class registration
- Friday, November 13: Last day to drop a class; will receive a “W” on transcript
- Wednesday, November 25 at 8:00 a.m.: Thanksgiving Break begins (no classes- residence halls remain open)
- Monday, November 30 at 8:00 a.m.: Classes resume
- Friday, December 11: Last day of classes for Fall semester
- Monday, December 14: Final exams begin
- Friday, December 18 at 5:00 p.m.: Residence halls close for winter break
  - Students living in residence halls that close for break (all halls except Knox, York, Kennebec, and DTA/patch) must vacate the halls within 24 hours after their last final or by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 18- whichever comes first.
- Sunday, January 17 at 10:00 a.m.: Residence halls re-open for spring semester
- Monday, January 18: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day- no classes
- Tuesday, January 19: Classes begin for spring semester
- Monday, January 25: Last day to add classes
- Monday, February 1: Last day to drop classes
- Friday, March 4: Residence halls close for spring break at 5:00 p.m.
  - Students living in residence halls that close for break must vacate the halls
- Sunday, March 20 at 10:00 a.m.: Residence halls re-open

Spring Semester Class Registration

You may have already heard panic in your student’s voice at the thought of having to register for classes for spring semester so soon. This can be a very stressful process the first time around, so our staff in the first year residence halls and the First Year Center will be providing much hands-on support and assistance through the next few weeks. In addition, I want to make sure you all as family members also are aware of how this process works.

Most first-year students will be registering for their spring semester classes between November 16 and November 18, though students who entered UMaine with AP or previous college credits may register sooner. The next page will explain the entire registration process, including the fact that there are various stages or steps that your student will have to take. Some of the key things for you to know:

- Students are expected to lead this process. While advisors and other staff will assist in helping student with the logistics of the process, and may offer suggestions about meeting various requirements, the student is ultimately responsible for making sure that they complete this process.

- New this year, the university is offering a Winter Session. During winter break students will have the opportunity to take online general education courses. These classes count as part of their spring semester registration, and can be paid for with their spring financial aid package. If your student did not complete 15 credits this semester (the standard credit requirement in order to graduate in four years), this is a great way to catch up. Or, if your student struggled with taking 15 credits at the same time for fall semester, they can take an online course over break and register for just 12 credits for the rest of spring semester.

- The Academic Support Coordinator staff in the First Year Center will be programming in all of the first-year residence halls over the next few weeks to assist students with preparing for class registration. Alternately, students can schedule an individual appointment by calling us at 207.581.1420.
The Online Class Registration Process

UMaine's class registration process is on-line, through MaineStreet. Below is an overview of the process.

1. **To be sure that your student does not have any holds that would prevent them from registering**, your student should first check MaineStreet. Holds may include an outstanding balance, or an administrative hold because we have not received all copies of their immunization records, etc. All this information is found in the student’s “Student Center” under Holds, Messages, or Account Summary.
   - See next page for more information about how to clear various account holds.
   - Even if your student does have a hold on their account, which will keep them from registering for classes for some time, they should still go through all of the steps below. That way, as soon as the hold is cleared, they can enroll as soon as possible, hopefully ensuring that they get the classes they want.

2. **Your student should identify their enrollment date.** This information is also on MaineStreet, in the Student Center under Enrollment Dates.
   - If your student is in class during their registration time, they can ask a friend to complete the process, or simply wait until class is over. They should not plan to attempt to complete registration during another class, as this is highly disrespectful to both the faculty and other students in that classroom.

3. Using the Wish List function in MaineStreet (also in the Student Center) **your student should search the course catalog for all courses being offered through UMaine for spring semester**. Your student should review the general education requirements checklist and the curriculum for their major to be sure that they are on track for completing both sets of requirements.
   - If your student does not yet have a major, they should focus on completing the general education requirements. They can look for classes that fulfill these requirements and also sound interesting, as this is a great way to try out new subjects (which may become the chosen major) while still ensuring that all classes completed “count” towards any major they choose. A full list of classes that fulfill each general education requirement can be found on the UMaine Catalog.

4. **As your student identifies classes they are interested in, they can add them to the Wish List.** This Wish List is similar to an online shopping cart. Putting something into the cart does not commit you to purchasing that item. But if you do decide to purchase that item, it’s waiting in your shopping cart so that you don’t have to search out the item again later.
   - By putting classes into the Wish List, your student can keep track of various courses that they’re interested in. They can also put multiple sections of the same class in the Wish List. This way, if they know they have to take Physics 121 next semester, they can put multiple sections of that course into the Wish List. If they later find another course they want or need to take, but it overlaps a section of Physics, they know that there are still options available to take both courses.

5. **Once your student has a full list of possible classes, he/she will want to Validate the Wish List.** The Validation process will tell your student if there are overlaps in class times for the selected courses, if they do not meet one of the requirements for a class (i.e. need Junior standing or special permission), or if they have not completed a prerequisite course (i.e. students need to successfully complete MAT 122 before taking MAT 126). Students can validate multiple sets of classes, as well, to see if there is a particular combination of classes or class sections they prefer.

6. **Your student will likely be required to meet with their advisor before registering.** Advisers will expect students to have begun putting together their Wish List for class registration prior to this meeting. While Advisers are there to offer advice, the class registration process really puts a lot of the power and responsibility on the student. After the Advisers has reviewed your student’s Wish List, they will provide your student with a unique registration PIN number. Without this PIN number, your student will not be able to complete the registration process. Please note that some Advisers may only consult about the registration process via email, while other students may go through this entire process in their First Year Seminar course.

7. **Almost done!** On your student’s actual enrollment date (during the specified window of time) they will need to log back into MaineStreet, go into the Wish List, select the courses they want to enroll in, click Enroll and follow the next few steps to complete registration for spring semester 2016. **This is the step that many students forget to take- even though it’s the most important one!**
How to Help Your Student Choose the ‘Right’ Major

Grant McCormack, Academic Support Coordinator for Somerset and Oxford Halls

Let’s be honest for a minute – how often do you ask your student what they’re planning on doing in college? Probably more often than you realize. You might have heard a lot of different ideas from them, as well. I know I personally went from wanting to study food science to music to medicine to biology to education, and each time I switched was more stressful than the last. It doesn’t help much that colleges are adding more programs and majors every year, so there are far more choices to make now than there were before.

So with all the new choices, what do you say to your student when they tell you they don’t know what major they want? First and foremost, be patient! It’s a difficult decision to declare a major after only a few months of being in college, and sometimes they don’t ‘see the light’ of their ideal major until their third semester or later. We have general education requirements to help students explore different subjects and topics, and sometimes that one random class that they signed up to take on a whim is what will lead them to a major. Even if your student has dreamed about being a doctor since they could say ‘stethoscope,’ college is a time of growth and development for students. They’ll want to try new things and explore all the options they have for career paths, so share in the excitement and curiosity they have about their different choices! Ask them some questions, get to know a little more about what they’re studying now, and ask about why they’re interested in this new major.

The next important point is programs might not be what they’re expecting. Let’s think about engineering – everyone hears engineering and instantly thinks about making money, just like medical school and business degrees. What students don’t realize is the intensive academic course load that comes with these same majors. Going through their first semester of college can be a huge eye-opener to how difficult the classes really are. If your engineering student is taking a pre-calculus course and hates math, it might be time to ask them why they decided to pursue engineering. The conversation you have could be the first time they’ve thought through why they want to be an engineer, and that could be the push they need to realize their passion is somewhere else. Help them find what they want to do, but remember – it’s ultimately their decision. You have the opportunity to be that support net that helps push them to the next level and find something they really love.

Another important point to keep in mind is many college students don’t know how to ask for help. They might understand something is bothering them about their classes, but they might not be able to put the pieces together. We have a lot of offices at UMaine with staff members who are more than happy to help out in whatever way we can. The Career Center has a dedicated staff of career counselors that can provide assessments and discussion to point your student in the right direction. They also have a mentor database your student can use to connect with people in their potential career field. We also have the First-Year Center located in Androscoggin Hall that is staffed by myself and other Academic Support Coordinators. Our primary goal is to support students in whatever way we can, and we’ve talked many students through major choices and instructed them on how to switch if that’s what they want. Students can also talk to their advisors, Resident Assistants, or professors for additional perspectives. There are plenty of people who are more than willing to answer any questions your student might have– they just have to seek out the help!

For Assistance with Clearing Class Registration Holds
For academic holds, students should contact the Dean of their Academic College.
- Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture: 105 Winslow Hall, 207.581.3202
- Education and Human Development: 151 Shibles Hall, 207.581.2412
- Engineering: 210 Advanced Manufacturing Center, 207.581-2217
- Business: 211 DP Corbett Building, 207.581.1968
- Liberal Arts and Sciences: 105 Stevens Hall, 207.581-1952
For financial holds, students should contact the Bursar’s Office.
- 100 Alumni Hall, 207.581.1521
For immunization or other records holds, students should contact Student Records.
- Wingate Hall, 207.581.1288
UMaine Resources for Sexual/Relationship Violence Prevention and Support  
Submitted by the UMaine Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Prevention Committee

As much as we hate to think about it, sending our students off to college can mean sending them into difficult situations. The University of Maine System has provided an informative and engaging online Sexual Assault Prevention Training for all students. We encourage parents and families to view the training either on their own, or -even better- with their student. If you follow the above link you can login as a guest and learn about ways students can help keep themselves and others safe on campus. Use the password 14867demo to complete your login.

Many other resources are available for UMaine students, both to receive help themselves, or to help them help a friend. Resources are available both on campus and within the greater Bangor community, if the student wishes for additional anonymity. Some of these resources are confidential and others are private. The difference is that in a confidential situation the information students share will be kept between themselves and the provider. In a private situation, information may need to be shared with others to keep the student or the larger community safe. It’s a fine line and can be hard to navigate in a stressful situation. With that in mind, we advise you to read through the brochure for the Office of Sexual Assault and Violence Prevention. This information may be useful to you, as a parent or family member, should you find yourself needing to assist your student in knowing what to do, and whom can help.

As professionals working to help make UMaine a safe place for students, we believe parents and families make a crucial difference in helping their student feel prepared to take on the world. Unfortunately, that world may some day include sexual or relationship violence. Watching the Sexual Assault Prevention Training and talking with your student about it can have a big impact in your students’ safety. With Thanksgiving Break coming up, this can be an ideal time to watch the video together and talk even more about this important topic.

Access to Student Grades

Several parents have contacted me recently to ask how they can get access to their students’ grades. Unlike many high schools, where there is a central database that tracks all student grades (and attendance), or where it is commonplace to issue mid-semester grade reports, this is not something that is commonly done at the collegiate level. Students at UMaine are generally expected to track their own performance.

Instructors issue a syllabus at the beginning of the semester that explains the grade breakdown for their course. This generally includes the number and type of assignments that will be due during the semester, as well as the percentage of the grade that each assignment is worth. Some instructors do use MaineStreet or another online system for their course (to post assignments, for online homework, for class discussions, etc.), and may post grades on this site, as well. However, there is no other way in which the university releases grades directly to parents during the semester.

Therefore, if you are seeking information about how your student is doing academically, this will require you to talk directly with your student. I recommend asking very specific questions, such as the following:

1. How many classes have you missed? Students who miss class more frequently almost always prove to do poorly in those classes.

2. How much time are you spending on homework in a normal day/week? Students should typically be setting aside two hours for homework for every one hour that they are in class.

3. What sort of grade do you think you currently have in each class? What leads you to believe this? Studies show that 1/2 of college students typically cannot estimate what grades they are earning in their courses even 2/3 of the way through the semester.

If your student needs assistance estimating their grades, ask them to find any graded assignments that they have gotten back from the instructor and then check the syllabus for the grading policy/breakdown. Alternately, your student can also contact their instructor to talk to them further about the grade for a given class.