

August 2019

Dear Parents,

Summer is coming to an end and fall semester at University of Portland is close at hand. Very soon your college bound student will embark to the Bluff to start their college education. This newsletter, the second of monthly letters to parents of incoming students, is designed to inform you about the University and what your student is experiencing on campus during their first year of studies.

We will try to update you about what to expect from your first-year student, both while at UP and when they make the journey back home. We seek to keep first-year students up-to-date on campus events, and we thought you might want to know as well. The newsletter is sent via mail but you can opt to receive an email copy of the newsletter. Please visit www.up.edu/sarc and click on "Services" then "Parent and Family Resources" to find the link and submit one or more email addresses.

Orientation weekend, prior to the start of classes, is an important time for new students and families to meet the UP community (faculty, staff, administrators, and returning students), learn about important services and resources the university provides, and get your questions answered. A full Orientation schedule is published on the Orientation website. Visit <https://www1.up.edu/orientation/>. You can also download the schedule via the handy mobile app Guidebook. The app can be downloaded from your app store or you can visit <https://guidebook.com/getit/> for download instructions. Once you have the app search for "University of Portland Orientation 2019".

After working with first-year students at the University of Portland, here are some of our helpful hints for parents:

Be available, but avoid being intrusive. Resist the urge to call or e-mail every day. Check their class schedule before you call or text. Be positive and supportive when your child calls you. At first, university life can be overwhelming, but it becomes very satisfying when students realize that they can overcome the crisis of the day.

For students close enough to commute home on the weekends, please advise them not to do so during the first four to six weeks of their first semester. The first weeks are very important for establishing friendships and connections on campus. Many local universities do not begin classes until mid-September. If students hang out off-campus (with their high school friends) during this critical first-year bonding time, they may feel like "outsiders" on campus and will find it harder to make friends later in the semester.

The academic calendar is different than high school. For example, **do not plan Labor Day activities for your student – UP holds classes on Labor Day.** The students have a week off in October, but the residence halls do not close, so they can remain on campus. Make sure to review the academic calendar before booking flights home during finals week. A student may have a final on Thursday afternoon and there may be limited to no flexibility for moving the final earlier in the week.

Students need to know a few basics BEFORE they live away from home. Hold a crash course before the semester starts if necessary.

- **Laundry:** It is important to know how to do laundry, especially separating colors.
- **Money:** Living on a budget, and understanding credit are essential.
- **Time:** Good time management skills will prevent most of the crises of academic life. This issue rates number one nationwide in first-year obstacles.
- **Health:** When one is not feeling well, it helps to know when two aspirin might help and when to go to the Center for Health and Counseling. Determine where the local pharmacies are located for regular medications.
- **Wellness:** Although the advice may seem to be ignored, remind your student that everyone — even “independent” college students — still need adequate sleep, a balanced diet, and exercise to function well.
- **Communication:** Speaking with roommates is key and most students have not had to share rooms with strangers. So, encourage them to come up with some questions and ground rules before they arrive here. Also, encourage them to contact their roommate before they arrive on campus.

During Orientation, through the web, or through the Shepard Academic Resource Center’s monthly letters to first-year parents, you and your student can learn about the support services on campus. Please encourage your student to take advantage of the many resources available. Tutoring, advising, counseling, career guidance and activities galore represent educational "value added" features that greatly enhance the University experience. If your student does not know where to go tell them to stop by the Shepard Academic Resource Center and we will help them find the answer.

Students should be encouraged to visit their professors and advisors. They should take advantage of UP’s small classes to get to know their professors. The professor is the first person students should seek when they do not understand course material...but we can tell you that they will NOT do this without a little push. Most first-year students worry that asking questions of professors or seeing professors for help may make the student appear unknowledgeable. We need to enlighten students: professors see these behaviors as proving the student cares about learning.

Encourage your student to get involved in activities outside of classes. A good guideline for students is to try three different activities: an activity related to an academic interest, one that involves service to others, and one that is just for fun. Students will meet a variety of new people with this strategy, will develop new skills and strengths, and will build networks of friends for their college years and beyond.

A University campus is reflective of society in general. Your child will be faced with decisions about academic honesty, alcohol and drug use, choosing friends, sexuality, and other matters large and small. You can often help to reinforce shared values and serve as a sounding board during challenging times. Keep your parental antennae tuned. You still know your child very well.

How will money be handled, and who will be responsible for paying the bills? It is important to discuss money issues with your student, as this may be the first time they are independently responsible for paying for food, clothing, books, entertainment, and a host of other items. Will they have their own bank account, or will you make timely deposits into an account for them? Will they be working while at school, and if so, how much? Encourage your student to balance work and school. The more hours students work each week, the less they will get out of their college experience. If your student works

more than 10 hours per week, then be realistic about how many courses she or he can commit to during a term. Discussing these issues sooner rather than later is essential so that your student can balance these concerns with those of their new environment.

Consider carefully whether your student will use a major credit card. While convenient in an emergency and helpful as identification, a credit card is not necessary and can lead to overspending. We recommend setting guidelines in advance for use of both credit cards and debit cards.

If your student will live at home and commute to school, remind yourself often that college is not an extension of high school. Courses are more demanding and require more hours of out-of-class preparation. Involvement in a variety of campus activities is essential if your commuting student is going to derive the full benefit of an undergraduate education. Make a conscious effort to limit the domestic responsibilities of your student in the home and support his or her full participation in University life.

Students have several transportation options this year. The University of Portland offers a weekend shuttle service leaving from the University Pilot House and going to three local grocery stores - New Seasons Market, Fred Meyer, and Safeway. Pilot Express is a student operated service that provides transportation to the airport, bus and train stations during academic breaks. Additionally, Zipcar has several cars on campus this year. You can check out the plan at "zipcar.com/up" or on campus during Orientation.

Continue to reinforce the expectation that your child will identify an educational goal—not just a grade, work hard in classes, make progress toward a degree, and graduate. First-year college students are easily derailed by confusion about goals, occasional failures and frustrations, and the many distractions of daily life. Your expectations and reinforcement can provide important support to your student.

We look forward to seeing you at Orientation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda Greiner".

Brenda Greiner
Director
Shepard Academic Resource Center