



Parent and Family Newsletter

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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 midterm grades, if they are going to fail a class, and if they should stay enrolled in or drop a course. These topics are important yet can be difficult to discuss; however, I encourage you to talk to your student 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. 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.

Our dining center will be shut down from Thursday, Nov. 23 until 5 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 26. The Office of Student Affairs will be providing a traditional Thanksgiving to-go meal on campus at noon on Wednesday, Nov. 22.

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

Respectfully,

Kevin Harmon,
Vice President for Student Affairs

Be seen. Be heard. Be empowered.

Creativity fuels Audet's multimedia journey

By Achille Tenekeu Djauken, University Communications student assistant



Marie Audet, a native of Minot, embarked on a remarkable academic and professional journey at Minot State, guided by her passion for creativity and communication.

However, it was not just about earning a degree but about embracing her local community and following her passions.

Audet's decision to attend Minot State was influenced by her desire to stay close to her family. It was a choice that allowed her to embrace the local community and build meaningful connections.

"What I like most about Minot State is that it feels like a little community. I see someone I know everywhere I look, and the professors are so personal with the students, especially in the art and communication department," she said.

Audet's academic exploration as a freshman led her to discover her creative side. She explored various subjects, taking general courses and classes that intrigued her. She took art classes and studied video production, ultimately realizing her passion lay in the art side of technology.

"I knew I always loved being creative, so I took art and video production classes. I learned that I was more interested in the art side of technology, such as video production, audio production, graphic design, photography," she said. "I explained this to my advisor, and he set me on the path of multimedia studies.

I also started to enjoy the COMM classes, so I decided to double major."

The knowledge and skills acquired during her academic journey proved invaluable during her internship at the North Dakota State Fair. From drafting professional emails to mastering Adobe programs, her education became the foundation of her success in the professional world.

Audet's internship was the highlight of her summer. She designed and created signs, social media posts, and advertising. This fusion of marketing and art contributed to the fair's success.

After months of planning, seeing the successful outcome and the joy of fairgoers left a lasting impression on her. It was a testament to the demanding work she did.

"The most memorable experience I had during my internship was during the fair when I was out of the office checking on the events," Audet said. "I was in charge of what was going on the grounds during fair week. I had planned for months, so seeing it pan out and how happy the fairgoers were was an incredible feeling."



However, everything was not just sunshine and rainbows. Challenges are part of every job.

For Audet, it was the task to please everyone. Her approach involved compromise, patience, and seeking insights from experienced colleagues, allowing her to navigate these hurdles effectively.

"When making decisions, there is always going to be someone who wants something different, and I

overcame this the best I could just by compromising and having patience. I would also ask what past interns had done so I could better understand how they dealt with those sorts of issues in the past,” she said.

As her internship neared its end, Audet’s main takeaway was the importance of seizing every opportunity to learn and grow, even when it felt overwhelming. Real-life work experience, she realized, was a valuable complement to classroom learning.

Audet envisions a long and successful career in her hometown as she keeps herself updated on the skills

businesses seek for effective marketing to stay updated with the changes in the multimedia world.

“My future career aspirations in multimedia and professional communications would be something like a design lead, working with advertising material, digital media, graphic designing, and video editing for a local business in or around Minot,” she said.

As she looks back on her fantastic and invaluable opportunity with her internship, Audet foresees a bright future driven by the ever-evolving role of technology in our lives.

Financial Aid Information

Unpaid balances

When students have an unpaid balance on their Student Account in Campus Connection after waivers, scholarships, grants, and federal loans have been applied, there are a few payment options. 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. External scholarship opportunities.** Follow the [MSU Financial Aid Office Facebook](#) page to learn about opportunities from various organizations that come up throughout the school year. We also share timely financial aid related reminders.
- 3. MSU Tuition Payment Plan.** This plan allows families to spread out the fall and spring semester payments over three months, rather than having to pay the entire balance at once — in September for the fall semester and in January for spring. There is a \$50 fee for enrolling in the plan each semester and 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 at [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 a loan available to parents of dependent students who file the FAFSA. You can 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 typically the borrower but usually need a co-signer with good credit in order to qualify. 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, 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 or private loan, our staff is happy to assist you. Please call the financial aid office at 701-858-3375.

2024-25 FAFSA

The 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opened on Oct. 1 at StudentAid.gov. The 2024-25 FAFSA covers the Fall 2024, Spring 2025, and Summer 2025 semesters. Get an early start on applying for federal financial aid for next school year by submitting your FAFSA now!

First-year students and the one tough class

By Vicki Nelson, [CollegiateParent.com](https://www.collegiateparent.com)

We received a question from a new college parent that we know many readers will relate to, especially at this midway point in the semester.

The question:

I am a first-time college parent with a student attending a private college. My student completed the first major week of tests and was greatly surprised by one of the classes where the professor tested on things that were not in the syllabus, not discussed in class, not in the book or on the study guide. The teacher is a visiting professor filling in for a professor on sabbatical. The class has all freshmen, and the teacher struggles to teach the material so the students understand. This is a fundamental class for my student. What is the parent's role in this situation? So far I've just listened and offered advice.

To answer, we reached out to CollegiateParent contributor Vicki Nelson, a longtime higher education and student success expert who teaches at a college in Massachusetts.

Vicki's response:

Although it's difficult, I'd suggest that the parent not get involved. College officials and faculty are not very sympathetic when they get calls from parents — especially about classroom issues. It sounds as though this parent is serving in exactly the correct role of listening and offering advice.

In such a situation, start by asking your student what they've already tried. Then here are some suggestions to share (and this will involve genuine commitment and self-advocacy on your student's part):

1. Talk to the professor.

Take the syllabus, textbook, lecture notes, test. Be specific about what material on the test doesn't seem to be included in any of the other sources. The student's attitude is important, so rather than complaining about the material on the test, the



approach might be to say, "I want to do better, and I seem to have missed where I should have gotten this information. What can I do next time to make sure I find and study the material that I need for the test?" Since the professor is filling in, they may not realize that students are missing some basic knowledge.

2. The comment mentions that "the instructor struggles to teach the material so the students understand."

This might require another visit with the professor — perhaps a couple of students going together. Again, being as specific as possible without being accusative is important. Why aren't the students able to understand? How does the teacher "struggle?" Does the teacher go too fast, cover too much material, include technical material, lecture too much or not enough? If the students take the attitude that "we want to learn but we're struggling in class" rather than "you're not teaching us well," the instructor may be open to feedback.

3. Form a study group.

Are other students in the class struggling as well? Is the student studying with others or forming a study group? A few students working together might bring different perspectives and a different understanding of the material that will help them all.

4. If neither of these approaches seems to help, I'd suggest that the student (or several students) go to the chair of the department to talk.

As with other approaches, rather than going to "complain" about a professor, going with the open attitude that "we want to learn but we're struggling" will help. The chair may be able to speak to the professor to help the professor understand what the students need or what some issues might be. This is especially important with a visiting instructor who may be used to a different type of student at another institution.

5. Finally, it's simply a fact that many first semester freshmen struggle in classes.

They haven't learned enough yet about how to "do college." Their first tests weren't good. They aren't sure how to take notes in class beyond what may be on a Power Point slide. Things that may seem like casual conversation or an aside about the subject may actually be information that they are expected to get. They may not be used to reading college level texts. So it's frustrating not to be doing well in a foundational class, and your student should certainly address the situation, but should also understand that the frustration is not uncommon. They can use this experience as a learning situation to build good study skills — and the ability to work with different kinds of professors — for the future.

In all of this, it's on the student, not the parent.

As uncomfortable as it may be to sit on the sidelines, that's the appropriate place for a parent. But offering advice can help your student see that they have options for action and aren't just stuck.



UPCOMING DATES & DEADLINES

NOVEMBER

1 – Native American Cultural Celebration
Alumni Speaker: Monte Yellow Bird,
Black Pinto Horse Fine Arts, time and
location to be determined

NDAFAA Counselor Workshop,
Conference Center, 8:30 A.M. – 12 P.M.

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.

International Cultural Celebration,
Student Center Atrium, 12:30 – 2:30 P.M.

9 – Last day to drop a 16-week class

10 – Veteran's Day observed, University
closed

15 – Last day to withdraw from second
8-week classes and receive a 50%
refund

20 – Last day to drop a second 8-week
class

22 – Thanksgiving Vacation, no classes

23 – Thanksgiving, University closed

24 – Thanksgiving Vacation, no classes

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

Help your college student learn to manage conflict

By Vicki Nelson, CollegiateParent.com

Maya is upset because she's fighting with her roommate all of the time. They can't agree on cleaning up, having overnight guests, or playing loud music.

Sam is in a bad mood because he thought he'd made some close friends in his first weeks at college, but now they argue about politics all of the time and can't seem to get past their different viewpoints.

Clinton just can't seem to find common ground with his history professor. They disagree about what makes a good enough excuse for handing an assignment in late.

Toni and her mother argue on the phone almost every time they talk. Her mom wants Toni to come home on weekends and Toni wants to stay on campus to spend time with her friends.

All four of these students are experiencing conflict. They came to college to have new experiences and to meet new and different kinds of people, but negotiating those differences has created problems.



Conflict is a normal part of life.

One reason these students may be upset by the conflict they are experiencing is because they didn't anticipate it. Conflict can be as simple as not agreeing with someone or as complex as an all-out, long-lasting dispute. These students need to understand that some conflict is inevitable.

According to psychologist and writer Kenneth Kaye, "Conflict is neither good nor bad. Properly managed, it is absolutely vital."

The goal is not necessarily to eliminate all conflict, but rather to see it as a natural, healthy process and to manage it. If your college student is experiencing conflict — if any of the scenarios above sound even a little bit familiar — it is important to talk with your student about it.

It's all about your approach.

Sometimes, the problem isn't the conflict itself, but how we approach it that can cause issues. Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann, two professors at the University of Pittsburgh, analyzed five ways of approaching conflict. Your student may find that one of the following five approaches might help. The key is thinking about how much you want to get your own way (being assertive) and how much you are willing to let the other person get their way (cooperativeness).

- 1. Accommodating (*letting the other person win*).** This keeps the peace at all costs (you give up your side) and can work well for minor situations, when something doesn't matter as much to you as it does to the other person, or definitely when you realize that you are wrong.
- 2. Avoiding (*keeping your fingers crossed that the problem will resolve itself*).** Basically, you ignore the problem. This may work well when the issue isn't really important or worth the effort and it can give both people time to think of a more appropriate way to approach the situation later.

3. **Compromising** (*partially satisfying both people*).

Both people give up something that they want to find a compromise. This will lower levels of tension and stress and may be a good first step when people don't know each other very well. It's the approach we were most often taught as children.

4. **Competing** (*getting your own way, often at the other person's expense*). This is a zero-sum game where someone is going to lose. You stick to your guns and force the issue. This may be necessary when a quick resolution is required or as a last resort when the issue matters more than the potential relationship with the other person.

5. **Collaborating** (*working together creatively to find a solution*). This approach takes time and commitment to resolve the issue by confronting the problem (not the person) together. It requires a level of trust, allows both people to feel they have a stake in the outcome, and helps build a long-term relationship. Both people have a shared responsibility for the outcome.

Think about these five approaches to conflict and how they might work in each of the scenarios above. There is no correct solution, but the outcomes could be very different.

Immediate strategies for managing conflict.

Although it's important to talk to your college student about accepting some conflict as normal and about taking different approaches to conflict, it may also be necessary to help your student take immediate action.

Here are some suggestions:

- Cool off first. If you're having an argument, choose your words carefully and think about what you do.
- Talk about it with the other person — calmly. They probably want to find a solution, too.
- Focus on behavior and events, not personality. ("When you leave banana peels on the floor, I slip and fall." NOT "You are such a slob.")
- Listen to the other person's point of view. *Really, really.*
- Identify any points that you can agree on. This is a starting place.
- Be specific about the cause of the conflict. What exactly is the problem? Don't let it grow out of proportion.

- Prioritize issues. If there are several things you disagree about, choose one to settle for now.
- Brainstorm solutions together. Get creative. Think outside of the box. (*Collaboration!*)
- Develop a short-term plan together and agree to revisit later to see if it is working.
- Be respectful and optimistic. Believe that you can find a solution.
- Get help from a neutral third party (Residence assistant? Academic advisor?).

On the subject of respect, your student should be more formal in how they go about requesting a meeting with a professor and how they conduct themselves during a conversation than they might be when communicating with a peer.



Can conflict ever be a good thing?

Although we don't like to see our students unhappy or stressed, a little conflict can actually be a good thing. Difficult situations can help students build communication and strategy skills, define their values more clearly, learn how to negotiate, and practice flexibility. Finding a solution to a difficult situation can be extremely satisfying.

Sometimes, students may just need to move on. They may need to make new friends, change roommates, take a class with a different professor next time, or learn to say no to family. As parents, when we encourage our students but stay out of the fray, we can take pride in watching them learn to take control of their own lives and continue to grow.