



Parent and Family Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2023 Issue 1

September 1, 2023

Dear families,

One week of classes is in the books, and it has been nice having our students back on campus! Welcome Week activities have offered a myriad of exciting opportunities for students to connect with their campus community.

Make sure to ask your student about their first week at school. While the upcoming Labor Day weekend can be a difficult time to be away from family and friends, MSU Life and our residence halls have activities planned throughout the fall to help alleviate this; please encourage your student to be active and attend these events.

Later in this newsletter, you will find information about our Parent and Family Weekend scheduled during Homecoming Sept. 15 – 17. Campus will be electric during this time! Please consider making arrangements to visit Minot State University then and spend some quality Beaver time with your student.

Again, welcome to our family and please know that you may contact me at any time. I can be reached at 701-858-3140 or by email at kevin.harmon@MinotStateU.edu if you have questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Kevin Harmon,
Vice President for Student Affairs

Be seen. Be heard. Be empowered.

Parent and Family Weekend

Sept. 14 – 17, 2023



THURSDAY, SEPT. 14

Campus Tours: 10 A.M. and 1 P.M., Enrollment Services (Admin. 165) – Schedule your tour [here](#).

Northwest Arts Center:

Open 9 A.M. – 4 P.M. (Gordon B. Olson Library)

Wellness Center – Open 6 A.M. – 10 P.M.

Rock wall open 4 – 8 P.M.

Group exercise class, time TBD

FRIDAY, SEPT. 15

Campus Tours: 10 A.M. and 1 P.M., Enrollment Services (Admin. 165) – Schedule your tour [here](#).

Northwest Arts Center:

Open 9 A.M. – 4 P.M. (Gordon B. Olson Library)

Wellness Center – Open 6 A.M. – 10 P.M.

Rock wall open 4 – 8 P.M.

Group exercise class, time TBD

MSU Athletics Hall of Fame Banquet – 5 P.M., Grand Hotel

Women's Soccer vs. University of Mary – 6 P.M.,

First Western Bank Field at Herb Parker Stadium

Women's Volleyball vs. St. Cloud State University

6 P.M., Dome

Homecoming Alumni and Friends Reunion

7 P.M., The Original Bar and Nightclub (21+)

Logger Fest – 4 – 10 p.m., Oak Park

SATURDAY, SEPT. 16

Homecoming 5K Fun Run and Walk – 10:30 A.M., run/walk the parade route – Sign up [here](#).

Homecoming Parade

10:30 A.M., Downtown Minot to the MSU Dome

Homecoming Brunch – 10 A.M. – 2 P.M., Beaver Creek Café

Serving: honey pit ham with dinner rolls, vegetarian egg frittata, pork sausage links, eggs benny, cheesy potatoes, glazed carrots, herb baked salmon, caramel rolls (half with pecans), fresh cut fruit, yogurt, and mixed salad (ranch and balsamic vinaigrette)

Tailgate Party – 11 A.M., Dome East lot

Women's Volleyball vs. University Minnesota Duluth

1 P.M., Dome

Football vs. Minnesota State University

2 P.M., First Western Bank Field at Herb Parker Stadium

Wellness Center – Closed

Farmer's Market – 9 A.M. – Noon, Oak Park

Logger Fest – Noon – 11 P.M., Oak Park

SUNDAY, SEPT. 17

Wellness Center – Open Noon – 8 P.M.

Homecoming Brunch – 10 A.M. – 2 P.M., Beaver Creek Café

Serving: prime rib with dinner rolls, vegetarian egg frittata, pork sausage links, breakfast burritos, cheesy potatoes, glazed carrots, chicken alfredo, caramel rolls (half with pecans), fresh cut fruit, yogurt, and mixed salad (ranch and balsamic vinaigrette)

Registered families will receive reduced admission at all sporting events, meals, and free use of the Wellness Center! Contact kevin.harmon@MinotStateU.edu to register or for more information.

NOTSTOCK 2023: Sept. 21 – 23

NOTSTOCK is an annual live, hands-in, hands-on arts event held at Minot State University every fall since 2007. NOTSTOCK is a portmanteau derived from the words Woodstock, Flatstock, and Minot's mantra, "Why not, Minot?"

This signature arts event has fostered education, opportunity, engagement, and exposure to the arts. NOTSTOCK has showcased poster art, ceramics, poetry, writing, film, theatre, broadcasting, dance, and music, and guests have ranged from newcomers to those who are nationally recognized and honored for their work. Artists have come to Minot State University to work, collaborate, and share their knowledge, talents, and experiences with MSU students, K – 12 and postsecondary students and teachers, community members, and other guests who attend and participate.

The event has evolved from a one-day event with one artist in 2007 to a multiday event with multiple artists and art forms. NOTSTOCK 2023 on Sept. 21 – 23 will be another outstanding educational opportunity!



More information at MinotStateU.edu/notstock.

Important message from the Minot State University Financial Aid Office

Reminder for your students that Wednesday, Aug. 30 is the last day to:

- Drop a 16-week fall semester class and receive 100% tuition and fee refund
- Add a 16-week class to their fall schedule
- Drop a 16-week fall semester class and not receive a W on their transcript

Your student's enrollment at 11:59 P.M. on Aug. 30 determines their enrollment status for the Minot State Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy, Federal Pell Grant, ND State Grant, ND Career and Tech, ND Academic, and other scholarships. Be sure all fall enrollment changes are completed before that time. Contact the financial aid office at 701-858-3375 if you have questions.

Important fall dates and deadlines

Wednesday, Aug. 30

Last day to charge books to student account

Wednesday, Sept. 6

- Financial aid disbursement
- Fall tuition and fees due



Last minute financial aid reminders

Classes are now in progress and it's an exciting time for your student as they start the school year! Here are a few reminders for your student related to financial aid and paying their bill at Minot State:

1. Have your student view their account summary in Campus Connection to review tuition, fees, and other charges posted to their account, as well as anticipated financial aid.
 - After logging in, choose Financial Account, then Account Summary.
2. Financial aid will be applied to student accounts just before the Sept. 6 fall semester fee payment deadline.
3. If your student will owe a balance after all financial aid is applied, consider the following options to help cover any remaining balance:
 - a. The **Minot State Tuition Payment Plan** allows student to divide up the remaining balance into three monthly payments. More information is available [here](#). The first payment must be made by Sept. 6.
 - b. **Federal Parent PLUS Loans** are federal loans that parents can borrow to help students pay their educational expenses. For more information, visit [MinotStateU.edu/financialaid/loans/index.shtml](https://www.minotstate.edu/financialaid/loans/index.shtml), then click Federal Parent PLUS Loan.
 - c. **Private loans** are non-federal loans offered by lending institutions to assist students. More information and a private loan comparison tool are available [here](#), then click Private Loans.
 - d. If you plan to pay a remaining balance, you can pay online on Campus Connection, by mail, or over the phone at 701-858-3333. The mailing address is Minot State University Business Office, 500 University Ave W, Minot, ND 58707.
4. If your student expects to receive more total financial aid for the fall than they will owe to Minot State, encourage them to enroll in **Direct Deposit** in Campus Connection to allow their excess financial aid to conveniently be sent directly to their bank account. Detailed direct deposit instructions are available at [MinotStateU.edu/busoffice/pages/direct-deposit-of-financial-aid.shtml](https://www.minotstate.edu/busoffice/pages/direct-deposit-of-financial-aid.shtml).
5. If your student hasn't already done so, discuss having them complete and submit the **FERPA Consent to Release Information** to provide permission for parents to discuss financial matters with Minot State financial aid and business office staff members. The form is easy to complete and it's available online at [MinotStateU.edu/records/right_to_privacy.shtml](https://www.minotstate.edu/records/right_to_privacy.shtml). Students also have the right to revoke permission in the future.
6. Contact the financial aid office at 701-858-3375 or email financialaid@minotstate.edu if you or your students have any questions. We look forward to assisting you at Minot State!



Family life

By Marybeth Bock, CollegiateParent.com

If you spend any time on social media, you know that each fall brings an outpouring of emotional posts from parents dropping kids at college and from those newly entering the empty nest stage of parenting.

With no hesitation, I admit that the first college drop-off with our daughter was rough for me as I struggled to reconcile my excitement with my heartache. Reflecting on it now, I realize that most of my emotional turmoil was because she was moving across the country, to a city where we knew nobody, and that was scary. We had no doubts she'd succeed in college and would be fine once she acclimated and made friends. But it still felt like something was just *wrong* for a while.

It was a completely different vibe the second time around, when my husband and I left our son just two hours away at a school many of his friends would be attending, too. We turned the corner after saying goodbye to him and grinned at each other. I hummed George Michael's "Freedom" for most of the ride home.

An emotional milestone

Becoming empty nesters is a monumental milestone for parents. So much so that the transition now is listed as a health phenomenon, according to the Mayo Clinic:

["Empty nest syndrome"](#) isn't a clinical diagnosis. Instead, empty nest syndrome is a phenomenon in which parents experience feelings of sadness and loss when the last child leaves home... Although you might actively encourage your children to become independent, the experience of letting go can be painful."

For some people really feeling the loss, there may even be increased vulnerability to depression, alcoholism, identity crisis, and marital conflict.

When my children left for college, I grappled with various emotions, of varying degrees — sadness, loss, exhilaration, and perhaps even a little guilt as we happily drove away from our son's dorm.



That's not to say there weren't moments that I missed him deeply and shed a few tears when I thought about him not being with us for certain occasions, but the overall mood of our new empty nest was one of peaceful contentment.

Differences between then and now

I remember asking my mom at that time if the transition to an empty nest was hard for her when I (her baby) left for college. She said she was sad for a little while, but adjusted quickly, as I think most parents did back in the day.

Why does this transition seem so much more fraught now? I saw a mom on a site recently saying she "had a breakdown just seeing the first college brochure arrive at their house." We laugh at joke-y pictures of parents being dragged in despair out of dorm rooms, but they seem to signal an underlying message that we can't deal with our kids moving on and leaving us.

I think there are a few reasons our generation of parents struggle more than our own parents did.

First, the world just seems more uncertain and scary. Parents sending kids to college today worry about them surviving and thriving through a pandemic, divisive politics, climate change (and

associated extreme weather events), and increasing mental health challenges.

In addition, the competitive nature of parenting has changed how much emotional and financial currency a certain demographic of parent spends raising children. Kids start playing on organized sports teams before they even get to kindergarten. Some parents get on waiting lists for the “right” private elementary and secondary school years before their children can even apply. The race to have a robust college application packet factors into kids’ activities when they’re barely into middle school, and many of us spend thousands of dollars on things like club sports teams, community service trips abroad, and standardized test tutors. These are things most parents in the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s never considered doing, and would have scoffed at spending money and time on.

We’re also much more immersed in the day-to-day lives of our children. Technology made it simple during their high school years to view their homework assignments and test grades, what they and their friends were posting on social media, and even where they were geographically at any given moment.

When suddenly they disappear from our immediate sphere of influence and observation, it’s a shock to the system.

Have we gotten too close to our kids?

This has all left me pondering. Have we gotten too close to our kids? Have we invested a bit too much of ourselves into raising them to be successful, to the detriment of our ability to exist happily without them?

I for one am so thankful to have a close relationship with my young adult children. My husband and I talk with them about things we never talked to our parents about. I think most parents of my generation enjoy more honest and open communication with our children than we had with our own parents. This could be part of the reason many of us struggle with adjusting to an empty nest.

We simply miss interacting with them. Talking, laughing, hanging out.

The peace and pride of your empty nest

I think we can re-frame the whole emotional act of sending our children out into the world, whether

they’re off to college, trade school, the military, or a job. When they move forward to the next life stage, it’s rock-solid proof that we’ve succeeded in our roles as parent.

Think back to those first few exhausting years. Pull out the baby book if you have one. Remember when your child first slept through the night? You rejoiced! Remember when they took those first wobbly steps? You cheered! Think about the thrill you felt when they read their first sentence, or wrote their entire name, or willingly shared their toy with another child at the playground.

You felt pride and triumph on every one of those momentous occasions. Your baby was advancing, progressing, and evolving to become a more complete human being. One with the physical, mental, and emotional skills to make their way in the world.

Getting to send out your only or your last child to experience life on their own is the ultimate goal of creating and parenting another human. It is fitting to celebrate that enormous success. And with that achieved goal should come feelings of profound peace.

Of course, there will still be times that your child causes you worry and aggravation, no matter where they are. That’s human nature and will occur as long as you have a relationship with them. But depending on their circumstances, they’ll be back home for visits, possibly entire summers, or for extended stays.

I’ve found that I experience many periods of deep peace within my empty nest. After that last child leaves, and your children are taking on more and more responsibility for their own lives, you can release more and more of the mental labor of parenting. The emotional connection continues to strengthen, but with an added benefit of watching your kids transform into mature and conscientious adults. This is the way it should be.

So if or when empty nest grief overwhelms you, move through your sorrow, but have faith it will diminish quickly.

Then summon and lean into the peace and the joy of an empty nest. Celebrate reaching the significant milestone of parenting that it is and be grateful for the opportunity to see your incredible human return on investment. Congratulations on an important job well done.

What really happens after college drop-off

By Marlene Kern Fischer, [CollegiateParent.com](https://www.collegiateparent.com)



You've imagined it countless times in your head and now it's a reality. After all the planning and shopping, packing and unpacking, your child is officially a first-year college student.

You've moved them into their residence hall, said your goodbyes, and shed a few (or more than a few) tears. [What happens next?!](#)

Having dropped off three kids at college over the years, I can tell you that it feels odd to depart with one fewer family member in your midst — kind of the opposite of when you gave birth and came home from the hospital with an additional person. Here's what you might expect.

You may wait breathlessly...

After I left my two older sons, I waited breathlessly for a text or call. And waited and waited.

Communication was never their strong suit, but I was still surprised I didn't hear from them. I wanted — no, NEEDED — to hear how they were doing, and they didn't provide much information.

I found out that this is normal. You may hear a lot from your student, or you may hear very little. If you're in the "very little" category, don't worry; know that your

student is navigating a new environment, meeting new people, figuring out their academic schedule, adjusting to having a roommate, etc.

In other words, they have a ton going on and calling you may not be their first priority. If I was lucky, I received brief (sometimes one word) replies to my texts. More often there was silence.

With great difficulty, I squelched my desire to reach out all the time. I knew it was better to leave them be for a while.

Then they call...and you almost wish they hadn't

One thing was worse than a lack of communication: the phone calls and texts I got when they had a problem or were unhappy. Those caught me off guard because, by the end of the summer, my sons had seemed so ready to leave.

I wasn't always sure what to say when they were upset but learned that just listening and offering reassurance and support was the best course of action. Keeping the lines of communication open and letting your student know you're there for them despite the physical distance is the best you can do.

Parents of other first-year students may be reluctant to share that their offspring are also going through a period of [homesickness](#) and adjustment. However, I can assure you there is a [settling-in period for everyone](#).

Staying close while apart

You may also be wondering how you'll stay close now that you don't live under the same roof.

The bottom line is you're not going to know what they're up to at any given moment (and you wouldn't always want to). That doesn't mean you can't still be an integral part of each other's lives. Family group texts, funny short emails that [include photos of a pet](#) (a cheap but effective trick), and little care packages are all ways to stay connected.

We tried to have a set regular time to speak with our sons by phone but it wasn't carved in stone and often the day and hour would roll around and they just weren't available to talk.

On that note...

Mismatched circadian rhythms

Dropping your student at college is a bit like leaving them in a foreign country with its own time zone.

Scheduling conversations can be challenging. My oldest once called home at 1 a.m. to chat and I was like, "Are you kidding me?!" He'd somehow forgotten that my bedtime was several hours earlier. Even allowing for the hour difference between St. Louis where he was and New York where I was, that time just wasn't going to work. I wanted to talk to him — just not when I was half-conscious!

Worry a little, trust a lot

You may have concerns about your student's wellbeing.

Parents of 18-year-olds have all seen their occasional lapses in judgment first hand. Know that the lessons you've taught your child and the values you instilled in them have impacted who they have become. My husband and I were happy to discover that, for the most part, it appeared our boys had been listening to us all those years (even when we thought they weren't).

In other words, despite the likelihood that they will make some mistakes, your student will be okay. You did a good job. Now it's time to trust them.

I'll leave you with this

As you journey home, whether to a house that still contains other children or an [emptier one](#), the new normal will take time to get used to. The future will be a constantly shifting kaleidoscope of your students leaving and returning and leaving again. But the ties which bind you will remain, strong and enduring.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM *Welcome Week*



Welcome Week 2023 kicked off with New Student Convocation in Ann Nicole Nelson Hall, followed by a barbecue for all students and staff on the Old Main lawn. Student activities during the week included bingo, RecFest, Slamabama concert, a hypnotist, and the club fair.



Top tips for successful students and the families that support them

By Jennifer Sullivan, [CollegiateParent.com](https://www.collegiateparent.com)

Here are my top tips for students and family members!

Successful students:

1. Ask for help

This sounds simple, but some students find it very difficult. This is because asking for help requires students to do two things: 1) acknowledge that they need help and 2) have the courage to ask for it.

In college, if students don't say anything about a problem, staff and professors will assume they have everything under control. If students are having trouble with anything (academics, roommates, mental health, etc.), they (not their parents) need to speak up. Students who are introverted or anxious may be daunted by the prospect of approaching their professor. Practicing or role-playing this kind of interaction can help them build confidence.

2. Find the best place to do their homework

Where did your student do homework in high school — on their bed, at a desk, at the dining room table? Encourage them to reflect on their previous study habits, and then think about their ideal college study environment. Campuses have many different types of spaces for students to work, hang out, and socialize. Your student should try a few spots to find one that makes them feel relaxed and productive.

3. Write down usernames and passwords

New college students receive a school email address and username. Most colleges also require new students to set up an account in an online learning management system (LMS) for viewing grades and submitting assignments. Remembering all their usernames and passwords can be tough! Ideally, students find an organizational system they like before arriving on campus, but it's not too late. There are great phone apps that store and organize this important info.



4. Get to know the health and counseling center

Your student's physical and emotional health is as important as their academic success! Every college and university have health and mental health services available on campus. Even if your student doesn't need this care right away, chances are good that soon they, a roommate, or friend will get sick or may need some support or a listening ear.

Encourage your student to explore services on the college's website and locate the health care building, its hours of operation, and how to make an appointment. Some offices accept walk-in appointments while others schedule appointments in advance online.

For families:

1. Remember: College is a marathon, not a sprint

Developing college-level academic, social, emotional, and executive functioning skills takes time. During the early weeks and months of college, your student will rely heavily on the academic and social skills they developed in high school.

For some lucky students, this works just fine. Others are surprised to learn that their high school skills aren't helping them meet the rigors of college. This is completely normal! Successful students recognize which high school skills work and which don't. Trust the process and settle in for the marathon. The student who enters college will not be the same person who graduates. Walk alongside them and support them.

2. Expect them to make mistakes

Expectations shape our attitudes and reactions. If we expect perfection, we will often (always?) be disappointed. If we expect some bumps in the road we won't be surprised to hit a pothole. College students must learn how to balance academic demands, friendships, nutrition, exercise, mental health, money management, and more — without a parent around to help. Oversleeping an occasional class or ordering too many GrubHub deliveries in the first semester is common. They're figuring it out — just like you did at their age.

3. Avoid the worst-case-scenario mental minefield

It will happen eventually — you get a text from your student with bad news. Or maybe it's a letter in the mail addressed to your student with midterm grades, or a social media post that sends up your parental red flag. Have you ever gone down this dangerous road? "They got a D! What if they fail the class? What if they fail all their classes?"

We parents tend to obsess over bad news. It's important to take care of yourself. Avoid the "what if" thoughts by doing something joyful and distracting: turn on uplifting music, offer to walk a neighbor's dog if you don't have one of your own, spend 30 minutes writing a letter (or nice comments on social media), meet a friend (and don't talk about your kids!).

4. Celebrate their homecomings

Students love coming home because it's where they can leave the pressures of school behind and just be themselves. However, parents may see school breaks as a chance to get stuff done (go to the dentist, get a haircut, visit grandma!). Try not to overdo it. There are sure to be serious things to discuss (grades, their budget), but start by making them feel special when they come home — and loved. There's nothing they'll appreciate more.

Your child leaving for college affects your life as well. Allow yourself to feel your feelings. Treat yourself with patience and compassion. There's no rush to "have it all together" immediately. If you feel like texting your student to say "I love you," do it! They may need to read those words as much as you need to send them.



UPCOMING DATES & DEADLINES

SEPTEMBER

- 4 – Labor Day, University closed
- 6 – Financial aid disbursement; tuition and fees due
- 7 – Last day to withdraw from all first 8-week classes with a 75% refund
- 13 – 16 – Homecoming 2023
- 15 – Hartnett Hall construction tour, 2 P.M. (pre-registration required)
- 20 – Last day to withdraw from all first 8-week classes with a 50% refund
- 21 – 23 – NOTSTOCK 2023
- 27 – Last day to drop first 8-week classes
- 29 – Last day to withdraw from all 16-week classes with a 75% refund

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