



Parent and Family Newsletter

OCTOBER 2023 Issue 1

October 1, 2023

Dear parents and families,

The first month is behind us and it has been filled with ups and downs for your students; the fear of making new friends has subsided a bit, only to be replaced with the uncertainty of a poor grade on a quiz or test. This is the time of the semester where the roller coaster starts leveling out after the hype of Welcome Week and the excitement of their newfound freedom starts to become their new norm. The multitude of emotions is going to continue, however; the six-week mark is a crucial point in their semester. Students will decide how they are going to respond to academic or social adversity, to stay in a class or drop a class, or to stay enrolled at Minot State or leave all together. These issues bring forth big decisions and your students should not try to resolve these issues without including others. Advise your students to reach out to someone, anyone whom they can talk to about a plan forward. They may speak to their advisors, visit the tutoring or counseling centers, or stop by my office and we can talk about next steps. Encouraging your student to have a conversation with University personnel is a no-risk and high-reward proposal.

I enjoyed seeing many of you at Parent and Family Weekend and Homecoming a few weeks ago. Please know that you may contact me at any time at 701-858-3140 or kevin.harmon@MinotStateU.edu if you have questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Kevin Harmon,
Vice President for Student Affairs

Be seen. Be heard. Be empowered.

2023 Homecoming and Parent and Family Weekend



UPCOMING DATES & DEADLINES

OCTOBER

5 – Fall Assessment Day

Recovery Reinvented, 8 A.M. – 5 P.M., Ann Nicole Nelson Hall

6 – Spring semester graduation application due to Registrar's Office

11 – Final exams for first 8-week classes

In Our Backyard: Raising Awareness about Human Trafficking in North Dakota, 7 P.M., Ann Nicole Nelson Hall

12 – Second 8-week classes begin

Midterm grades due to Registrar's Office

19 – Last day to add second 8-week classes

Last day to drop a class or withdraw from all second 8-week classes and receive a 100% refund

23 – Grades available for first 8-week classes

24 – Spring registration for currently enrolled students opens

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

NOVEMBER

1 – Native American Cultural Celebration

Alumni Speaker: Monte Yellow Bird, Black Pinto Horse Fine Arts, time and location to be determined

2 – Last day to withdraw from all second 8-week classes and receive a 75% refund

Native American Cultural Celebration Indigenous Luncheon, Native American Cultural Center, 11 A.M. – 1 P.M.

9 – Last day to drop a 16-week class

10 – Veteran's Day, University closed

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

Minot State implements new student mental health model

Minot State University is implementing a new system of delivering and monitoring mental health and mental health treatment for students, named Stepped Care.

The model is a multi-tier system of programs that seeks to meet students where they are in their mental health process while promoting autonomy and empowerment.

“The Stepped Care Model is important for Minot State University because it will help counseling services and, ultimately, the University as a whole, in responding to and streamlining student needs and requests regarding their mental health,” said Troy Roness, Minot State clinical mental health counselor. “Our plan is to provide students with opportunities for connections with other on- and off-campus resources and support, as well as an integration of services across

all of campus — this is crucial for a healthy campus climate.”

The most effective, yet least resource intensive, intervention is offered first based off an individual's needs. Services will then “step up” as required depending on the level of student desire or need.

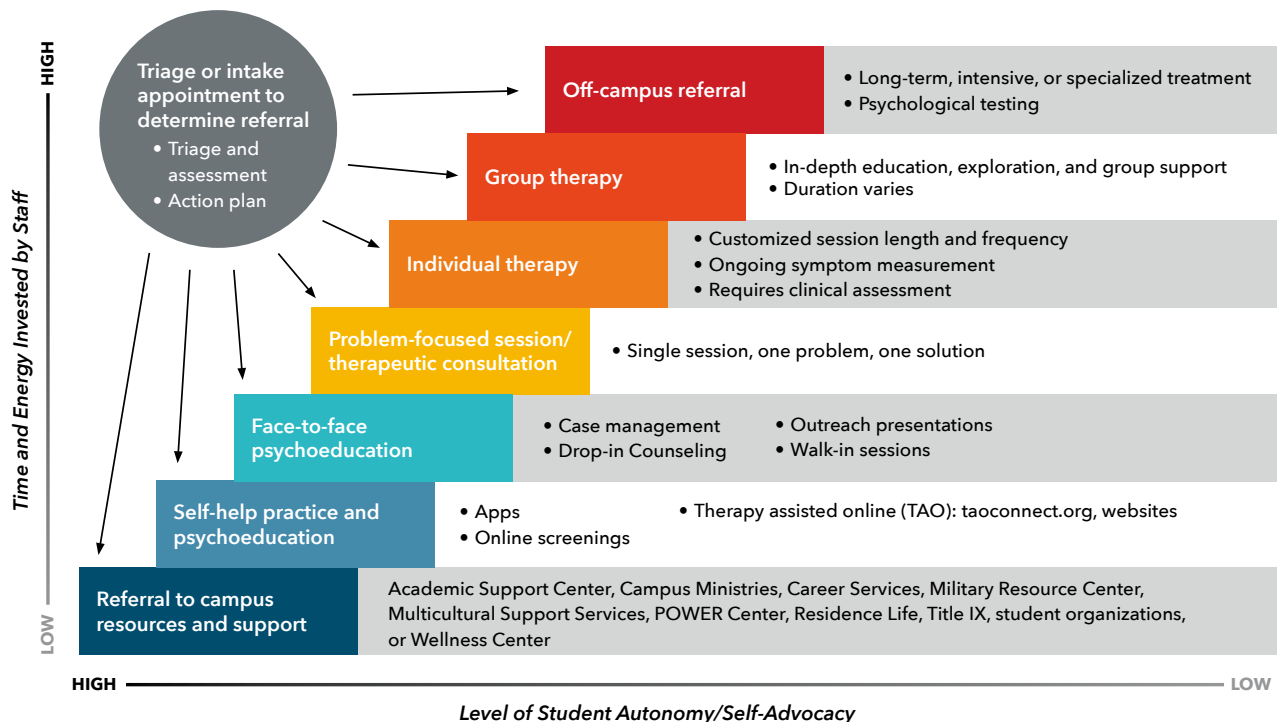
Less intensive treatments may include campus referrals, brief consultations, and self-help approaches like self-help practices and mental health apps, while more intensive treatments encompass options such as longer-term therapy, group therapy, or an off-campus or community referral. With Stepped Care, a variety of resources for individuals and an intervention structure that promotes resilience encourages a growth mindset.

Learn more [here](#).



Counseling Services

Stepped Care Model



2024-25 FAFSA changes

The 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will launch at studentaid.gov sometime in December 2023. The specific date has not yet been determined as the 2024-25 FAFSA is undergoing a significant redesign of the processes and systems used to award federal student aid thanks to the FAFSA Simplification Act. Below we identify some of the major changes to expect for the 2024-25 FAFSA cycle.

FAFSA Contributor

New terminology includes the term FAFSA Contributor. A contributor is anyone who is asked to provide information on an applicant's FAFSA including:

- The student
- The student's spouse (if applicable)
- A biological or adoptive parent; or
- The spouse of a remarried parent who is on the FAFSA — the stepparent

The new FAFSA is student driven, so that means the student's answers on their section will determine who will be a contributor in addition to the student. Students will need the contributor's name, date of birth, Social Security Number (SSN), and email address to invite them to complete the required portion of the FAFSA. Contributors will need to provide personal and financial information on their section of the FAFSA.

All contributors are required to have an FSA ID and to provide consent to have their Federal Tax Information (FTI) transferred from the IRS, have their tax data used to determine a student's eligibility for federal student aid, and allow the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to share their tax information with institutions and state higher education agencies for the administration of Title IV aid. Consent is provided once for the award year and cannot be revoked in that award year. This consent is necessary even if the contributor does not have an SSN, did not file taxes, or filed taxes in another country.

If a dependent student's parents are unmarried and living together, both parents will be contributors, will need to have separate FSA IDs, and need to provide



consent. Dependent students whose parents filed their U.S. income tax return as Married Filing Jointly only require one parent contributor to complete the FAFSA. If the student's parents filed separately, both parents will be considered contributors and therefore need separate FSA IDs, and both must provide consent.

If an independent student is married and filed separately, both individuals are contributors, must have FSA IDs, and must provide consent for the student to be eligible for Title IV aid.

Parent of record starting 2024-25

Effective the 2024-25 award year, parent of record on the FAFSA will be the parent who provides the most financial support. You will notice that the parent with whom the student lived the most in the past 12 months prior to filing the FAFSA is no longer a criterion in cases of divorced or separated parents. For divorced or separated parents, income and assets are reported for the parent who provides the most financial support even if the student does not live with that parent or lives with the other parent.

Parental income on FAFSA

- **Parents who live together**
Parental income and assets in the case of a student whose parents are married and not separated, or who are unmarried but live together, shall include the income and assets of both parents.

- **Divorced or separated parents**
Parental income and assets for a student whose parents are divorced or separated, but not remarried, is determined by including only the income and assets of the parent who provides the greater portion of the student's financial support.
- **Death of a parent**
Parental income and assets in the case of the death of any parent is determined as follows:
(A) If either of the parents has died, the surviving parent shall be considered a single parent, until that parent has remarried.
(B) If both parents have died, the student shall not report any parental income or assets.
- **Remarried parents**
If a parent whose income and assets are taken into account under paragraph (2), or if a parent who is a widow or widower and whose income is taken into account under paragraph (3), has remarried, the income of that parent's spouse shall be included in determining the parent's assessment of adjusted available income if the student's parent and the stepparent are married as of the date of application for the award year concerned.
- **Single parent who is not divorced or separated**
Parental income and assets in the case of a student whose parent is not described in paragraph (1) and is a single parent who is not divorced, separated, or remarried shall include the income and assets of such single parent.

IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) replaced

The IRS DRT will be replaced with the Direct Data Exchange (DDX).

- **EVERYONE** (students, spouses (if applicable), and parents) will need to consent to have their Federal Tax Information (FTI) imported into the FTI module.
- To provide consent, the individual will need to access the FAFSA with an FSA ID that has been matched with the Social Security Administration (SSA).
- Federal tax filers will have their tax information imported into the FTI module. No tax income will transfer into the FAFSA, but tax data will be sent to the colleges listed on the FAFSA.

- Non-tax filers must also check the box to consent. When IRS Data is accessed, the process will verify non-filing status.

Student Aid Index replaces Expected Family Contribution

The Student Aid Index (SAI) will replace the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) on the FAFSA form. Students and families will see a different measure of their ability to pay for college and experience a change in the methodology used to determine aid.

In addition to the SAI, the FAFSA Simplification Act is expected to expand the Federal Pell Grant to more students and link eligibility to family size and the federal poverty level.

Siblings in college

No benefit for having siblings in college: Previously, the FAFSA divided the EFC proportionally based on the number of household members in college. The elimination of this "sibling discount" will be the biggest change in aid eligibility for some students. The SAI will not use the number in college as a factor in calculation of eligibility. As such, students with siblings in college may see a change in their aid eligibility.

Family farms and small businesses

Inclusion of family farms or small businesses: When required, families will now report the value of their farms or businesses. While this inclusion continues to be debated in Congress, it will be required to be reported for appropriate families on the 2024-25 FAFSA and can influence the SAI.

We look forward to ongoing training throughout the fall of 2023 to learn more about the new FAFSA and the changes that we'll all be experiencing in the 2024-25 school year. For more information about the FAFSA Simplification Act, click [here](#).

Six key areas of adjustment for first-year college students

By Laurie Hazard and Stephanie Carter, CollegiateParent.com

The first year of college is rich with possibilities for students. From living with roommates to managing their own [spending money](#), each experience during the first year is an opportunity for growth and learning.

There's actually a psychological process that students move through during their first year which requires them to be willing to change — and which takes time. In fact, experts in higher education have identified six key areas of adjustment for first-year college students. In order to meet a new set of expectations, first-years must adjust their behaviors and mental processes academically, culturally, emotionally, financially, intellectually, and socially.

Academic adjustment

The learning environments in high school and college are different. At [the college level](#), students are expected to take a more active role in their learning than they had to in high school; therefore, they need to think about how they will adjust to meet the heightened expectations of higher education. Successfully making this adjustment means having the ability and know-how to meet the increasing demands of college and being open to change.



Some academic challenges:

- Developing self-regulatory behaviors ([time management](#), avoiding procrastination)
- Establishing [relationships with professors](#)
- Managing assigned reading and workload

Cultural adjustment

College students interact with others of various cultures, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, ages, and physical abilities in a number of different settings. Some of these situations will be social, others academic or work-related.

What these experiences have in common is that they provide opportunities to learn from others with a different perspective. How much a student will benefit from these diverse interactions depends on their ability to adjust culturally. Being accepting and welcoming of differences is one way to embrace diversity in college.

Some cultural challenges:

- Living and learning with a diverse student body
- Adjusting to language differences among classmates, roommates, and faculty
- Understanding their own bias-related belief systems

Emotional adjustment

Students respond differently to new living and learning environments, meaning they'll have different emotional responses to their first-year experiences. Some will be prepared to handle the stressors of college life more readily, while others may struggle with challenging situations. Successfully making this emotional adjustment means learning how to cope and manage their feelings.

Some emotional challenges:

- Experiencing [homesickness](#)
- [Coping with stress](#)
- Developing strategies for handling [mental health issues](#)

Financial adjustment

College students need to learn how to [independently manage money](#). For many students, it may be the first time they don't have ongoing guidance from family about money issues. It can be hard for students to [learn how to budget](#) and not be tempted to spend their money frivolously. It's important for students to adjust to this change sooner rather than later to avoid problems like bank fees or high-interest debt.

Some financial challenges:

- Developing budgeting and financial literacy skills
- Understanding tuition costs and [navigating financial aid](#)
- Finding and managing a [part-time job](#) while a student

Intellectual adjustment

In college students have the opportunity to join an academic community. This community includes fellow classmates, faculty, and college administrators.

During class, students are expected to engage in intellectual discussions with their faculty, raise questions and, at times, even challenge them. In turn, students will be exposed to new ideas and subject areas and career choices that they may have never considered before.

Some intellectual challenges:

- Experiencing a shift in previously held values
- Feeling uncertainty about [choosing a major](#)
- Taking calculated risks that move them outside their comfort zone

Social adjustment

First-year students will be faced with shifts in their relationships, finding a new peer group, and handling the pressure of fitting in. Residential students will also have to adjust to a new living situation, which may include roommates.

Some social challenges:

- Experiencing changes in relationships
- Developing strategies for [living with a roommate](#)
- Handling social situations involving peer pressure

What Is the parent's role?

Throughout their first year, students are encouraged to learn and claim their education in many ways, in the classroom and beyond. Learning involves making connections, taking calculated risks and being open to change. So, how can parents of first-year students help with this transition?

Talk about it!

First, parents can engage in candid conversations with their students throughout the first year about the habits, behaviors, and attitudes that contribute to college success and how to cultivate them. You know your student well, of course. You can help them anticipate which areas of adjustment may pose the greatest challenges and have them reflect on how they might handle these challenges.

If challenges have cropped up already, you can help them identify [campus resources](#) that address a particular area of adjustment. For example, the campus learning center can support students as they learn to handle a challenging course load; a residential student's RA (resident assistant or advisor) can help with roommate issues.

Encouragement goes a long way.

Parents can encourage their students to fully engage in their college experience and be ready to operate with a [growth mindset](#). Help your student understand that they will need to make changes and ask for help in order to mature and adjust academically, culturally, emotionally, financially, intellectually, and socially. Encourage your student also to be patient with themselves as they cope with these adjustments. It can take the entire first year for a student to build the skills they need to be successful, and that's perfectly okay!

Coach your student to communicate with professors

By Amy Fisher, [CollegiateParent.com](https://www.collegiateparent.com)

A freshman parent once called my office early in the school year. Because I'm a department chair, I sometimes field general questions from parents, but this parent wanted very specific information.

"Is there a way to log in to see my son's grades?" she asked.

This question is becoming more common. Many parents, used to online K-12 grade portals, expect the same access in college.

"No," I told her. Some of the faculty at my university use an online learning management system, but others, like me, teach students how to track their grades the old-fashioned way — by collecting all graded work and using the formula in my syllabus. "But your son should be able to calculate his grade if he's keeping up with his graded assignments."

This did not satisfy her. She suspected he was floundering and wanted to know for certain. I reassured her that he was being coached through his first-year success course on how to stay on track — and more importantly, how to talk to his professors if he was concerned about his progress.

The student-professor relationship in college is one of the most important to cultivate. Professors want to

develop strong relationships with their students, and students should want the same.

Here are a few tips to guide your student through the process of creating an open line of communication with a professor. Pandemic or not, these are solid strategies for starting off the semester right!

Establish a relationship early

Professors will be happy to get to know your student before a problem arises. Any time during the semester — with the exception of the day before the final! — is a good time to reach out, but the sooner the better.

Your student should take cues from the syllabus about the best way to communicate with a professor. Is the professor available to meet in person or is email or an online meeting better? It goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway: if the professor prefers email, then use email and check it often.

When your student meets with the professor for the first time, it's a good idea to have a list of questions ready. Here are a few that can help your student learn more about the professor's expectations:

- "I want to learn as much as I can in your class. What can I do to succeed?"



- “I usually (fill in usual study practices). What will work best for this class?”
- “I want to be sure I start off with solid work in your class. Can I come see you before an assignment is due to make sure I’m on the right track?”

A solid relationship early in the semester can be helpful if your student’s circumstances change. In the spring of 2020, when students moved home because of the pandemic, one of my students had to pick up extra shifts at his job and so he could no longer join our class online at the designated time. Another student was dealing with limited internet access. Faculty will want to know about any situation that makes it hard for a student to access their courses online or show up for an in-person class.

Create a plan to stay organized

College students need a planner, preferably a large one that can be hung on a wall or anything that can be accessed easily. Classes meet on different days of the week and at different times, and your student will also have study sessions and extracurricular activities to map out.

During the pandemic, students at my institution had hybrid classes that were held both online and in person, and those designations changed from week to week. Students were asking themselves questions like, “Am I meeting my psychology class in person for small group work this week or are we online?” A consistent organizational strategy will keep the chaos under control.

Seek immediate feedback after graded work

If your student gets a low grade, or lower than anticipated — even if they think they know why — it’s good to check in with the professor as soon as possible.

Here are a few ways your student can open a conversation after a low or failing grade:

- “I reviewed my work. Can we go over what I did wrong so I understand what I should do differently next time?”
- “I’m bummed I messed up that assignment. Would you help me see where I made mistakes?”
- “Can we talk about how this low grade will affect my progress in the course? I want to make the improvements I need to raise my grade.”

Because students share this fear with me, it’s worth telling you: yes, professors really want to talk with students who’ve failed an assignment. No, they don’t think their students aren’t smart enough to pass their class.

Professors want their students to learn and to earn good grades. Your student shouldn’t be ashamed to speak to a professor about a class they’re failing. Reaching out demonstrates a willingness to improve.

Practice patience, kindness, and self-care

We learned during the pandemic that we are resilient, but the last years have still been stressful for families and communities. Despite lots of work on our end, faculty and administrators can not 100% guarantee that our institutions’ plans for this academic year won’t need to shift if COVID-19 cases increase.

Remind your student to practice patience and kindness to themselves and others as they begin their fall term. And know that, more than anything, their school wants them to be successful and healthy.

Check email!

Encourage your student to check their official school email account daily.

Just as most colleges and universities changed from on-campus to online in a matter of days in the spring of 2020, your student’s college may institute quick changes at any time. Professors often communicate with their class by email and so do offices, including financial aid. The more your student reads and responds to email, the more prepared they’ll be.

If you as a parent are able to sign up for institutional announcements, often provided through the parent and family program, do so immediately.

We all benefit from staying connected and informed!