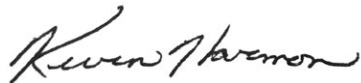


Dear parents and families,

December is upon us and that means final exams time. Earlier this year, I compared a student's experience during a semester to a roller coaster ride. Well, the end of the ride isn't always a smooth roll up to the station house. Even once the semester is over, your student could still be in the upside-down portion of a loop-to-loop. Be supportive and keep your conversations focused on what can be controlled and the positives. We cannot go back and take a do-over; however, we can prepare for January with a fresh plan for success. If you need assistance or advice in this process, the holiday break is a great time to suggest your student reach out to the University as we are here and have time to talk. Our first full day of classes will begin on Jan. 12, 2021. Classes will continue to be offered face-to-face and in hybrid form.

Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season!

Respectfully,



Kevin Harmon
Vice President for Student Affairs

Be seen. Be heard. Be empowered.

COVID-19 safety precautions called for adjusted learning during the Fall 2020 semester. Below are examples of how Minot State worked to make the semester safe and successful for our students.



Chemistry lab taught remotely by Dr. Christopher Heth; glass partitions installed between stations.



MSU choir held physically distanced rehearsal outdoors near the Gordon B. Olson Library.



Social dance class utilized pool noodles to maintain safe contact with partners.



IMPORTANT DATES

DECEMBER

14 – 18 – Final exams

18 – Jan. 7 – Sodexo dining closed

28 – Official grades available

JANUARY

11 – Spring semester 2021 classes begin after 4 P.M.

12 – First full day of classes

18 – Martin Luther King Day, University closed

21 – Last day to add classes

21 – Last day to drop a class or withdraw from all classes and receive a 100% refund

View more dates, deadlines, and events at MinotStateU.edu/calendar.

Financial Aid Information

Spring fees

Spring semester tuition, residence hall fees and meal plan fees will be posted to student Campus Connection accounts in early December. Spring semester fees are due to be paid in full by Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2021. Your student can view a detailed list of their charges for a specific semester by clicking on Account Summary under the Finance section in Campus Connection.

Bookstore charging

Students who have enrolled and have accepted financial aid in Campus Connection for the spring semester may charge their books at the MSU Barnes & Noble Bookstore from Monday, Jan. 4 through Thursday, Jan. 21.

Direct deposit of excess financial aid

Students who expect to receive a refund of excess financial aid, which occurs when the total of the student's financial aid is greater than the amount owed to Minot State, are encouraged to sign up for direct deposit rather than receiving a paper check. With direct deposit, the funds are deposited directly in the student's bank account and the check is never lost in the mail. Students can sign up in Campus Connection by clicking on the "Enroll in Direct Deposit" link. Additional directions are available at MinotStateU.edu/busoffic/pages/direct-deposit-of-financial-aid.shtml.

2021-22 Minot State scholarship application

The Minot State general scholarship application will open to accept applications for the 2021-22 school year in early December. The application form will be available online at the Minot State financial aid website at MinotStateu.edu/finaid. The application deadline is Feb. 15, 2021. All returning students are encouraged to submit the general scholarship application every year.



Calculating GPA in college — what students need to know

Amy Baldwin, Ed.D., CollegiateParent.com

Recently I counseled a student who wanted to drop two classes because he worried that he would sink his GPA. After a lackluster fall term, he needed to be sure he could get off academic probation and knew that his low grades in those two classes could drag him under yet again. But he wasn't aware of the potential consequences his low GPA could have on his overall progress.

GPA — grade point average — is a term most students are very familiar with, but they often don't know how it is calculated in college. While a student's GPA doesn't equal their worth or potential, GPA can affect a student's ability to earn a degree at an institution and create a barrier to post-graduation plans.



Why is it important to know how to calculate a GPA?

The short answer is that it can help your student keep track of their progress. The longer answer is that knowing how to calculate GPA will help them make realistic plans and adjustments to their current academic habits.

For example, the student I advised used what he knew about GPA calculation to consider dropping two classes for fear the grades would drop his GPA even lower.

Understanding the calculation process can also help your student create short- and long-term academic goals. If your student wants to earn a spot in a competitive nursing program, for instance, they may need to earn at least a 3.7 GPA to be considered. Earning a 3.7 GPA will require a strong academic plan to study and monitor grades along the way.

What can GPA affect?

- **GPA affects academic standing.** Depending on the institution's policies, a low GPA may put your student on alert, probation or suspension. And this can affect your student's ability to progress toward a degree.
- **GPA affects financial aid.** A low GPA can affect renewable scholarships, grants and loans, which could hamper the ability to pay for college.



TERMS TO KNOW

Grade points = the grade translated into points. A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, F/NC (No credit) = 0

Quality points = the grade point multiplied by the number of credit hours. For example: 4 (grade points for A) x 3 (credit hours) = 12 quality points

Grade point average = the total quality points divided by the total number of credit hours. For example, two A's and three B's in 3-credit-hour courses results in a 3.4 GPA for that semester.

- **GPA affects life outside of college.** Some students are not aware that on-campus work and participation in certain student and leadership organizations such as a fraternity or sorority can be affected by a low GPA. A low GPA can also affect your student's ability to earn an internship or a spot in a competitive professional and graduate school program.

How do you calculate GPA?

Most likely your student's college or university has an online GPA calculator, and I encourage you both to find it and use it. However, it is still important to know the process as it can help in estimating the effect of final course grades and in planning how best to use a student's time and energy.

Consider the following grades on 13 credit hours: A, A, A, A and D. If a student needs a 3.5 GPA to keep a scholarship, will they be able to with those grades? It depends on how many quality points they earn for each grade. If the D is in a 1-credit-hour course, the student will earn a 3.76 GPA. If the A is in a 1-credit-hour course, they will earn a 3.3 GPA. Same grades, same total number of credit hours, but different weights based on the credit hours of the course.

Grade	Grade Points	Credit Hours	Quality Points
A	4	3	12
A	4	3	12
A	4	3	12
A	4	3	12
D	1	1	1
Total		13	49
GPA			3.76

Grade	Grade Points	Credit Hours	Quality Points
A	4	3	12
A	4	3	12
A	4	3	12
A	4	1	4
D	1	3	3
Total		13	43
GPA			3.30

For the student who needed advice about his GPA, I walked him through all of the considerations including calculating what he could possibly make this semester and how that would affect his academic standing and his future plans to go to medical school. I wanted him to realize that he could make improvements to his GPA and that doing so could help him reach his long-term goals.

What to do when your student's GPA crashes:

- **Talk with financial aid.** Any time your student has a dip in their GPA, check in with the financial aid advisor to see how it may affect scholarships, grants or loans. If it is the first time the GPA has taken a nosedive, there may be a grace period in which your student has time to improve before aid is taken away. Note that there may be different GPA requirements for different types of aid. For example, your student's scholarship may require a 3.25, but your student's major may require a 2.0.
- **Talk with an advisor.** A low GPA can affect your student's ability to gain entry into or graduate from an undergraduate degree program. An advisor can help your student troubleshoot potential issues related to progressing through a degree plan.
- **Review what happened.** Find out why your student's GPA bit the dust. Academic struggles may be just one explanation. Other reasons can include mental health issues, lack of motivation, a misunderstanding, or a careless but costly mistake such as forgetting to turn in an assignment. The more your student knows why it happened, the more likely they can make changes next time.
- **Create a plan to improve habits that will improve GPA.** Talk with your student about what steps they will take to improve their GPA. Will they go to tutoring? Will they eliminate distractions? Will they check in with you if they need some guidance?