



Parent and Family Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2022

Dear parents and families,

This month, our Residence Life office will open fall registration for current students. While many returning students choose to live off campus, I would like for you, as parents, to say, "Not so fast..." From our room rates and meal plans making economic sense, to residents earning higher grades and graduating at higher rates than peers who live off campus, to flexibility, living on campus may be a great choice for your student. For more reasons or to help your student apply for housing, visit MinotStateU.edu/life.

Minot State University continues to offer COVID-19 testing Monday through Friday in the Student Health Clinic and monthly vaccination events. For our on-campus residents only, we offer meal delivery to students in their residence hall or isolation quarters when identified as a case or close contact. Your student should complete and submit the self-report form found at MinotStateU.edu/covid if they are a case or close contact. This action causes notification to professors and meal deliveries, if applicable.

As always, I'm prepared to field any questions or concerns you may have at kevin.harmon@MinotStateU.edu.

Respectfully,

Kevin Harmon,
Vice President for Student Affairs



IMPORTANT DATES

FEBRUARY

- 21 – President's Day, University closed
- 21 – Last day to withdraw from all 16-wk. classes and receive 75% refund

MARCH

- 7 – Midterm grades
- 14-18 – Spring Break

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

Residence Life at Minot State – why live on campus?

Make the most of the college experience.

"Living on campus is such an enjoyable experience. I have been able to meet new people, become involved with the community, and engage in my studies on a more meaningful level."

Johanna Eben,
freshman,
professional
communication



"I like the late-night conversations that just happen when people are hanging out. It's amazing support."

Michaela Erfle, junior,
professional communication



Classes, dining, and activities are right next door.

"I love being really close to classes!"

Zhuoyu Yang, senior,
computer science



Make lifelong friends.

"Living on campus, I met my best friend from Canada. She is also in my same major so we can study together."

Wyniah Mintz, graduate student,
speech-language pathology



"Living on campus, I met my girlfriend."

Kyle Bjugstad, senior, business

Meal plans save you \$\$\$\$.



Statistically,
on-campus
students
graduate
sooner.



Help your student deal with digital distractions

By Alyssa Abel, [CollegiateParent.com](https://www.collegiateparent.com)

Living in the internet era means we're bombarded all day (and night) long with news and notifications. Parents text their kids when they want them to come downstairs for dinner. Phones ping with weather and traffic updates or social media posts at all hours.

Many of us can remember a less connected way of life — but not today's college generation. Gen Z doesn't know another lifestyle; they are one with their screens.

Now, with some amount of online/remote learning having become a regular part of our students' ordinary lives because of the continuing pandemic, students may need to take a step back and consider if how they engage with technology is having a negative impact on their health and studies.

Digital devices are both essential to learning and a continuous source of interruption. Here's how to help your student deal with digital distractions now and into the future when we are able to return to a more normal life.

How digital distraction affects productivity

Like most mammals, humans are an incredibly social species. Chatting with friends and interacting pleasantly with strangers triggers positive emotions. But as we attach ourselves continuously to phones, tablets, and laptops, even as we "interact" with others, we're often missing out on in-person connections.

Still, it's hard to stop, especially for teens. If their friends are posting continuously online, they don't want to miss it. Smartphone users touch their devices more than 2,600 times each day!

As social interactions continue to move online, it can be increasingly challenging to manage real-life relationships and responsibilities. This includes school. With phone in hand, students can't fully focus on what's in front of them — including when they're in class.

Digitally distracted students may cut study sessions short and neglect assignments. They take longer to complete tasks because their focus is fragmented. When personal gadgets are present in the classroom, students score half a letter grade lower than usual.

Taking classes online, students' temptation to pursue other digital activities will only increase. Teachers and administrators can't nip this issue in the bud when students are being required to use digital platforms as their classrooms, resource centers, and assessment tools. Only the students themselves — perhaps with parental help — can address the issue by developing self-discipline.

The negative impacts of multitasking

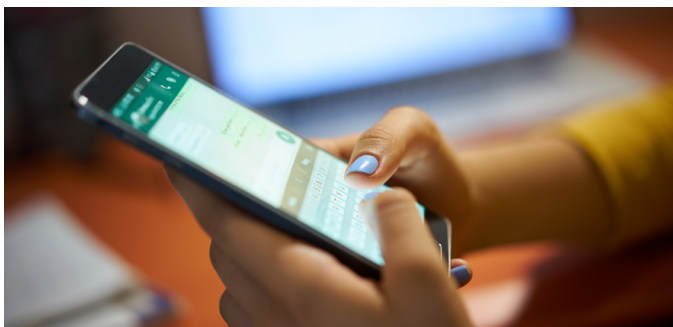
Most teens and college students today find it natural to attempt multiple tasks at once. But how can you compose an email, proofread an essay,



text a friend, browse YouTube, and take notes at the same time? You can't — at least not effectively. It's impossible to do so without making an error, taking extra total time, or putting in a subpar performance on each task.

When a person attempts to absorb new information while playing a smartphone game, their IQ starts to decline almost immediately. Whether your student is multitasking while attending an online class or doing homework, it's likely to negatively impact their retention and the quality of the work they produce.

Digital multitasking also affects mood and sleep cycles. With so much to do and so many distractions, students often become stressed and exhausted. When they don't sleep well, their ability to prepare for tests and complete projects suffers.



Signs of technology distraction

Sometimes it's difficult to tell there's a problem. After all, we're all technology users and even tech dependent to some degree! Here are a few ways to identify if your student has an issue with digital distraction:

- **They can't seem to set down their smartphone.**
If your student checks their phone or constantly peruses social media while trying to complete schoolwork online, there's a bit of separation anxiety in play — which can point to digital addiction.
- **They never look up from their device.**
When you're out together or taking time as a family, you might feel like they're more interested in catching up with text messages than with you.
- **They miss out on conversations.**
If you constantly must bring your child's attention back to the present — and they never seem to catch what anyone is saying — they might be digitally distracted.

- **They fall behind on their responsibilities.**
Is your student falling behind on deadlines, procrastinating with self-structured online coursework, struggling to get organized and remember assignments?

If any of this sounds familiar, your student may be spending too much time on nonessential digital activities and need help achieving digital balance in their life.

Ways to build better habits

First and foremost, it's important to remember that you're not responsible for your student's academic record. Their performance depends on how much they want to succeed. They're adults setting their own goals and making their own decisions. However, they may need guidance to stay — or get back on — the right path. Here's how you can help.

1. Set timers and restrictions

Setting timers is a simple way to prevent excessive smartphone use. Every day when your student sits down to complete online coursework, they should put away their phone and focus on school. Encourage them to set a timer while they're studying or install a plugin that prevents them from accessing email or social media sites.

2. Talk about accountability

Even with your student back at home to complete their semester online, it's not your job to provide constant supervision. It's up to them to implement good habits, but you can still make this a topic of discussion. Talk about accountability and why it's so important to remain engaged and dedicated, even if their classes look a little nontraditional right now. They're not home to take a break — they're still responsible for finishing the semester and completing all their coursework.

3. Turn off notifications

Especially if they have their laptops connected to social media accounts and text strands, push notifications contribute to digital distraction. Suggest to your student that they silence these alerts when they're online to watch lectures or complete coursework so that they can be completely present while learning.

4. Make use of resources

Schools typically offer a wide variety of support resources, and writing and tutoring centers will still be staffed even though consultations may have to take place virtually. If your student is having trouble focusing or struggling with the material in a class, urge them to contact their professor or advisor and ask for guidance. This is a challenging time for everyone, but your high school teachers and college faculty and staff are still available and truly want students to be successful.

5. Strive for a balance

We can't expect our children to avoid distraction all the time. Instead, we can aim for a balance. Try to work with your student to establish boundaries. For example, agree on times when their smartphones and social accounts will be off or unreachable while they work on their online classes, and try to limit the amount of study breaks they take when "school" is in session.

Manage digital distraction while succeeding in online courses

Digital distractions affect all of us. But because they haven't known anything else, younger generations struggle the most with productivity, performance, and distinguishing what really deserves their full attention from what push notifications tell them is important.

There are always going to be challenges and frustrations with online courses but your student can still be successful, and the new skills they're learning will also help them focus more effectively in their in-person classes.

Music History in Prague and Vienna: encourage your student explore the world!

Minot State University offers a variety of study abroad opportunities that are affordable, exciting, and rewarding. By exploring a new country and experiencing a new culture, your student will grow intellectually, professionally, and personally.

Faculty-led study abroad programs are a great way for students to experience the world while enjoying the safety and security of familiar faces. Your student will travel with an enthusiastic MSU instructor as learning objectives of the class are connected to the local host culture, customs, and history. Programs are typically one to two weeks in length and allow students to earn course credit.

Faculty-led programs offered at MSU vary from year to year, and course credit differs depending on the nature of the experience and the faculty member's area of expertise. This year we are excited to announce an upcoming program taking place in **May 2023: Music History in Prague and Vienna!**



The program's customized itinerary has been tailored specifically for the MSU community. While in Austria, the Czech Republic, and Bavaria, students will learn about regional musical traditions and will visit multiple famous performance venues. The schedule also includes museums dedicated to history and culture, important architectural and heritage sites, and breath-taking natural scenery.

The Division of Performing Arts has partnered with the Office of International Programs to offer this exciting opportunity. All students, alumni and community members are welcome to join! The priority application deadline is Sep. 9, 2022, for students who want to participate in fundraising activities. Applications will continue to be accepted until Jan. 20, 2023, as long as spots are still available. You can learn more about the program's itinerary, highlights, cost, and deadline [here](#).

Financial Aid Information

Summer Financial Aid

Is your son or daughter planning to enroll in summer classes? Summer 2022 financial aid is based on the 2021-22 FAFSA — summer is considered the end of the 2021-22 school year. The amount of financial aid students have available for the summer semester is impacted by the amount of aid they have received during the preceding academic year.

The Minot State Financial Aid Office will post a short Summer Financial Aid Application at [MinotStateU.edu/finaid/eligibility/summer-financial-aid-info.shtml](https://minotstateu.edu/finaid/eligibility/summer-financial-aid-info.shtml) when summer registration opens in late March. The application allows students to easily communicate their summer plans to the financial aid office so we can determine eligibility for the summer and send a new award notice specifically for the semester.

In some cases, students may not have eligibility for additional federal student aid for the summer. You may want to consider the Federal Direct PLUS Loan as an option to assist your student with summer costs or students may look at non-federal private loans as an option. More information about PLUS and private loan options is available at [MinotStateU.edu/finaid/loans/index.shtml](https://minotstateu.edu/finaid/loans/index.shtml).

For questions about summer financial aid options, contact the financial aid office at 701-858-3375.

Planning for the 2022-23 school year

The Minot State General Scholarship Application for the 2022-23 school year is open. **The application deadline is Tuesday, Feb. 15** and all students planning to enroll for the 2022-23 school year are encouraged to submit their application online at [MinotStateU.academicworks.com](https://minotstateu.academicworks.com). Encourage your student to apply today!

The 2022-23 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opened on Oct. 1, 2021. Applying early helps your student maximize their eligibility for financial aid options and allows extra time for resolving any questions. The FAFSA has become easier to complete with options to pull data directly from the IRS records and fewer questions for most applicants. If your student has not already submitted the 2022-23 FAFSA, now would be a great time to complete the FAFSA at [FAFSA.gov](https://fafsa.gov)!

Renewal criteria for scholarships and awards

If your student is the recipient of a scholarship or award program that may be renewed from year to year, be sure to review the renewal criteria now and ensure they will meet all of the required conditions for renewal during the 2022-23 school year.

If your student's renewable scholarship is from a source other than Minot State, check with that organization about any questions related to the renewal standards.

Criteria for renewable Minot State awards is available on our website at [MinotStateU.edu/finaid/scholarships/index.shtml](https://minotstateu.edu/finaid/scholarships/index.shtml). You can reach the financial aid office at 701-858-3375 for additional questions.

