



Parent and Family Newsletter

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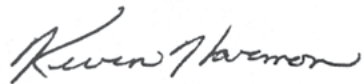
Dear parents and families,

Residence Life has opened Fall 2023 registration for current students. While many returning students choose to live off campus, I encourage 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 high rates than off-campus peers, living on campus offers many advantages. For more reasons to live on campus or to help your student apply for housing, visit MinotStateU.edu/life.

As winter continues, please encourage your student to stay active. The best way to beat the blues is to stay busy. Minot State hosts a plethora of clubs and events, offering many ways to get and stay involved in campus life.

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

Be seen. Be heard. Be empowered.

Spring semester action items for your college student

By Suzanne Shaffer, CollegiateParent.com

Students are back on campus following a well-deserved winter break. Spring semester will soon be in full swing!

In addition to coursework and extracurricular commitments (and, of course, their social life), there are activities and tasks that are unique to the second semester. **This Top 5 should be on your student's radar:**

1. Meeting with an academic advisor

Your student has already registered for spring courses and will meet with an advisor later in the semester to preregister for fall. That makes NOW the perfect time for a big-picture conversation with their academic or major advisor.



They can evaluate the previous semester(s) and, if they are a couple of years in, do an informal academic audit (at some schools, a formal academic audit will be required). They should confirm that they are on track to graduate with no unpleasant surprises waiting for them senior year (i.e., coming up a few credits short of what's required to graduate).

A meeting with an advisor can also help prepare your student for future course selections and provide a chance to ask questions about their major and electives.

2. Visiting the financial aid office

If your student receives financial aid (need-based or merit), they should make an appointment at the financial aid office. Students wishing to apply for or renew financial aid must complete paperwork (due dates vary and may involve completing an online form for the school plus the FAFSA and possibly the CSS).

Any loans for the spring semester will need to be signed, and this is a good time to verify the status of grants and scholarships, especially those with academic requirements. While there, your student should get a list of all loans and take inventory of their college debt.

3. Diving into study abroad tasks

Does your student hope to study abroad next year? Applications for fall programs are due this spring. There is still time to meet with a study abroad advisor, attend a study abroad fair, and research programs, but your student should not procrastinate. Planning for study abroad requires a lot of work, comparable to taking an extra class.

If your student has already been accepted to a summer or fall program, they can follow [this checklist](#) and start completing the required tasks.

Waiting until the last minute is not an option! It can take weeks or even months to get an appointment at the consulate to apply for a student visa and more time for the passport and visa to be returned.

Is your student considering studying abroad during the spring semester a year from now? They may think they have all the time in the world, but they do not want to be rushing around like crazy next fall. Encourage them to apply now and enjoy the extra breathing room!

4. Preparing for on-campus housing selection

The on-campus housing selection process typically gets rolling in late winter. Many colleges use a lottery or room-draw system. Students may enter the lottery as an individual or in a group of two or more.

Most freshmen were matched with roommates by the college. After the first year, students usually choose their own roommates. It can be traumatic if your student hasn't bonded with other students and is forced to enter the draw alone. My daughter was placed in this position after returning from study abroad. It's important to be informed and flexible during this process and to prepare ahead of time.

Before selection begins, your student should look at residence hall options available to upperclassmen and rank their top choices. Options may include:

- Single-gender residence halls (all female or all male)
- Coed halls — males and females living in the same residence hall, but usually not in the same room
- Single-gender floors in coed halls
- Floors reserved for LGBTQ+ students
- Quiet or substance-free floors/halls
- Honors halls
- Special focus and enhanced learning communities for students interested in music, foreign languages, science, service learning, leadership, etc.

Some residence halls will offer single rooms, others suites (multiple bedrooms sharing a common room and bathroom). Before the lottery, each student/group is assigned a random number generated by a computer. The lowest number chooses first, and the others follow. When it's your student's turn, they will log into the system online and select a room from the ones that are still available.

Is your student contemplating a move off campus next year? Here are some things to consider, plus tips for a safe and successful off-campus housing search: [Housing decisions for next year](#).

5. Dropping by the career center

It's time to polish up that resume and apply for summer jobs, internships, and research opportunities. There are career prep workshops your student can attend (how to write a cover letter and prepare for an interview, for example). Spring job fairs are a great chance to learn what's out there. If the college has funding available for students accepting unpaid internships or staying on campus to do research, applications will be due this spring.



IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

FEBRUARY

8 – Last day to withdraw from all 8-wk. classes and receive a 50% refund

15 – Last day to drop a first 8-wk. class

15 – Minot State General Scholarship Application deadline

20 – President's Day, University closed

20 – Last day to withdraw from all 16-wk. classes and receive a 75% refund

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

Financial Aid Information

2023–24 Minot State Scholarship application is OPEN!

The Minot State General Scholarship Application for the 2023-24 school year is now open. The application deadline is Feb. 15, and all students planning to enroll for the 2023-24 school year are encouraged to submit their application online at MinotStateU.academicworks.com. Encourage your student to apply today.



Financial aid satisfactory academic progress standards

Schools that participate in federal student aid programs are required to monitor all enrolled students for satisfactory academic progress (SAP). SAP standards apply to eligibility for all forms of federal student aid, some non-federal private education loans, and various scholarship programs.

At Minot State, SAP is evaluated at the end of each semester after grades are posted. It is important for students to be aware of these SAP standards — they must meet the minimum standards to continue being eligible for those forms of financial aid in future semesters.

To maintain eligibility for programs that fall under the SAP standards, Minot State students must meet or exceed the following criteria:

1. Minimum grade point average

Undergraduate students are required to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 at the conclusion of each semester based on all MSU and transfer undergraduate credits.

2. Completion of attempted credits

Students must successfully complete a minimum of 66.667% of the cumulative attempted credits. Attempted credits include any credits students are enrolled in as of each semester's census date (the last day to drop a full-semester course and receive a 100% refund; approximately the 10th calendar day of fall or spring term, or fifth calendar day of summer term) and any credits added after the census date. Credits dropped or withdrawn from after the census date and failed credits are considered attempted but not completed.

3. Maximum time frame

Students must successfully complete their degree within 150% of the published number of credits needed to complete their program of study. The maximum number of credits includes all prior credits attempted while attending Minot State University and any credits attempted at other colleges or universities whether or not federal financial aid was received while completing those credits.

The complete Minot State SAP policy is available at MinotStateU.edu/finaid/Policies-and-Consumer-Information.shtml. Students are encouraged to contact the financial aid office, located on the second floor of the Administration Building, or call 701-858-3375 if they have any questions about SAP.



Student employment at Minot State

Minot State on-campus student employment opportunities are a great way to help fund an education or allow students to earn spending money.

Student employment is flexible and convenient by fitting with a student's class and study schedule. Students do not work more than 20 hours per week to encourage them to keep college the top priority and are paid a minimum of \$10 per hour twice a month. Student employment provides experience for future resumes and builds customer service skills. Most student jobs do not require any previous employment skills.

Federal work-study employment is a part-time employment opportunity for students with financial need, allowing students to earn money while enrolled on campus.

On the FAFSA, Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the applicant is asked if they are interested in work-study. Students that are eligible for federal work-study and marked they are interested may be offered work-study when financial aid is awarded for the academic year.

Eligible students that marked they were not interested in work-study or unsure may still be awarded federal work-study funds. Students not eligible for federal work-study can still be employed by Minot State in departments that have the funding to hire students.

All student employment begins on the Minot State human resources employment opportunities webpage, MinotStateU.edu/hr/jobs/. Scan the QR code for more information.



Your student can browse listed jobs under Student Employment Openings at Minot State University, located at the bottom of the page. For more information on each advertised position, click on More Information. To apply for the job, click the blue Apply for Job button.

New user? Your student must register if they have never applied for Minot State student employment before. They will set up a username and password — this is different from their Campus Connection username and password. HINT: They can set them up to be the same so it is easier to remember the account!

Returning user? Your student needs to simply log into their account to apply.

Once your student applies, they will be notified after a supervisor reviews their application. For more information, encourage your student to stop by the Minot State financial aid office, email tonya.critz@MinotStateU.edu, or call 701-858-4152.

Helping your student get through seasonal depression

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

The colder season is here, and that can mean snow, gray skies, and SAD — winter-onset seasonal affective disorder.

This seasonal form of depression affects many adults every year, but it can hit college-age students particularly hard because of the stresses already associated with college life.

Whether your student is in their first year of college or their last, as we head into second semester, it's important to tune in to their mental health and know how to help if they appear to be struggling.

What Is SAD?

Sometimes referred to as the winter blues, seasonal affective disorder often accompanies the cold winter months and lack of sun. Days are short, nights are long, and this can have negative impacts on both physical and mental health.

SAD can be particularly troublesome for young people like college students, many of whom are just starting to experience life on their own and exploring the limits of their independence. Instead of getting up early and having a regular routine like they did in high school, they often stay up late to study (or socialize) and sleep in if they don't have a morning class. This can make it harder to get the vitamin D they need to ward off symptoms of SAD.

While science has not definitively identified the cause of SAD, a variety of biological factors come into play, including:

Circadian rhythm: Your natural biological clock keeps track of the normal cycle of sunlight and darkness, signaling when to feel awake or go to sleep. The reduction in sunlight in winter can throw the body off balance and lead to winter-onset SAD.

Melatonin levels: The additional darkness can also lead to an increased level of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep patterns — causing lethargy and sleepiness, which contribute to depression.

Serotonin levels: Less sunlight can mean a decrease in the synapse levels of serotonin, a neurotransmitter involved in mood.

Vitamin deficiency: The sun is our best source of vitamin D, which is also thought to be involved in serotonin levels. Spending less time in natural sunlight can result in vitamin D deficiency.



Common signs of SAD

The first thing you can do to help your college student manage seasonal depression is to learn how to identify SAD. Common symptoms of SAD are similar to those of generalized depression, such as:

- Low energy and sluggishness
- Insomnia, increased drowsiness, or other sleep problems
- Trouble concentrating
- Feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness
- Changes in weight or appetite
- Losing interest in favorite activities
- Sadness on a daily basis
- Social withdrawal

Certain risk factors make some people more likely to develop SAD, including:

- Being female
- Already struggling with bipolar disorder or depression

- Previous family history of SAD
- Living in northern latitudes
- Younger age

If you're hearing from your student less or seeing their habits change at the start of the winter term, it doesn't necessarily mean they're experiencing SAD — but you know them and their usual way of behaving and communicating so stay alert for the signs.

Tips for helping your student get through seasonal depression

Your college student is an independent young adult learning to navigate the world on their own but if you suspect they're suffering from SAD, there are practical ways you can help.

1. Encourage them to maintain a regular bedtime.

A lack of sleep is known to worsen the symptoms of general depression and can increase the likelihood of experiencing SAD as well. It can be hard to maintain a regular sleep schedule when college classes have them running around, studying, and working at all hours, but try to emphasize the importance of going to bed by a specific time.

If they normally do homework at night, for example, encourage your student to choose a cutoff hour to close the books for good — like 11 p.m. No one should be up until the early hours working on a research paper or studying for an exam — not only will that make depression more likely, but it won't produce quality work.

Help your student sleep better by using bedtime accessories like eye masks and earplugs or developing a pre-sleep relaxation routine.

2. Help them create balance.

It's likely that your student is still getting the hang of time management so, if they are open to it, provide advice about how to schedule studying along with other everyday activities. The beginning and end of semesters are often stressful for college students but routine creates order and helps keep anxiety in check. Help your student create a strategic plan that integrates study time with rest and self-care in order to support their mental health.

3. Remind them to prioritize emotional and physical wellness.

Many of us see winter as a time to shut out the cold and stay cozy indoors — it's especially tempting for college students in the hours they're not trekking to classes.

Hibernating inside, however, could be a factor contributing to your student's SAD causing them to forego exercise, say no to social outings, and see even less of the limited sunlight.

Hunkering down in their dorm might feel like a natural choice when they're feeling depressed but keeping up with regular routines could help significantly. Regular exercise and social interactions can counteract the symptoms of SAD and ensure your student stays mentally and physically healthy.

If they still need more help, suggest daily light therapy as an alternative to medication — consider shipping them an inexpensive light therapy box. Just 20 minutes to an hour of light exposure each day can have a positive effect.

4. Visit on-campus health facilities.

If the above strategies don't help and SAD's symptoms begin to interfere with your student's daily life, suggest they take advantage of on-campus mental health support. If their school doesn't have a therapist on staff or isn't able to refer your student to a local specialist, you can help your student contact a professional in their area.

SAD may only happen seasonally, but it's still a form of depression. If the symptoms become too much for your student to handle on their own, it's essential that they seek professional care — whether they just need a safe space to talk or to be connected with other treatment options.

Supporting your college student with SAD

The winter days are short and often gray, which means it's the season for SAD. If your college student is dealing with symptoms of seasonal depression, the best thing you can do is let them know you're there for them — no matter how much physical distance may separate you.