FALL 2013
Upcoming events:

- New and Transfer Student Orientation - August 20-25
- Parent & Family Orientation August 20-21
- Fall Career Fair September 25
- Homecoming September 27-29
- Family Weekend October 18-20
- Pitt Make a Difference Day October 26
- Academic Calendar

Welcome Class of 2017 Parents and Families!

Excitement is growing on campus as PittStarts are in full swing and orientation is on the horizon. Summer is a busy time at Pitt as we prepare to welcome thousands of new and returning students to campus. Summer is a busy time for parents and families as well, especially parents of incoming Pitt freshmen. So, it is not surprising when parents ask, “What is the difference between summer PittStart days and Fall Orientation, and do I need to attend either or both?” The answer is, each event involves preparation for fall term but there is a difference.

PittStart is an academic orientation. Your student will meet his advisor, get one-on-one advice and guidance for fall classes, and then schedule those classes. Parents are provided with information, tours, and programming during these two days. Click here to view a PittStart parent and student schedule.

Parent and Family Orientation is our opportunity to welcome you and your student during freshmen move-in*. Orientation focuses on your student’s transition and adjustment to college life and gives you an opportunity to meet with college administrators. Parents will receive a complimentary “Proud Pitt Parent” t-shirt and custom pin to wear during the Freshmen Convocation Ceremony. Click here to view the Orientation schedules.

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to attend both PittStart and Fall Orientation. However, these events are completely optional for parents. If you have questions, please email parents@pitt.edu, or call 412-624-8548

*Students will receive an “Arrival Survival” packet via USPS. Click here for up-to-date Panther Central information.
IT’S A BALANCING ACT

I t’s summer! I hope that you and your student are able to enjoy some rest, relaxation and quality time together, and I hope that you have time for some great summer reading. I have just the book for you!

Starting on June 26, we will facilitate a Facebook book discussion using an informative and entertaining book about college life entitled: The Naked Roommate: FOR PARENTS ONLY. Please consider borrowing or buying this book by author and speaker, Harlan Cohen, and join our discussion. Click here to join our Facebook group.

Speaking of discussions, parents and students are also invited to join us for our Wednesday PittChat Webinar Series. Click here for topics, dates, times, and how you can register. All you need is a computer with internet connection, a keyboard, and speakers.

Finally, in response to our last newsletter survey, we realized that several parents were not able to read the Panther Connections newsletter due to the border design. We apologize and have discontinued that feature. Please let us know if this corrected the problem.

We strive to address your needs and hope that you will continue to communicate with us by written word, phone call, or survey. We may be reached at parents@pitt.edu or by calling 412-648-8548.

From our Pitt family to yours, we wish you and your student a wonderful and relaxing summer. Hail to Pitt!

Sandy
Sandy Talbott
Parent and Family Liaison

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP ADVISING THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE

By: Matt Schultz, Honors College

National Scholarships are external awards designed to augment an undergraduate’s educational career through expanded academic, networking, and professional development opportunities. The University Honors College scholarship advisors help students identify scholarships and explore the steps to become competitive applicants for these awards. Through the application process students attain a broader perspective and a refined understanding of their personal, academic, and professional goals.

Interested students should attend a general scholarships information session. Sessions dates and times can be found at: http://scholarships.honorscollege.pitt.edu/calendar.html

For more national scholarship information, please click here.
**Sorority Membership: A Reflection**

*By: Carolyn Lewis, President, Collegiate Panhellenic Association*

College is full of decision-making. As a rising senior, I cannot even begin to imagine my college experience if I had not made the decision to join a sorority. When I entered as a freshman, I was skeptical about the fraternity and sorority community, due to the pervasive negative stereotypes I had already seen dramatized by movies and Web sites. However, there was always a voice in the back of my mind saying, “What about traditions, opportunities, and brotherhood and sisterhood?”

I have found exactly those things within the University of Pittsburgh’s fraternity and sorority community. Over the past three years, I have met hundreds of individuals who have supported me, challenged me, and inspired me. I ran for and was elected chapter president after the encouragement of older sisters who saw leadership potential in me that I hadn’t even recognized in myself. I can now say I have worked to raise thousands of dollars for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, traveled the country meeting other student leaders, and even presented to the Board of Trustees! These opportunities are further enriched by the fact that I experienced them with individuals who have provided me with a family away from home. The members of Pitt’s fraternity and sorority community are dedicated, involved, and passionate about their endeavors. I know I will be able to carry my sorority experiences and relationships with me throughout the rest of my life. For all these reasons, joining a sorority has been the best decision I have ever made.

I wish for all Pitt students to have a truly enriching collegiate experience. To learn more about the fraternity and sorority community please click here.

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**Pitt Odyssey Summer Retreat: First Year Students Find Their Place at Pitt**

*By Katie Munsch Costa, Program Coordinator Office of Student Life*

Every summer, Pitt’s Office of the First Year Experience sponsors Pitt Odyssey, a weekend retreat designed for incoming students. Students who attend this retreat have an opportunity to have fun, make friends, enhance their leadership skills, and learn more about life at Pitt.

The retreat takes place at the Outdoor Odyssey Leadership Academy located in Boswell, PA. Incoming students can arrange their own transportation to the retreat or register for transportation options from the Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg areas. Once students arrive at Outdoor Odyssey, they stay in furnished cabins with indoor plumbing.

Pitt Odyssey is led by Pitt students who are passionate about making the first year of college a success for the freshmen. These students have valuable personal experiences and can offer advice about classes, fun things to do in Oakland, and anything else students will need as they begin college. Activities that take place during Pitt Odyssey include team challenges, ropes courses, hikes, games, bonfires, and time to just relax. Pitt Odyssey accommodates students of all physical ability and all activities are optional.

Current Student Government Board President Gordon Louderback, who attended Pitt Odyssey as an incoming freshman, recently reflected on his Odyssey experience: “Definitely attend Pitt Odyssey if you’re looking to start your freshman year at Pitt with a great group of friends and a feeling of comfort… Odyssey will spark your collegiate leadership journey!”

For more information about Pitt Odyssey, including dates, cost, and how to register, click here.

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**Want to see what Odyssey is all about?**

**Check out the video!**
SURVIVING THE SUMMER BEFORE COLLEGE

By Panther Parent Ambassador, Laura Heleniak

If you are traveling the road to “Summer before College” perhaps this guide for survival may assist you in that journey. Most importantly you must realize that you will survive, even though reality is starting to set in that you will soon be separated from one of the most precious treasures in your life. Take a deep breath and ask other parents who have been over that bridge. They will tell you as well that you will survive. Encourage friendships with parents who have had college students so you can bond when the time comes for “empty nest.” Sometime in June or July you should be gathering all your store coupons and make way to one of those stores that carries all the college stuff. It will be true reality check that your high school graduate is really “moving out.”

This is a time for them to choose bedding and dorm accessories. You may be a true reality check that your high school graduate is really “moving out.”

What items should your freshman bring and what is best left at home? We asked our First Year Mentors....

Bring an umbrella because it rains a lot. And, bring a shower caddy because it makes life much easier, trust me. Although I drink a lot of coffee, I realized making it and having space for the machine in my room was harder than buying it on campus.

Greg, Junior Biology major

My hot water dispenser was so useful, especially when I needed tea or ramen in a hurry! I thought that I would use my ironing board all of the time, but it just collected dust all year.

Ashley, Sophomore Political Science and Economics

A raincoat is a good investment. I couldn’t have made it to class without it. Since we are allotted 900 printing pages it’s easier to use the self-service printer than it is to have a personal printer. Also, as soon as I ran out of ink, I didn’t want to buy more.

Natalie, Junior Finance Major

A stool was helpful because the closets are taller than I anticipated. I also brought some of my favorite books but I never used them because I was always too busy.

Raechelle, Sophomore English Literature major

True, you will miss them, but do not dwell on their absence before they make it out the door. It will make the departure worse for everyone.

While your times with your pre-college student may be limited, enjoy the moments at dinner or shopping before they are off to school. Remember, they are nervous about the move even though they may not be telling you. Listen for indications that they may be a bit nervous about leaving. Let them know it is a change that all in your home will experience. Tell them it is normal to be nervous about the move.

Hard to believe but once you drop them off they very quickly realize you will not be there to pick up dirty laundry or prepare their favorite meal. They are finally responsible for themselves. What a wonderful thing that really is!

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If they never appreciated you before they certainly will once they leave. Knowing all of this from another parent who “survived” may assure you that your life will go on! You will survive!
Looking Back to Freshman Year

By: Mi Kim, 2013 Pitt graduate

Having their first child attend college in the United States, my parents had a tough time adapting a new parenting style during my freshman year.

My mom preferred to give endless advice, and grilled me every day with questions. But as my college years progressed, my mom adapted her parenting style. She listened more, and instead of our phone conversations being a one-sided interrogation, it became a two-sided conversation. On the other hand, my dad’s parenting style didn’t change when I entered college. When I used to ask him for help, his way of helping was by asking me questions like “Do you know who you need to contact?” “Do you know their phone number?” and “Don’t you have internet in college? Use it.” When I got to college, I understood why he asked questions instead of giving me immediate help. My dad knew I could fix my own problems without his help if I took the time to understand and think through the situation. Moreover, I think it was his way to teach me about taking responsibility.

Looking back, I can see how my parents guided me through. Although I am not a parent, I’ve learned that parents who allow their students to learn from their mistakes help their student understand the importance of taking responsibility. Their students are better equipped to make wise choices and resolve problems on their own.

Attending college does not mean your student will know everything about life by his/her first year. Becoming a college student means it is a time for growing up, learning more, and making most of the Pitt experience.

Emerging Leaders

By: Summer Rothrock, Assistant Director, Leadership Development and Greek Affairs

Is your student a leader? Is your student looking for a great way to get involved and meet new people? If so, the Emerging Leaders program is the perfect opportunity for students to develop leadership skills, meet new friends, and learn how to market themselves.

Emerging Leaders is a 20-hour program offered in a 10-week or weekend format in the fall and spring term by the Division of Student Affairs. Emerging Leaders takes a lively and exciting team approach to learning leadership skills and behaviors. Students participate in small and large group activities and exercises that explore topics such as group dynamics, conflict management, diversity, power and influence, ethics, and life planning.

Emerging Leaders has several benefits. In addition to meeting a diverse population of students who are interested in leadership, they will develop a positive sense of personal identity, understand and strengthen personal leadership skills and style, and practice proven leadership behaviors. The skills learned can be applied immediately to any student leadership role and will be beneficial for a future career. Listing Emerging Leaders on your resume will demonstrate valuable skills outside of the academic classroom.

Emerging Leaders helps students to become the leader they have always wanted to be. Each semester hundreds of Pitt student-leaders participate in Emerging Leaders and receive opportunities and experiences that are only available in this exclusive program. Our program has established partnerships with corporations and community organizations, which has resulted in internships and scholarships for the men and women that have used Emerging Leaders to network with top Pittsburgh business leaders.

I encourage your student to join us in this exciting opportunity to explore leadership. There is a $60 registration fee. Please register on-line.

Orientation Housing for Commuter Students

By: Lynne Miller, Coordinator, Commuter Student & Family Programs

Pitt provides an overnight housing program for first-year commuter students, allowing them the opportunity to live in a residence hall, more closely connect with other students, attend late night events, and experience Oakland. By participating in this program, your student will be able to begin to build friendships with other students—a challenge that many first-year commuters face. Students will spend three nights in Bruce Hall in suite style accommodations and will room with others from their Commuter Pod. Check-in will be on Tuesday, August 20 and check-out on Friday, August 23. For more details on the program and to register, please visit our commuter web site.
PARENT AMBASSADOR CONTACTS

The below Panther Parent Ambassadors, listed below, have generously offered their contact information so that you may e-mail them if you have a general question from a parent perspective. If you do contact them, please identify yourself as a Pitt parent in the subject line and thank them for their service!

Albamonte, Sarah             Fairfax VA
Gargani, Melissa               Houston TX
Krincek, John and Tara     Nazareth PA
Majstorovic, Michele         Orchard Park NY
Nebbia, Alaine and Mark Bethlehem PA
Ricelli, Angie                    Pittsburgh PA
Todd, Joan                        Sykesville MD
Tolerico, Fred                  Carbondale, PA

If you are interested in learning more about the benefits and activities of being a Panther Parent Ambassador, please contact Sandy Talbott.