

December Article 1 – Finals Support

We're coming upon another milestone in the life of your freshman – his or her first college-level Finals Week. The upside is that, truly, we're almost there – your son or daughter has nearly completed his or her first semester at the University of Portland. However, for students and parents alike, these final few weeks can be particularly difficult.

In the last few weeks of the semester, students are often finishing up long-term individual and group projects or papers, keeping up on daily homework and studying, and then trying to find time to prepare for the combination of cumulative and non-cumulative tests of knowledge known as final exams. The academic pressure, in addition to the sudden extra constraints on your students' free time, may lead to some very stressed-out phone calls home.

As a parent, there are a few things you can do to help your student during this stressful time. The first is to help your students understand that UP has a number of resources available to them – and that one of the ways we expect our students to be successful is by utilizing those resources provided for them on our campus.

- Are your students in a writing intensive class, or a math, speech, or language class? Send them to the Learning Commons in Buckley Center 163, where our [Writing Center](#) and [Math Resource Center](#) are located, and where [speech](#) and [language tutors](#) are available.
- Is your student experiencing test anxiety or concerned about his or her time management? Refer them to Brother Thomas Giumenta, our [Learning Assistance Counselor](#); he helps students work through test anxiety, understand time management techniques, and he provides strategies on such topics as reading and comprehension, note-taking, studying, and learning and remembering.
- Are your students' stress levels affecting their ability to sleep or study? Work with them to make an appointment at the [Health and Counseling Center](#), where they can meet with professional counselors to talk through issues and help them understand stress management.
- Are your students struggling in particular classes? Advise them to meet regularly with professors during office hours to get questions answered, to spend at least two hours studying for every hour they are in class, and to be active in their studying by forming study groups and working with peers.
- And if your student has any other questions about resources available on campus, refer them to the [Shepard Academic Resource Center](#) – we'll work with them to get them connected to the best resources.

The second and most important thing you as a parent can do during this stressful time is simply to give support. Understand that, after about 10 years of middle and high school academic experience, they have had a little more than 10 weeks to adjust to the academic standards at the University of Portland – and there's a natural learning curve and some stress associated with that.

Send a note letting your students know you support them – email is great, but few things cause more excitement at college than “real” mail. Or, in the same vein, consider a care package; make your own or utilize one of the [options UP offers](#).

So when you get those frantic phone calls home, the important things to remember are to listen, give support, and make sure your students are well-connected to our campus resources. And remind them that, no matter how stressful the time in between, it’s just a few short weeks until they’re home again with one semester of college under their belts!