Families of First Year Students

The emotion-filled week of “Arrival Survival,” orientation, and the goodbyes to your student are past, and the new pattern at home is beginning to take place. It is probably not as difficult to pass by your student’s empty bedroom. You may even be enjoying some quieter less hectic time. Now is the time to consider the next phase of your role with your son or daughter.

Communication Pattern
How frequently have you phoned or texted your son or daughter? Everyone’s need to interact varies, but now your student is more acclimated to his or her surroundings, met more students, and likely has started new friendships. There is probably less of a need for them to be in frequent communication with you. Daily interaction may be less necessary at this point. A couple of contacts a week might be a comfortable pattern to allow them to establish more of a sense of independence and self-sufficiency, which is of course what we all strive for.

Relationship Change
It is natural and healthy, but not easy, to give up some control in this relationship. You may give input on course selection or social alternatives like alcohol use, but when you do, you will realize that as a young adult he or she must make his or her decision. The parent-child relationship begins now to evolve to an adult to adult relationship. Independence is not necessarily automatic based on age but is a shared release by one and acceptance by the other. The complication is that each is not necessarily ready at the same time.

Families of Second Year Students

Academic Status
At this time of the year the sophomore student is focusing on finalizing their decision about their academic program and considering a major and the curricular plan. They have taken a variety of courses that hopefully informed them about possible alternatives. Now is a good time to ask more questions about majors. It is strongly advised that they attend the Academic Rush Majors Fair. This is an excellent opportunity to speak with representatives of numerous majors on campus. This event is October 6, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Career Considerations
Last year as a freshman your student may not have felt the topic of choosing...
HOW TO FIND US

Division of Student Affairs
www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu
412-648-1006

Disability Resources and Services
www.drs.pitt.edu
412-648-7890

Career Development
www.careers.pitt.edu
412-648-7130

Cross Cultural and Leadership Development
www.ccld.pitt.edu
412-648-9523

International Services
www.ois.pitt.edu
412-624-7120

Office of Parent and Family Resources
www.parents.pitt.edu
412-624-8548

Residence Life
www.reslife.pitt.edu
412-648-1200

Student Employment and Placement Assistance
www.hire.pitt.edu
412-383-4473

Student Life
www.studentlife.pitt.edu
412-648-1074

Student Health Service
www.studhlth.pitt.edu
412-383-1800

Counseling Center
www.counseling.pitt.edu
412-648-7930

Office of Student Conduct
www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/conduct
412-648-7910

Mary’s Message
Welcome to Our First Parents e-Newsletter

This e-publication symbolizes much that is new in the realm of parent and family relations at the University of Pittsburgh. The Office of Parent and Family Resources was created this summer to build awareness of the many opportunities available to your student here at Pitt. We do this by communicating with you regularly about available resources to your student and opportunities for you to come to campus and participate in fun activities with your student. As your student settles in here, he or she will reach out to you for advice and counsel at important times for them. The difference is now they are the responsible party in their college experience. You continue to be there for them, but in more of a coaching role than as a key player in their experience. Together, we can help you make the most of your new role.

The Parent and Family Web site www.parents.pitt.edu has a complete handbook and will hold an archive of past editions of these newsletters. In addition the site holds links to most information that you might require. In addition, we will be holding information sessions on-line on topics of interest to you. Watch for more information in the near future.

Our goal in the Office of Parent and Family Resources is effective communications designed to meet your special needs while advising your student. I invite you to call or e-mail the Office of Parent and Family Resources with your questions and concerns. When visiting campus, please stop by the office in room 130 of the William Pitt Union and introduce yourself. I look forward to welcoming you to campus at our many events and programs during the upcoming year that are outlined in this newsletter.

We also invite you to provide us feedback on the newsletter. If you think of topics you would like to see covered in the future, please let us know that as well. Thank you for being a member of the Panther Parent Association. We hope you find it a fruitful association.

Sincerely,

Marvin J. Roth
Parent and Family Liaison
University of Pittsburgh
Office of Parent and Family Resources
130 William Pitt Union
412-624-8548

Hail to Pitt!

Parents commented on the chancellor’s speech at Freshman Convocation focusing on the remarkable accomplishments achieved here at Pitt. Many of these accolades achieved by students, faculty, and alumni are highlighted in the speeches that can be seen at these two links.

The Decade of Challenge at http://www.chronicle.pitt.edu/?p=5437
and
The Chancellor’s Report at the Annual Meeting of our Board of Trustees at http://www.chronicle.pitt.edu/?p=5873
Career Fair Quickly Approaching

The University of Pittsburgh Fall 2010 Career Fair is just a few weeks away. To date, there are over 240 confirmed businesses and organizations attending fair looking to hire Pitt students from all majors for internships, and part-time and full-time positions.

In order to help your student prepare for the fair, which will be held at the Petersen Events Center on Thursday, Sept. 30 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., we strongly encourage you to encourage them to do three things:

1) Attend the career fair, regardless of whether they are a freshman, sophomore, junior, senior or graduate student. Younger students need to learn how to interact with college recruiters; older students need to secure internships, entrance into graduate school, and/or career-related jobs.

2) Preregister. All preregistered students will receive an advanced copy of the directory plus other tips to help them prepare for the fair. The student directory and other tips will be e-mailed beginning September 20. Students can preregister through the portal at my.pitt.edu.

3) Attend Career Kickoff Events the week prior to the career fair. Key employers will be on hand at various campus locations to review resumes and perfect networking skills.

For more information, visit: www.hire.pitt.edu

Emerging Leaders

The fall session of Pitt’s Emerging Leaders Program, a personal leadership development series that equips students with the skills and tools to become successful leaders, will begin the week of September 21.

The Office of Cross Cultural and Leadership Development will sponsor five sessions of Emerging Leaders this year:

- Tuesdays - 10 a.m. to noon
- Wednesdays - noon to 2 p.m., or 6 to 8 p.m.
- Thursdays - 2 to 4 p.m., or 6 to 8 p.m.

The 10-week program covers topics such as group dynamics, conflict resolution, diversity, values and ethics, power and influence, marketing yourself, and understanding yourself as a leader.

Students can register now at www.emergingleaders.pitt.edu Walk-ins also will be accepted during the first sessions on Sept. 21-22-23.
Parents Special Interest Groups

If you would like to become more involved, a new outlet is being developed for you: Parent Special interest Groups (SIG). Career Development, the Student Payment Center, and Panther Central are among the first to be inviting parents to help them out. Each department might have a different purpose for their Parent SIG. The description of what they are seeking is below. If interested, send your interest area with the subject “Special Interest Groups” to Marv Roth at parents@pitt.edu. He will pass your name and contact information to the departmental coordinator who will be in touch with you.

Student Payment Center
The Student Payment Center would appreciate participation from parents in evaluating ease of use of PittPAY, and assist us in identifying ways to simplify navigation and usability. Space in this group is limited. Depending on the outcome, more groups may be sought.

Career Services
For Parents and Family of Pitt Students:
• Panther Shadow Program
  Volunteer to serve as a “host” to a student for a day. This experience can be structured in many ways and the goal is to provide an experience to students that offers a realistic understanding of a career field.
  • Recruiting Opportunities: Employer Liaison
  Serve as a contact to support a recruiting relationship between an employer and the University of Pittsburgh, and/or provide current information regarding job opportunities.
  • Information Sessions:
  Share information with students highlighting your organization or industry on campus.

For Pitt Alumni Parents and Family:
• Panel Presenter:
  As a Pitt alumnus, return to campus and share your expertise with students. Topics and times vary throughout the academic year.
• Pathway to Professions:
  An annual alumni networking event held prior to Homecoming Weekend. This is an excellent way to network with other alumni from a variety of different industries and professions.
• Pitt Career Network:
  This online networking directory is designed to create a community of Pitt alumni and students for networking and sharing of career-related information.

Flu Vaccines
Parents are encouraged to remind their student to receive the flu vaccine this year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued recommendations that anyone above six months of age who is not taking medication that could cause an adverse reaction, be vaccinated. Student Health Service (SHS) has flu vaccines available for a fee of $25. SHS will be hosting a flu vaccine clinic in October or students can make an appointment to receive the vaccine at the clinic in the Medical Arts building (next to Rita’s Italian Ice).
a career field was all that compelling. However, in today’s competitive employment marketplace the more prepared the student is by selecting a direction and experiencing it, the more competitive they will be when they graduate. This refers to graduate school as much as employment. Graduate school applications always increase when the job market is soft, which in turn drives their competitiveness.

What should they be doing? Career exploration is crucial. Learn about options, job shadow, and look at internship opportunities. It is definitely not too early. They should find and connect with their career development professional. They should attend any career fair offered to explore opportunities with which they are not familiar.

Families of Junior Students

Academic Status
The junior should be excited about their major and eagerly engaging in it. The pitfall some students lose sight of, in their justifiable exuberance of pursuing their academic interest, is to also demonstrate their full range of skill sets through extra-curricular leadership experiences and internships. The balance between academic and life experience makes for the “Education of the Whole Student” that Pitt holds up as a primary tenant of our educational experience. This is the rationale for the creation of the Outside of the Classroom Curriculum. (See www.occ.pitt.edu) The student is encouraged to maintain their involvement in that program to help keep them on track to a broad high quality education.

Career Consideration
At the risk of sounding redundant, the key is further engagement in career exploration. Internships during the semester or in the summer are the focus of the junior year in preparation for the job search next year. They should have a resume reviewed and ready to go. If graduate school is in consideration, they should be exploring programs and school options by the end of the year. Preparation for graduate school exams should begin and the application process should start by the end of this year.

Families of Senior Students

Academic Status
Your student is “rounding the far turn.” They should meet with their advisor to be sure that all of their course requirements will have been met by the end of the year. They should know their planned course selection for next semester already. They should have all of this done early in the year so they can focus on the logistics of getting into graduate school or finding employment.

Career Consideration
Your student may already have done some of this, but now is the time to have their entire “marketability toolbox” ready to go. They should have their career development professional review their resume, and they should have a mock interview, even if they are confident in their interviewing skills. Even professional athletes still practice. These tools are important for both employment and graduate/professional schools. They should sit down with their career development professional to be sure they have an application plan in place. They should connect with the Office of Student Employment and Placement Assistance (SEPA) on the second floor of the William Pitt Union for assistance with their search. (See www.hire.pitt.edu)
Class of 2014 Attempts to Set World Record

On Thursday, August 26, 2010, the incoming Class of 2014 formed the World’s Largest TorchLit Logo during the Pathway to Your Success at Pitt orientation program at the Petersen Events Center. At least 2,496 students formed the PITT logo using blue and white flashlights.

While the record must still be officially confirmed by the Guinness Book of World Records, Pitt officials are more than confident that the Class of 2014 will enter the record book. The previous mark of 528 people making a torch-lit logo was set by students at Full Sail University in Winter Park, Fla., in January of 2010. Pitt had at least five times that many students light their flashlights for the required 10 minutes.

“This is the best start to a new academic school year that I have ever seen,” said new Pitt Provost Patricia Beeson, who has worked at the University for 27 years and previously served as the vice provost for graduate and undergraduate studies and as a professor of economics. She delivered remarks to students and parents in attendance at the event and teams with Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg to lead the University.

The idea to have Pitt students set a world record was the brainchild of Vice Provost and Dean of Students Kathy Humphrey. “We wanted the Class of 2014 to do something really special that would create a sense of unity and Pitt pride, so we thought setting a Guinness world record would do that. The students hopefully will remember this for the rest of their lives and always know that when they work together they can make their mark on the world.”

DIDJA KNOW?

In this monthly feature, we will spotlight a question we received that you may be thinking about as well.

This month’s question is… How do I gain access to my son or daughter’s grades and health records?

The first consideration that we would recommend to student and parents regarding access to your student’s grades and/or select medical records is to have a conversation with your student about how you will learn about this part of their life now that they are in college. Every student and parent relationship is unique and therefore there is no one way that parents should learn about this information. Perhaps you will agree that your student will keep you informed about their grades and health, which would not require you to have direct access to this information. However, some parents express to their student a preference to have direct access to this information and students agree. Regardless of the decision, good communication is critical.

The following process is available to students who decide to grant their parents direct access to grades and/or select medical information. In order for you to gain access your son’s or daughter’s grades he or she needs to provide a “Waiver to Release Educational Records” found at the web address at the bottom of this page:

To access grades on the web, log on to Student Self Service by clicking on my.pitt.edu, entering your son or daughter’s User ID and Password and following the path:

Click on “Student Center Login”>click on “Self Service”>click on “Student Center”>select “other academic” and in the drop down box, select “Grades” then click on the double arrows to continue to “Grades” screen …this will display the most current term….to change terms, click on the green button that reads “change term” then select the appropriate term and click the green button that reads “continue”.

In order to receive access to select medical records your son or daughter must provide the Student Health Services with written permission for them to release those records.

www.registrar.pitt.edu/Forms/WAIVER%20TO%20RELEASE%20EDUCATIONAL%20RECORDS.pdf
The University of Pittsburgh will once again conduct a public awareness campaign to call attention to the symptoms of depression and encourage individuals experiencing symptoms to seek assistance from a network of resources.

A committee comprised of Pitt faculty, staff, and student leaders from the Division of Student Affairs will collaborate with community partners at LEAD Pittsburgh (Leading Education and Awareness for Depression) and Contact Pittsburgh to promote the “Talk to Me” campaign.

“Depression is a very real condition that can affect anybody on campus—faculty, staff, and our student population,” said Kenyon Bonner, associate dean of students and director of Student Life and a member of the depression awareness committee. “The purpose of the Talk to Me campaign is to let people know that the best thing somebody can do if they are experiencing symptoms of depression is talk about it and talk to the right people.”

Parents should be aware that their student could suffer from depression, and encourage their student to talk to somebody in the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930) if they answer yes to five or more of the following questions and they have felt this way for at least two weeks.

- Do I feel sad or unhappy?
- Am I uninterested in things I usually enjoy?
- Do I feel hopeless about the future?
- Do I have trouble concentrating and/or can’t make decisions?
- Do I feel sluggish or restless?
- Am I gaining or losing weight?
- Am I sleeping too little or too much?
- Do I feel guilty or worthless?
- Do I become irritable or anxious?
- Do I think about dying or killing myself?

If a person has thoughts about death or suicide, they should talk to someone immediately, regardless of their answers to any of the other questions.

According to James Cox, Director of the University Counseling Center, it is important for people to not only understand the symptoms of depression, but also know what types of activities can help prevent depression. “We want to heighten awareness of depression and assist people in getting the help they need,” said Cox. “But we also want to promote positive mental health. We want to help individuals manage stress so that it doesn’t become a problem.”

Individuals participating in the Talk to Me campaign will distribute cards with the following suggestions on how people can reduce stress and combat depression:

**Encourage your student to:**
1. Exercise or engage in some form of physical activity.
2. Get enough sleep, eat well, and drink plenty of water.
3. Reduce or eliminate the use of alcohol and drugs, and limit caffeine intake.
4. Focus on positive aspects of life.
5. Stay connected or get involved in a support network of friends, family, and organizations.
6. Set aside some time to do things they enjoy.
7. Pace yourself and set realistic goals.
8. Try to reduce wasting precious energy on negative thoughts and things they can’t control.
9. Try new ways to relax, such as yoga, massage, deep breathing and meditation.
10. Don’t be afraid to talk to someone about their concerns.

Cox said that if an individual is practicing these techniques and still feels especially despondent or anxious, then they should seek help. “If students are doing all of these things to help themselves and still experiencing symptoms of depression, then they need to come to the University Counseling Center.”

**Counseling Center**

www.counseling.pitt.edu
412-648-7930