



Parent and Family Newsletter

DECEMBER 2023 Issue 1

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Dear parents and families,

December is upon us and that means end-of-semester activities. As your student readies themselves for final projects and tests, this is a great time for some extra boosts from home: supportive phone calls and texts, maybe a special delivery food item, really any little show of support.

It's been a great semester filled with many activities for our students. I hope you are finding this newsletter as a positive way to stay engaged with Minot State University. I always appreciate any feedback about newsletter content, as well as any suggested topics or potential engagement activities for families. I would love to hear your ideas on improving the family experience at Minot State.

The University has a wealth of information available at [MinotStateU.edu](https://www.minotstateu.edu). This month, I encourage you to take a few moments and familiarize yourself with the Report a Concern webpage, available [HERE](#).

Respectfully,

Kevin Harmon,
Vice President for Student Affairs

Be seen. Be heard. Be empowered.

Hedberg, Gunville make the most out of internship opportunities

By Kylie Koontz, University Communications student assistant

After securing internships and their real estate licenses from 701 Realty, Minot locals Mason Hedberg and Jaxon Gunville plan to take their hard work and talent to the Minot community.

Former Minot State University basketball teammates, Hedberg, a senior who played for four seasons for the Beavers, and Gunville, a junior guard on the 2023-24 team, have been working towards their finance and management degrees.

“Up until now I really didn’t know what I wanted to do,” said Gunville. “Thankfully I heard about the internship and that helped me narrow it down a lot.”

Both Gunville and Hedberg found out about the internship through Randy Conway, Minot State University Severson Entrepreneurship Academy director.

“The Severson Entrepreneurship Academy works closely with College of Business faculty and staff to connect MSU students with the business community,” said Conway. “Together, we have developed many paid internship opportunities with great organizations across several industries and locations.

“An internship is a great way for students to gain practical experience while they are attending MSU and a great way for businesses to make strong connections with students prior to graduation.”

Having heard about the opportunity from Conway, Gunville saw how much the internship impacted his fellow teammate and decided to give it a try.

“When I saw Mason do it, it got me thinking about what I’m going to do and how I am going to make money,” Gunville said. “It’s one of those things I can always do to make money on the side, whether I take a finance job or not. And it also gives me an opportunity to give back to the community.”

Now that both have had career-based experience, their thoughts are turning towards the future.

“I plan on doing real estate on the side and I’ve actually gotten another internship at a bank right now, and they offered me a job once I graduate,” Hedberg said. “Using my experience from the internship at 701, I can use real estate as a form of passive income in the future.”

Although Hedberg finished his playing career and



will graduate in December, Gunville has two more years, giving him a little bit more time to narrow down his career path.

"I'm really leaning towards starting in accounting and seeing where that takes me. I'll definitely do real estate on the side as well," said Gunville.

Having grown up here, playing basketball at Minot State, and now getting to watch their siblings grow up, both Hedberg and Gunville make no plans to leave the area.

"As athletes, we really get used to the idea of giving back to our community and that's something that I really want to be able to do here in Minot," said Gunville. "This internship really opened my eyes to the opportunity to do that."

They also found the low-risk value in pursuing their internships.

"I definitely recommend taking an internship. The Severson Entrepreneurship Academy allowed me to fully get the real-life experience," Hedberg said. "There's only so much you can really learn in the classroom, it's the experience that really teaches you how to do a job well."

"Internships for me were important because I didn't really know what I wanted to do, and there are a lot of people out there in the same boat," Gunville said. "If you have the willingness to try new things the worst that can happen is that you know that job isn't for you."

With Hedberg already having a salary position available to him after graduation, and a realtor's license, and Gunville with his realtor's license as well, the Magic City is lucky to have two very talented and passionate young men dedicated to giving back to their community.



UPCOMING DATES & DEADLINES

DECEMBER

6 – Minot State University scholarship application opens; deadline is Feb. 15

11-15 – Final exams

DEC. 17 – JAN. 5 – Sodexo dining closed

25 – University closed

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

JANUARY

1 – University closed

8 – Classes begin after 4 P.M.

9 – First full day of spring classes

15 – Martin Luther King Day, University closed

18 – Last day to add a class, drop a class or withdraw from all classes and receive a 100% refund

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

Four reasons your student may be struggling in college

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

It can be heartbreaking to get phone calls from your college student when they are upset, sad, or overwhelmed. It's common for students to struggle in college and parents often see the symptoms of their student's struggle before identifying the cause. Read on to learn about four common challenges that could be at the root of your student's struggles in college.

1. Learning new “college systems”

It probably took your student four years to understand the systems that were in place in their high school. Transitioning to college immerses your student in an entirely new network of systems.

College systems can include anything from the number of classes your student has each day to how to contact their teachers (email, in person, office hours, etc.). Colleges have systems for how students can pick up and eat their meals (dining halls are open only certain hours and these hours often change on the weekend) as well as systems for how students should submit homework (some professors prefer hard copies in person while others want assignments submitted online). Student-athletes need to learn new practice schedules, conditioning routines, and additional academic expectations.



Your student's ability to identify and learn these new systems will determine their ability to “go with the flow” or stumble with each new system to learn. College freshmen, in particular, may face setbacks in their first year related to adjusting to these new systems but excel in their sophomore year as things just seem a little easier. However this year during the pandemic systems have been in flux and students of every year have had to continuously adjust and readjust.

2. The demands of increased critical thinking and writing

Higher education encourages students to develop the ability to question pretty much everything. Professors challenge students to look below the surface and search for connections between ideas, make inferences, and suggest alternative perspectives.

[Bloom's taxonomy](#) identifies these skills as necessary in forming critical thinking skills — which are necessary for college success.

In high school, students are often not told about this shift in teaching and learning and they enter college expecting tests that measure their recall and memory of already learned concepts — high school-level skills. This thinking can be misleading when college students are expected to see what isn't there and question ideas they are taught instead of merely regurgitating them.

Furthermore, college professors expect students to expound upon their ideas in lengthy written essays. It can be hard enough to understand an ethical theory in Philosophy 101 but explaining said theory in 2–3 pages can be painstaking for some students. If your student struggles with abstract thinking or is a very concrete thinker, the increased critical thinking and writing demands of college [may be part of their struggle](#).

Learn more about the academic adjustment from high school to college [here](#).

3. Executive functioning weakness

Students at every stage of college can struggle with time management and organization, also known as [executive functioning skills](#).

In high school, these skills are often supported by teachers, guidance counselors, special education teachers, and parents — all of whom are absent from college. I know I'm guilty of nagging my high school daughter to turn in assignments that I've checked in her online portal. This well-meaning behavior on my part is actually undermining her ability to organize herself and develop the skills needed to manage her time.

In college, students are responsible for keeping track of their weekly schedule of classes, all homework assignments, social events, financial aid/tuition deadlines, doing laundry each week (hopefully!), and medication management (if this applies to your student). In addition, being able to regulate and plan how they'll use their free time outside of class requires a well-developed pre-frontal cortex (the location in the front of the brain where executive functioning skills are housed).

If your student struggles to turn in homework on time, spends a lot of time playing video games, or doesn't remember to check their email, executive functioning skills may be at fault.

4. Inability to ask for help or self-advocate

Many new college students, [particularly those with learning differences](#) who may have spent years receiving K-12 special education services, tell me that they "want to do college on their own."

I highly respect students who want to be independent and commend them for their determination. However, even with this "I can handle it!" attitude, when students encounter difficulties in college they need to be able to identify who and how to ask for help.

Before college starts, I encourage families and students to identify and make a list of staff and departments at their institution who can help them. For example, who is the student's academic advisor when academic concerns arise? Who is the Director of Residence Life or Director of Accessibility Services? Where is the Writing Center or Academic Success

Center located and is their support virtual or in-person? Where is the Counseling and Wellness Center located and how do students make appointments?

Having this information readily available before students need it will increase the likelihood of your student asking for help rather than trying to go it alone.

How can I help my student?

There are other reasons that students may struggle in college and these may be related to a student's particular disability, personality, or unique tendencies. Each student will meet the challenges of college in different ways and their ability to cope and adapt to change will be as individual as they are.

If you begin to see signs of your student struggling, think about the four reasons mentioned above first. Ask them for their perceptions related to these four areas — this is an excellent way to build their metacognitive skills (thinking about their thinking).

Once you've identified the cause(s) of their struggle, you can help them remediate the concern by reaching out to a campus support system, or you might consider an outside professional such as an [executive functioning coach](#).

I guarantee your student is not the first to struggle in college. Referring to the common areas of struggle described above will help you have meaningful and productive conversations that will guide your college student toward college success.



Four steps to better conversations with your student

By Jennifer Sullivan, CollegiateParent.com

Entering a teenager's room can feel like walking into a lion's cage. Your teen suspects you're there to get something, usually an answer to an important question, and they immediately put up their guard.

When I coach college parents, I frequently offer advice about how they can engage their teenagers in conversation and, more importantly, how to create meaningful conversations that last longer than the usual two-word response, "I'm fine."

In any conversation with your student, I agree with Aaron Burr's character in the Broadway play "Hamilton" who advises Alexander to "talk less, smile more." Below I outline four steps to having open and meaningful conversations with young adults: setting the stage, breaking the ice through relationship-building questions, being aware of your body language, and resisting the urge to solve your teen's problems.

1. Set the stage

Parents, think for a moment about how you would answer if someone asked you to share your proudest moment from the past few weeks. You'd need a few minutes to reflect, filter through all of your recent activities, and then identify an experience you felt comfortable sharing.

Now imagine you were asked to do this while standing in line at the grocery store. Would you feel particularly open and comfortable? Probably not. But you might feel differently if you were asked the same question while sitting on your couch at home under a cozy blanket.

This principle applies to conversations with your teens as well. Environment and timing can be just as important as the words we use.

To increase the likelihood of your teen engaging in a conversation, consider the environments where they're most comfortable. Where do they feel relaxed? Where do they feel valued? Do they enjoy going on walks with the family pet? Do they love car rides with their favorite music playing? Do they feel at ease on the basketball



court, hiking, or on the beach?

Each person's comfort zone is unique to them. Each sibling's comfort zone is different, too, and the location where you and your student are most likely to connect and chat could be completely different from where their brother or sister feels comfortable opening up.

2. Ask a relationship-building question first

Before jumping into the real question that you want to ask, I suggest asking a relationship-building question. To understand why this approach works, let's apply the principle to a different situation (and one of my favorite topics) — food.

Do you know why grocery stores offer customers free food samples? (At least they did pre-COVID.) Stores have promotional items and brands each week that they're trying to sell, and they know that customers are more likely to buy an item if they try it first. Frozen meatballs may not be on my grocery list, but it's hard to resist buying a package if my taste buds have told my brain, "YUM — you need these!"

Your student might not initially want to open up about their struggles, but they'll be more likely to do so if you ask a "free sample" question first. Lead with a question that will get you halfway there and build a connection.

Some scenarios:

- **What you want to know:** Why did you get a D in English?

The question you ask first: What did you think of your classes this semester? What was your favorite class? What was your least favorite class? What do you think made that class so difficult?

- **What you want to know:** Why did you spend \$1,000 on food delivery to your dorm?

The question you ask first: What do you think of the dining hall food? What hours are they open? When you don't eat there, where do you like to eat?

- **What you want to know:** Why do you procrastinate and start your assignments the night before they're due?

The question you ask first: Do you have a lot of short-term or long-term assignments this semester? What's your process for tackling long-term assignments? I think your college has a writing/tutoring center that can help you break big projects into smaller ones — let's look at their website together.

3. Recognize your body language

Once you've set the stage and your college student has started talking, your body language will be a factor in whether or not they keep sharing or pull away.

I've noticed that when I walk into my daughter's bedroom and stay standing with my arms crossed instead of sitting on her bed, she is less likely to talk with me. In the moment, it can be challenging to step outside ourselves and be aware of our body posture, stance, facial expression, tone, and voice volume as a teenager would perceive them. But we must recognize our hidden habits that might sabotage our ability to have meaningful conversations with our teens.

For example, [studies in the psychology of communication](#) have shown that an imbalance in the height and perceived authority of two people having a conversation can affect the willingness of one person to communicate with the other. If your teen is sitting on the couch, on the floor, or on their bed, and you initiate a conversation while standing above them, your stance alone can shut it down before it starts.

I recommend asking your teen if you can sit next to them before starting a conversation. If they're having a cup of hot chocolate on the couch, consider making a cup of tea and asking, "You look comfy — mind if I join you?" Paying attention to this aspect of communication can improve the quality of your conversations with your student.

4. Lead (don't push) your student to the answer

When I coach college students struggling socially or academically, I always have a goal or skill in mind that I know will help "solve" their problem. Through talking with students, I can pretty quickly identify negative habits affecting students' success.

However, if I were to tell a student, "Here's what you're doing wrong, and here's what you need to do about it," the student would probably respond defensively and not listen to me again.

Even if I can identify a problem area right away, I see my role as guiding my students to identify the problem themselves and the solution on their own. This takes strategic questioning (see #2 above) and patience, but it's the path to learning.

As parents, it can be difficult to listen without judgment and to resist the urge to offer a quick solution. We all want quick fixes. But there is so much more value in responding with, "How do YOU think you would solve that problem?"

Little by little, you are shifting your communication style.

As your teen becomes more independent, your communication style with them will gradually shift from a parent who problem-solves and offers solutions to a parent who listens and offers support.

It may be hard to hang back and not jump into action. You may feel the urge to solve your student's problems by offering suggestions. Or you may be tempted to intervene by contacting their academic advisor or their roommate's parents when issues arise.

After all, you may have been in the driver's seat during your teen's high school years. Recently, a parent shared with me that they've spent the last 18 years solving their son's problems, and it feels unnatural to sit back and let him face challenges on his own. But when your teen opens up and shares their struggles,

they may be looking mostly for affirmation that they can figure it out on their own.

When you hear about a small problem that doesn't require immediate adult help, you may want to try, "That sounds like a tough situation you're in. I'm here to help if you want to talk more."

Empowering your student demonstrates that you trust and have confidence in their ability to solve their own problems. When they recognize that you trust them, they'll be more likely to share details with you — the good and the not-so-good — in the future.

Financial Aid Information

Spring fees

Spring semester tuition, residence hall fees, and meal plan fees will be posted to student accounts in Campus Connection in early December. Spring semester fees are due to be paid in full by Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024. Students can view a detailed list of their charges for a specific semester by clicking on Account Summary under the Financial Account tile in Campus Connection.

Bookstore charging

Students who have enrolled for Spring 2024 classes may choose to charge their books at the [MSU Barnes & Noble Bookstore](#) from Tuesday, Dec. 26 through Thursday, Jan. 18, regardless of whether the student has financial aid available or not. This change makes it possible for all students to easily acquire textbooks needed for academic success.

Direct deposit of excess financial aid

Students who expect to receive a refund of excess financial aid, which occurs when the total of the student's financial aid is greater than the amount owed to Minot State, are encouraged to sign up for direct deposit rather than receiving a paper check. With direct deposit, the funds are deposited directly in the student's bank account and the check is never lost in the mail. Students can enroll in direct deposit in Campus Connection by selecting the Financial Account tile, and then choosing Direct Deposit. Additional directions are available at [MinotStateU.edu/busoffic/pages/direct-deposit-of-financial-aid.shtml](https://minotstateu.edu/busoffic/pages/direct-deposit-of-financial-aid.shtml).

2024-25 Minot State scholarship application

The Minot State general scholarship application will open to accept applications for the 2024-25 school year in early December. The application form will be available online at the Minot State Financial Aid Office website at [MinotStateU.edu/finaid](https://minotstateu.edu/finaid). The application deadline is Feb. 15, 2024. All returning students are encouraged to submit the general scholarship application every year.

2024-25 FAFSA

The 2024-25 FAFSA will be available by Dec. 31, 2023. The FAFSA is undergoing a significant overhaul of the processes and systems used to award federal student aid, including changes to the formulas that determine student eligibility. We encourage students to watch for [the launch of the 2024-25 FAFSA](#) and submit the new FAFSA when it becomes available. More information about the changes can be found at the studentaid.gov website and on our [website](#).

