

## December Article 2 – Wrapping Up and Looking Ahead

First of all, congratulations are in order – you and your student have made it through the first semester of college here at the University of Portland! This is no small feat, so take a moment to congratulate yourself and your son or daughter.

And now that we're in the second half of December, there are a few last things to wrap up about the semester, and a few things to start looking ahead to for spring semester.

No doubt your student will be anxious to receive his or her grades for the semester, and they will be available right before break. Students are able to check their grades through Self-Serve on the UP Portal. Parents or family members (whose students have given them Proxy access) have permission to access the grades, and this can be done either by speaking with your student about the grades after they check, or by calling the Shepard Academic Resource Center. We can look up your student's grades and share them with you if you call and request them. Keep in mind that grades are never mailed home unless your student goes to the Registrar's Office and makes a request.

(If you plan on calling the SARC, know that we will close on Friday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 at 4 pm and will reopen on Monday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 at 9 am.)

So what happens if you or your students are not satisfied with the grades they earned this semester? Those students who earned a GPA of less than 2.0 will be required to work with a [Peer Mentor](#) through the Academic Resource Center for one hour a week for the entirety of the spring semester; that hour will be spent reviewing study skills, discussing class plans, and even tutoring. Students whose GPA dropped more than one point from high school will be offered a Peer Mentor, and invited into the SARC to discuss academic strategies for the new semester. Students who don't fall into either category but are concerned about their academic achievement should make an appointment with Brother Thomas Giumenta, our [Learning Assistance Counselor](#), to work on time management, stress management, test-taking and note-taking strategies, or any other academic skill they wish to improve.

And no matter what happened this semester, it is difficult for your student to be off track to graduate in four years. If this semester showed your students they want to change their major, refer them to the Career Center to discuss different majors, and send them to the SARC to discuss a class plan. If your student had to drop a class over the course of the semester, or has to retake a class to improve a grade, he or she has plenty of time to make that up. Students in this situation who came in with AP or college credit are still on track, since they will have at least 15 credit hours at the end of this semester. If students didn't come in with this credit, they should either consider taking one additional class in the seven semesters they have left, or taking one summer class (either at UP or getting a class from a local college pre-approved for transfer) during any summer, and they'll be caught up.

We hope that parents and students alike are satisfied with academic performance this semester, and we expect that many of you will be. However, keep in mind that it's not unusual for a student's first-semester GPA to drop up to a point from where it was in high school. We know many of our freshmen didn't have to study much, or didn't learn proper study skills, in middle and high school, and were

academically successful – which means they might have spent the last 8 **years** or more studying one way, and only the last 14 **weeks** learning what is required to be a successful student here at UP. The important thing is for your students to reflect on what they learned this semester, and to connect with the right resources on our campus so that they can hit the ground running next semester with these lessons in mind.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call us or email us.

We wish you and your family Happy Holidays!