



Parent and Family Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2021

Dear parents and families,

As the calendar turns to November, you can count on your student being busy as they juggle classes and life. They may be sitting on some important feelings, including stress, and wondering about mid-term grades, if they are going to fail a class, and if they should stay enrolled in or drop a class. These topics are important yet can be difficult to discuss; however, I encourage you to talk to your students about these — and other — matters and offer your support. This is a great opportunity for you to help your student reflect on their experiences and to suggest they seek support from any of our student success resource centers on campus. Learn more at [MinotStateU.edu/asc/](https://www.minotstateu.edu/asc/). This is also the time of year to make sure that health and wellness habits are in place. The Wellness Center offers around-the-clock options for physical and mental health activities.

Thank you to all of the families who attended Parent & Family Weekend, it was a successful weekend and I enjoyed seeing many of you participate in the activities. I've included a couple pictures from the events at right.

Our dining center will be shut down from Nov. 25 until 5 P.M. on Nov. 28. The Office of Student Affairs will be hosting a traditional Thanksgiving meal on campus at noon on Thursday, Nov. 25 in the Beaver Dam for students.

Contact me at kevin.harmon@MinotStateU.edu and I will make arrangements for any requested meeting.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Kevin Harmon,
Vice President for Student Affairs



Parent & Family Weekend Event in the Beaver Dam



Bonfire in the Quad

Be seen. Be heard. Be empowered.

Help your student adjust to college academics

By Suzanne Shaffer, CollegiateParent.com

There are so many milestones in any parent's life. Your baby's first steps, their first words, the first day of school, and their first girlfriend or boyfriend. But there are few occasions more momentous than the day you send your teen or young adult off to college.

You will probably be feeling bittersweet about it. You're delighted they're on track to succeed in life and learning to become an independent adult, but you may also worry that college will be a difficult transition. You will no longer be able to see them every day to help with their health or their homework. You won't know if they are struggling academically unless they tell you — and many students struggle without ever telling their parents.

Psychology Professor Drew C. Appleby asked students enrolled in his freshmen learning community to describe the differences they were experiencing between their high school classes and their college classes. His students identified several differences and said that "both the amount and difficulty of the work they were required to do in college classes has increased significantly from high school."

They also listed time as a factor, citing the greater amount of time it took to complete assignments and the limited time they had to learn new material because of the faster pace of classes.



Additionally, they noted that learning was their responsibility and not that of the professors who led their classes. One student wrote, "you did not have to do reading assignments in high school because your teacher taught you everything that was in your textbook that you had to know for tests. In college, if you do not do your homework, you have no crutch to lean on. You are much more on your own in college classes."

Your new college student should be prepared to adapt to a different type of academic environment in college. Discuss these six key strategies with them before they leave for college and reinforce them during their college years.

1. Dealing with academic freedom

Students receive less direction in college than they did in high school. In college, your student has the freedom to choose their academic major, their electives, their professors, and the number of hours they attend class.

This freedom, though exhilarating, can also be overwhelming. College gives your student the opportunity to pursue self-exploration and discovery. They're free to pursue subjects and interests they enjoy and steer clear of the things they dislike. But balance is key, and the first semester should not be overloaded with more credit hours than your student can handle.

Encourage them to set realistic goals. And remind them that freedom comes with responsibility. They should work closely with their academic advisor and make sure they are on track to graduate in four years or less.

2. Managing the increase in study requirements

Your student will quickly discover they will do very little "work" in the classroom. Instead, professors expect students to pay attention and take advantage of class time for learning: listening to lectures, taking notes, and participating in discussions. Since most lectures move at a fast pace, your student will be responsible for deciding which points are important to write down and review later.

Homework and outside reading are critical in college. Tests and midterm and final exams will also be based on the work your student does outside the classroom. They

will spend much more time doing homework than they ever did in high school, and you won't be there to be sure they are doing it.

Encourage your student to create a study schedule based on the amount of work assigned and the time to complete it. My daughter did this religiously with her reading assignments. As she was assigned a book, she counted the pages and scheduled a specific number to read each day. That way she wasn't cramming to finish the book before it was due. Include study time to review class notes and highlight any information that might be on a test, midterm or final.

3. Tackling college-level academics

For many college students, transitioning to college-level academics requires adjusting their habits and expectations. It requires improved study habits and a mindset to accept the changes in academic settings. Classes are larger, often in huge lecture halls. The pace is faster with lengthier reading assignments. Standards are higher and grasping the material requires concentration. Professors expect them to show up for class, pay attention, and do the work.

If your student tends to procrastinate, college might provide a wake-up call. Waiting until the last minute to read a book, complete an assignment, or study for a test isn't as easy as it was in high school. The material is more difficult to grasp and retain. Professors may have little compassion for the student who doesn't turn in work on time or gives excuses for a poor grade due to lack of preparation.

That said, professors and TAs (teaching assistants) want your student to succeed, and they offer study sessions and office hours for students who need extra support with a topic or project.

4. Managing their time

You won't be able to micromanage your student in college and they'll have many distractions to deter them from the main reason they are attending college — to learn and eventually get a degree. There will be scheduled class time and group project time, but no one will be making sure they attend.

In college, your student will be given assignments that require large time commitments. Term papers, semester projects, and preparing for finals make up a large portion of their grades and your student is responsible for managing their time effectively to complete these assignments on time. They should read the syllabus

provided and make note of assignment deadlines and test dates.

There will also be a learning curve when it comes to balancing their time between academics and a social life. Your student will have free time to use as they choose and should most certainly take advantage of activities and opportunities on campus. But they should also learn to prioritize their studies and say no when the activity interferes with study time. Setting boundaries and managing time is crucial to your student's academic success.

5. Adjusting to different teaching styles

In high school, teachers teach the content of the textbook to help their students understand the material. Often, they hand out notes and study guides. Professors, on the other hand, may lecture nonstop, bringing in additional background information, and even discussing research related to the topic. It's up to the student to arrive prepared (by completing assigned reading in advance), take good notes, and review after class.

At some universities, introductory classes are taught by graduate student teaching assistants. In this case, your student may only see the professor a couple of times during the term. Every professor and TA has their own teaching style. Some your student may like and others they may not. But learning to adapt to these styles is a part of adjusting to college.

6. Asking for help

Most new students have problems adjusting to the college learning environment. Colleges provide plentiful resources to assist those who ask for help.

When your student feels overwhelmed, remind them to seek help on campus! The tutoring and campus writing center, their academic advisor, and even their professors can assist when asked. Professors have office hours and are more than willing to answer any questions related to their course materials.

These valuable resources are available to all students and your student should know where they are on campus and how to use them.

College academics may be a challenging adjustment for your student. They shouldn't despair if it takes a semester or two to get the hang of things. If they make use of the resources the school offers, stick to a study plan, and manage their time wisely, they'll adapt — and thrive.

Financial Aid Information

Unpaid balances

When students have an unpaid balance on their Student Account in Campus Connection after any waivers, scholarships, grants, and federal loans have been applied, there are a few options that we often discuss with families. We always encourage eligible students to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to ensure they have accessed all types of federal aid available first, but when those options have been exhausted, there are some additional options that might be considered.

- 1. Personal savings or earnings from work.** Some families are able to cover the remaining balance by accessing funds from savings or earnings from employment.
- 2. Minot State University Financial Aid Office Facebook page.** Follow the MSU Financial Aid Office Facebook page to learn about scholarship opportunities from various organizations that come up throughout the school year.
- 3. MSU Tuition Payment Plan.** This plan allows families to spread out the payments for fall and spring semesters over three months, rather than having to pay the entire balance in September for fall semester and in January for spring semester. There is a \$50 fee for enrolling in the plan each semester. Students typically must enroll in the Tuition Payment Plan and pay their first payment on or before the standard fee payment deadline for the semester. More information about the tuition payment plan is available here: [MinotStateU.edu/busoffic/pages/tuition-payment-plan.shtml](https://minotstateu.edu/busoffic/pages/tuition-payment-plan.shtml).
- 4. Federal PLUS Loans.** The Federal Direct PLUS Loan is available to parents of dependent students who file the FAFSA. Parents apply online at studentaid.gov.
- 5. Private education loans.** Private education loans are non-federal loans offered by a variety of lending institutions. Students are the borrower on these loans but typically, students will need a co-signer with good credit in order to qualify for these types of loans. For more information and a link to FASTCHOICE, a tool that allows students to compare the terms of several different private loans borrowed by MSU students in the past three years, visit [MinotStateU.edu/finaid/loans/index.shtml](https://minotstateu.edu/finaid/loans/index.shtml), select Private Loans, then click the

FASTCHOICE icon. Students are not limited to using lenders on this list.

If you or your student would like assistance determining how much to borrow in a PLUS Loan or private loan, our staff members are happy to assist you. Please call the Financial Aid Office at 701-858-3375 with any questions that you may have.

2022-23 FAFSA

The 2022-23 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opened on Oct. 1 at studentaid.gov. The 2022-23 FAFSA covers the Fall 2022, Spring 2023, and Summer 2023 semesters. Get an early start on applying for federal financial aid for next school year by submitting your FAFSA now!



IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

OCTOBER

31 – Last day to withdraw from 16-week classes and receive a 50% refund

NOVEMBER

4 – Last day to withdraw from second 8-week classes with 75% refund

11 – Veteran's Day, University closed

12 – Last day to drop 16-week courses

16 – Last day to withdraw from second 8-week classes with 50% refund

23 – Last day to drop 8-week courses

24 – Thanksgiving vacation, no classes

25 – Thanksgiving, University closed

26 – Thanksgiving vacation, no classes

View more dates, deadlines, and events at [MinotStateU.edu/calendar](https://minotstateu.edu/calendar).