

UMaine First-Year Parent and Family Newsletter



August 15, 2019

Can you believe it's almost the start of the school year? In just two weeks you'll be heading to Orono to drop your student off to begin their UMaine experience! By now, you should have received a mailing from the university with information about Maine Hello (our move-in day for new students). This mailing will include some directions regarding packing and arrival to campus, an overview of the logistics for the move-in process, what we're going to ask of you when you get here, what you can expect of us and our staff when you arrive, and a special Maine Hello map that details a specific route for traffic going to each area of campus. We ask you to read this information thoroughly and to contact us if you have any additional questions by calling the First Year and Transfer Center at 207.581.1420 or emailing us at maine.hello@maine.edu. If you did not receive this mailing or possibly misplaced it, all of the information about this day can be found at <https://umaine.edu/fytc/maine-hello/mainehelloinfo/>.

This newsletter includes our answers to commonly asked questions about move-in preparation, Maine Hello, and Fall Welcome Weekend. The other sections of this edition include advice that we've solicited from various folks, to assist you as parents and family members, in letting your student go.

If you attended summer orientation and were hoping to review the parent presentation, you can download it here: <https://umaine.edu/fytc/families/orientation-information/>

If you did not attend orientation, take a look at this presentation! There is a lot of helpful information (or so we hope!)

I hope you find this information helpful! As always, feel free to email or call with further questions or concerns. Please know we always publish our newsletter at <https://umaine.edu/fytc/families/resources/>

Katie Taylor
Assistant Director, Student Life

How Your Relationship with Your Child is Changing and Some Tips for Navigating this Change

By the staff at the University of Maine Counseling Center

Parents and students have different expectations about how they'll spend time together during school breaks. While parents might want to use this time to reconnect with their child, the child often wants to use the time to make money by picking up shifts at their summer job, or by reconnecting with their friends who aren't going to the same university or college. Spending time with friends is a normal part of the process by which your student separates from you and becomes an adult.

If you're strict about curfews when your student comes home for breaks, this can cause a lot of resentment because they've experienced such freedom while they've been away at school. We encourage you to talk with your student about what time they expect to get in, and what you feel is reasonable.

Try to avoid things that could cause a major rift between you and your child. You may be surprised at the changes that you see in them as they develop their own values and viewpoints on the world. When you do discuss topics where you find you and your student disagree it's always good to give a rational for your position. They're much more likely to accept it if you do.

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Parents often have the greatest difficulty letting go of the oldest, only, and youngest children. The oldest is the guinea pig, so you may not be sure you've readied them fully to be on their own. The youngest is the "baby" and giving them up means facing your own issues with aging and having an empty nest. Be aware of how your child going to college may be affecting you.

Attempts to control behavior by extending or removing financial assistance can lead to resentment and feelings of inadequacy. As children make the transition into adult one of the major tasks that they must accomplish is finding a sense of financial independence from their parents. Thus you can actually hinder their growth and development.

Homesickness is more common than students are willing to admit. The best way to help your student through it is to make them go through it. If you jump in to save them at the first sign of trouble they won't learn to navigate these social issues for themselves. Assess the situation, and if it seems serious, let a Residence Life staff member know so that we can assist from close by.

Encourage your children to stay on campus for a few weeks before going home. The first few weeks are critical; most students who drop out do so during the first six weeks. They need to get rooted and the best way to do that is to focus on life here, not at home.

Going to college often leads to feelings of insecurity and loss for students who are leaving their homes and their childhood. It's important they have a home – and *their* room – to come home to. The idea of having roots and security they can return to is important, especially during a time of such significant change in their lives. We encourage you not to make any major changes to their room at home, at least for the first year.

Don't worry too much about the grades your student gets during the first year. They are experiencing a lot of change and adjustment, which may be shaking their confidence. They are part of a new community, perhaps the largest they've ever lived in. This is likely the first time they are truly independent and making so many choices for themselves. And intellectually, this is the most capable group of peers that they've ever competed against. Express your belief to them that they will succeed and this can help develop their self-confidence.

Finally, try to relax and enjoy the years ahead. You are both experiencing growth yourselves, so your relationship will also grow and change.

Tips for Parents of Students who are Transferring to the University of Maine

By Sarah Henry, Director of Student Accessibility Services, and the mother of a son who transferred after his first year

1. Support your student's decision and share his or her excitement!
2. Encourage your student to learn about student organizations and consider joining a club.
3. Suggest your student create an "Academic Information" file and place any materials about his or her major and program in it. Include a copy of graduation requirements, required classes, a printout of what transfer credits were received, and a copy of the semester schedule in this file.
4. Encourage you student to connect with his or her academic advisor, or the department's advising center early in the semester. Bring the Academic Information file to their class registration and other meetings.
5. Learn where the Information Technology Help Center is located (the IT Help Center is in 17 Shibles Hall, 207-581-2506). There are a number of different computer programs and web interfaces used at UMaine and if your student is having difficulty with any of them, calling IT can help your student avoid getting frustrated.
6. Encourage your student to use the UMaine web portal, my.umaine.edu. Once a student is logged into the portal he or she can easily navigate to Blackboard, MaineStreet, Gmail and other websites from this one handy website.
7. Remember that just like starting college the first time, the transfer process can be stressful.
8. Encourage your student to visit the Career Center on campus <http://umaine.edu/career/>. The Career Center will help with career planning, job search strategies, resume writing, experiential education and more. It is a great resource.
9. If your student has an IEP or 504 plan or received accommodations at a previous school, and will need disability accommodations at UMaine, send documentation of disability to the Student Accessibility Services office and have your student schedule a meeting with the professional staff there. The office phone number is 207-581-2319, <https://umaine.edu/studentaccessibility/>.
10. Come visit your student during Friends and Family Weekend (September 20-22, 2019) and Homecoming (October 25th-27th 2019)!

Supporting Your First-Year Student if they are not Living on Campus

By Lisa Morin, Coordinator for the Bodwell Center for Service and Volunteerism, and the mother of two commuter students

First-year students living off campus face some different challenges from students living on campus. They don't always take advantage of the resources available on campus to help them, because they don't spend as much time here. They also don't have Residence Life staff, who are trained in the needs of students, keeping an eye on them. Even though I work in Student Life, I have learned a lot about supporting commuter students from my son and daughter, who live/lived off-campus.

1. You are no longer in charge. This is a good thing, but also a difficult reality for many parents. It is time for your student to take charge of his or her life, and this is a great supportive environment. Even though you are seeing your student regularly, don't let him or her rely on you too much. Financial aid emails and registration reminders go to your student, not you. Your student should be handling everything. My daughter quickly realized how approachable and helpful people on campus are. There is great satisfaction in watching my daughter be comfortably in control.

2. Your student should not study at home. Maybe your student spent hours studying at home during high school. Mine didn't. Both my kids have nice desks in their rooms that have never seen a book – video games and makeup, but no books. They usually did their homework during study halls or sitting on the couch. College classes are challenging. They are supposed to be. Encourage your student to plan time to study on campus. Students studying at home may be more easily distracted and possibly fall into old routines or bad habits. There are many great places on campus to study. Your student should explore and find a place that feels comfortable to them, and schedule time before, after or between classes for studying. If they have a question about their schoolwork, the resources to answer those questions are on campus, so they should be too!

3. Your student needs to make new friends and explore new things. Maybe your daughter's or son's best friend is also coming to UMaine. My daughter had two good friends here during her first year. UMaine has students from all over the world. This is a great opportunity to meet new people and make new friendships. The more people they know and the more fun they have, the more they will enjoy their 4 years at UMaine.

4. Being a parent of a college student is different from being a parent of a high school student. When my daughter told me at 9:30 pm that she was going to the library to study with friends, I had a moment of panic. It's 9:30 – I want to go to bed, and you want to go out. Apparently, that is a normal time to study, and the library staff work very long hours. I should be grateful that she wanted to go meet people and study. Campus is a very safe place. UMaine police will even bring your student to their car if they don't have someone to walk with. There have been a few times when I wanted to step in. When she struggled in Geography, I wanted to ground her and make her study more. She talked to her advisor and took the class again in her second year. She did better, but Geography is not her thing. When she started writing a paper at 10:00 pm the night before it was due, I wanted to scold and give a lecture. She got it done, she didn't sleep that night, and she decided that was not a good idea. It is hard to take a step back, especially when they are right in front of us and making a questionable decision, but the best time to let our kids try it on their own is when we are right there to help, if they want us to.

I hope your student is very successful this year. Know that help is available for nearly any problem he or she might have. The First Year and Transfer Center and the Commuter Lounge can always point them in the right direction. Encourage your student to take advantage of everything the University of Maine has to offer. This is a great place to be!

Move-in Preparation

Q: Does my student need to bring cleaning supplies?

A: Our custodial staff clean the buildings daily (including public areas, such as hallways, lobbies and bathrooms). We do recommend that students bring cleaning supplies for their own use in their rooms. Students can check out vacuums, brooms and dust pans from the residence hall front desk.

Q: For Maine Hello, we are coming to campus with more than one student with last names in different time slots. When should we arrive?

A: You can plan to come during either time slot. If the students are moving into the same building, choose the time slot that works better for you. If the students are moving into different buildings, then you should go first to the hall with the student whose name is earlier in the alphabet. You'll then need to go back through the welcome lot to go to the second building.

Q: My student did not attend orientation, or did not stay at orientation long enough to get their MaineCard. Will he/she need the MaineCard in order to check-into their residence hall?

A: Each student will need to present a state ID (or passport) in order to check in at their residence hall. However, it is strongly suggested that you head to campus early on Maine Hello and stop first at the Memorial Union to pick up your student's MaineCard. Without the MaineCard, we cannot give your student permanent access to their

Advice from the Parents and Families of the Class of 2020

At the end of the 2016-2017 academic year we asked the parents and family members of the Class of 2020 (last year's first-year students) what they wished they had talked to their students about before sending them off to college. Here is what they said:

- the timeline, consequences, and possible benefits of dropping a class
- money- how expensive things are, how loans work, etc.
- making sure to complete everything on the MaineStreet to-do list immediately
- homesickness and that it's normal and ok, and also how to work through it
- that we wished he had let us know he was struggling academically so we could have helped
- how often we were going to communicate- she texted a lot at the beginning but then that stopped and I got worried unnecessarily
- handling peer pressure and being a better self-advocate
- wishing I had clarified that it was his responsibility to monitor his MaineStreet account, not mine
- what to do when she was upset with something her roommate did, because she still had to live with that person and had they just talked it out things might have been ok
- his faith and how to make sure that he stayed involved in the church while at college
- that it's ok to try and fail- you can't be the best at everything
- personal choices have consequences and they can be consequences that follow him forever
- his responsibility for his car, especially when it came to his friends wanting to borrow it
- her health issues and how she needed to make sure that she made that a priority in her life
- use of video games, and how they needed to be for down time only- also, what is considered down time
- reassuring him that he could do this and that he had made the right choice
- being true to herself



room, and the MaineCard also serves as your student's access to their meal plan.

Q: How much room is there under the beds, in the event that we want to buy storage containers?

A: At the standard height, all residence hall beds will allow for 18" of clearance from the floor to the bottom of the springs. If your student requested a mid-loft, there will be 27" of clearance from floor to springs, and with a high loft there will be 51" of clearance. If your student wants to request a loft, they can do so by [logging into myHousing](#) and following the directions provided.

Q: Which events during Fall Welcome Weekend are for parents and families?

A: The events that are scheduled for the weekend are really focused on the new students and helping them learn to navigate the campus and preparing to start classes on Monday. They will be introduced to staff members from across the campus, will have many opportunities to learn about UMaine culture and traditions, will have the opportunity to meet new friends in a variety of settings, and more. We strongly encourage parents and families to head on out of town on Friday (after the football game!) and leave your student here to settle in with us!

Q: We aren't able to arrive to campus on Friday, August 30. What are our options?

A: Once we open on Friday morning, most of our residence halls are open through the weekend.

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