



Just *for* Parents

Your
Handbook

2007-08

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is for you, the parent of a college student. Our purpose is to assist you in reflecting on how you can best help your son or daughter begin this new chapter in life. We also want you to understand how the University staff and you can work together as a team to support your student's growth and development.

Your relationship with your child will likely change. First, your student is no longer considered a "child," but rather a young adult, afforded all the privileges and responsibilities that adulthood carries with it. Second, he or she no longer lives with you. You now have to assume that the life lessons you taught your student will stick, and your reinforcement will occur from a distance. This requires more creativity and strong listening skills. Most importantly, the next four years are a critical period of development for your son or

daughter, filled with new experiences and new ideas that allow your son or daughter to decide what kind of adult to be.

These factors mean that the nature of your relationship with your son or daughter will change, and we believe this is an important, developmental step. You may welcome some guidance as you reflect on how to negotiate these changes, and we hope you will find our input helpful throughout your student's DePauw experience.

Best wishes to you as your vital role as a parent continues!

Sincerely,
Cynthia Babington
Dean of Students

DEPAUW'S RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR STUDENT

Because of federal privacy statutes and our philosophy that your child is now an adult, our primary relationship is with your student. We recognize that for you – a parent involved during your student's high school years and the admission process – this change will be an adjustment.

What does our practice and your student's role as an emerging adult really mean for you, especially if you are the one paying the bills?

- We release grades to your student, not to you.
- If your student is found responsible for a lower-level violation of University policy for the first time, you will only hear about it if your student chooses to tell you.
- If your student has a conflict with his or her roommate, we will not involve you in the situation, but will work directly with your student and the roommate to help them resolve it in a mature manner.

Even though we know you want your student to begin making independent decisions, we realize that your not being part of the communication process might concern you – a little or a lot.

Please try not to be overly concerned. We make it a priority to deliver high-quality support and advice to your student and have systems in place that encourage student development and success. We make it possible for each student to connect with upperclass student leaders, staff and faculty members in meaningful ways through a variety of situations: small classes, intimate residence hall floors with well-trained resident assistants, mentor groups of 10-12 with our top student leaders serving as a resource, academic advisers who care, and a multitude of student organizations for co-curricular involvement. We operate under the principle of "challenge and support." We will challenge your son or daughter to grow, to be open to new ideas and experiences, and to be accountable for his or her actions. When the challenge may seem too great, we are here to support your student.

WHEN TO CALL DEPAUW

While we want you to understand our adult relationship with your student, there are times we really want to hear from you. You are the best person to detect changes in your son's or daughter's demeanor, attitude or personality. Any noticeable, unexplainable change that worries you is something we want to hear about. We would also like to know:

- When there has been a death in the family and you feel it may impact your student's ability to keep up with classwork;
- If you suspect your student may be abusing alcohol or other drugs;
- If a family member or good friend's serious illness may impact your student's emotions and ability to concentrate;
- When you suspect that your student may be facing emotional challenges such as depression, severe stress, an eating disorder or serious homesickness, or is having difficulty adjusting to DePauw after the first six-week period;
- When your student has been out of class for a few days due to illness or hospitalization;

WHO SHOULD I CALL?

If you are uncertain about where to direct your concern, the Dean of Students Office is the best place to start. If we are unable to assist you, we will refer you to the appropriate staff member. You may call us at (765) 658-4270 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Outside of these times, all calls should be directed to Public Safety at (765) 658-4261.

If your student approaches you with a problem or concern, we encourage you to share these additional numbers for assistance:

- For answers to general academic questions: Academic Affairs, ext. 4359
- To have a paper proofread or receive general help with a class: Academic Resource Center, ext. 4737

- If your student uncharacteristically has not returned your phone calls or e-mails for a few days and you become worried about his or her whereabouts; or
- If your son or daughter has joined a fraternity or sorority and something about their pledge period concerns you.

When you contact the University, please be aware that the person you speak to may only be able to listen and likely cannot offer information about your student. We use the information you provide to assist us when working with your son or daughter. When you call us with a concern, we usually have your student's resident assistant (RA) or residence life coordinator (RLC) check to see how he or she is doing. In more severe situations, a Dean of Students Office staff member contacts your son or daughter. If the situation potentially impacts your student's ability to go to class or complete academic work as required, the Dean of Students Office contacts your student's professors with general information, provided your student has given us permission to do so.

- To learn more about how alcohol impacts the body or to get advice about how to help a friend who may have alcohol abuse issues: Alcohol Education Programs, ext. 4270
- To learn how to get involved in student organizations and activities: Campus Life, ext. 4580
- To get a jump on the job search or graduate school application process and to receive help in writing a résumé or finding an internship opportunity: Career Services Center, ext. 4280
- With questions about your student's bill: Cash Receipts, ext. 4015
- To make an appointment to talk with a counselor: Counseling Services, ext. 4268

- To report a physical, emotional or learning disability and receive accommodation: Disability Services, ext. 4027
- To learn about outside scholarships, the financial aid renewal process and student or parent loans: Financial Aid ext. 4030
- To learn about the recruitment or rush process or to report a concern with a Greek organization: Greek Affairs, ext. 4270
- To find out when the doctor is available to treat an illness or injury: Health Services, ext. 4555

- To explore community service and leadership opportunities on campus: Hartman House, ext. 4622
- To talk with a residence life coordinator about a roommate conflict or community concern or to report a maintenance problem with a residence hall room: Residence Life and Housing, ext. 4500
- To learn about the religious and spiritual opportunities on campus and in the Greencastle community: Spiritual Life, ext. 4615

WILL THE UNIVERSITY EVER CONTACT YOU?

Yes, when it is appropriate to involve you in something important happening with or to your student. You may hear from us:

If we have serious health or safety concerns — not every time your student makes a trip to health services or sees a counselor, but when your student’s health or safety is in jeopardy. We contact you so that we can work with you and your student to develop the most appropriate plan to support your student.

If your student is in danger of being separated from the University for academic reasons. When a student is placed on academic probation, we notify the parents in writing. Although we do not release grades to parents, this letter alerts you that

your student is not meeting minimum standards, and you and your student should have a conversation regarding his or her status. Students are generally placed on academic probation when they do not meet the required 2.0 cumulative grade point average or required 2.0 grade point average in their major (some departments, such as education and the School of Music, have higher requirements).

If your student has been placed on judicial probation for a serious or repeated offense of University policy. We invite you to contact the Community Standards Office (ext. 4270), who will be able to share some information with you regarding your student’s behavior.

SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENT AS HE OR SHE MANAGES NEW FREEDOMS

One of the greatest initial challenges your student will face is how to manage greater autonomy and freedom. While many college students arrive on campus believing that they can take on the world and no longer need any support, they do need their parents to check in to make sure they are taking care of themselves. Given the high demands of the classroom, as well as all they have going on outside of the classroom, life can quickly become overwhelming if students do not get adequate sleep, eat well, and exercise or find ways to relieve stress.

To compound matters, from the moment first-year students arrive on campus, upperclass students tell them to “get involved!” With more than 100 student organizations, athletics and intramurals, students can easily become overcommitted. Encourage your student to explore areas of interest, yet be practical about what he or she can handle. We want our students to take advantage of the opportunities at DePauw, but we want them to do so while maintaining balance in their lives. Their academic success is our first priority.

On occasion, ask your student:

“How many meals are you eating a day at the Hub or The Den?” Many students eat on the go. Encourage your student to take time out and eat with friends.

“What clubs or organizations have you joined?” If the answer is more than a couple, talk with your student about how much time they require and if any are infringing on study or sleep. Encourage your student to think quality, not quantity, of involvement.

“How often do you get to the Lilly Center or the Nature Park?” The Lilly Center is filled with students working out from early morning until late at night, and students frequently go

out with friends to walk or jog at the Nature Park. If exercise was important to your student in the past, encourage taking time to continue this routine. However, be aware if your student reports excessive workouts, and talk about it.

“How much sleep have you been getting?” Sleep is the first thing students sacrifice. Remind your student of the importance of getting adequate rest.

“Are you making enough time to study?” One mistake new college students commonly make is to cram their study time into one block. Most students have a couple of free hours throughout the day between classes. Encourage your student to use this time to study in smaller increments, which may help to manage the workload.

HOW HARD ARE CLASSES AT DEPAUW?

DePauw is an academically rigorous environment that challenges most students. Students who received straight As in high school need to put forth great effort to achieve an A or B in a class at DePauw. The biggest shock to first-year students comes at the end of the first semester, when they earn a grade point average lower than what they are accustomed to achieving. For many students, this can be devastating. It is important that you help your student develop perspective on this experience and the learning that is accomplished versus the final grade. For a student who could have worked harder, you can offer strong encouragement to take studies more seriously.

One resource every student should use, no matter what his or her grade point average, is the Academic Resource Center — the ARC. Students can go to the ARC in Harrison Hall for general tutoring as well as to have papers proofread and speeches videotaped and critiqued. Many first-year students are hesitant to visit the ARC, because it makes them feel like they cannot do the work on their own; most DePauw students have excelled in high school without having to ask for help. Help your student understand that some of our most outstanding students utilize ARC services. Many upperclass students say that

they wish they had started using the ARC earlier in their academic careers because of the valuable assistance they received.

Students who do not meet minimum grade point average requirements are placed on academic probation or, in severe cases, dropped from the University. Although each case is different, a student who does not meet the requirements (number of courses and grades earned) to return to good academic standing is usually ineligible to continue at the University.

Each student on academic probation works with an assigned academic standing adviser in addition to the faculty academic adviser. The student meets with the academic standing adviser every other week to report his or her progress and receive appropriate support and assistance. Parents should encourage students placed on academic probation to take full advantage of available resources.

WHAT DO YOU SAY IF YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER WANTS TO TRANSFER?

At first, simply listen. While many students fall in love with DePauw from the moment they step on campus and enjoy every minute of their experience, just as many students require a period of adjustment to their new living arrangements, new roommate, new daily routine, new friends, new professors ... the list goes on. Students generally need from six weeks to a full semester to adjust. As you listen to concerns during this transition period, encourage your student to keep an open mind, to continue meeting new

people and having new experiences, and to simply give it time.

If these concerns continue over an extended period, encourage your student to talk with someone in the Dean of Students Office. While we will not support a specific decision to leave or remain at DePauw, we will listen to your student and talk about the sources of the concerns. We will also determine if we can provide any assistance to alleviate them.

WHAT IF YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER DOES NOT HAVE A PERFECT ROOMMATE RELATIONSHIP?

Your student's vision of the college experience may have included living more independently, in a great residence hall room, with the absolutely perfect, compatible roommate. Unfortunately, this vision is not always reality. Building a strong relationship with one's roommate takes time, energy and patience, and it could be one of your student's greatest accomplishments outside of the classroom during the first year.

Students who enjoy successful roommate relationships recognize that they do not need to be best friends. While a good friendship is appealing, it is more important for roommates to build a relationship in which both parties are sensitive to each other's needs; willing to openly communicate concerns; keep roommate concerns private and try to work through issues with their roommate and RA without involving the entire floor; respect each other's property; and support appropriate study and sleep in their shared space.

If your student tells you that he or she is not getting along with a roommate, we encourage you not to get involved beyond listening, empathizing

and suggesting available resources – a resident assistant or residence life coordinator. Over the years, our staff has helped resolve many roommate conflicts. The most difficult situations occur when parents became inappropriately involved, either by talking with their student's roommate themselves, contacting the roommate's parents, or even contacting the RA or our office. Your student must learn how to resolve his or her own conflicts, and your involvement may deny your student this opportunity to grow and learn an important life lesson. Qualified staff members are available to sit down with your student and roommate to mediate the conflict. Many times, students simply need assistance from a trained third party (not their parents) to make sure their needs and concerns are heard and met.

Mediation works in most instances when students approach it with an attitude that they want the relationship to succeed. However, in some cases, two people are simply incompatible. In these situations, our staff members work with the roommates to find alternative living arrangements when possible.

RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS IN YOUR STUDENT

Your student will naturally grow and change as he or she develops new interests, beliefs and attitudes at DePauw. However, a sudden change in personality is cause for concern. Adjusting to college and handling academic and social pressures are significant challenges, and dealing with these stressors on one's own for the first time can be difficult. As a parent, it is important to look for sudden changes in behavior, such as:

- Sudden or significant weight loss or gain;
- Extended periods of moodiness;
- The repeated inability to engage your student in conversation;
- Extreme homesickness that lasts beyond the first few weeks of the semester;
- The inability to sleep or the inability to get out of bed for an extended period of time;
- Feeling “down” or anxious for an extended period of time;
- Loss of appetite;
- Frequent crying or unusually aggressive behavior; or
- Anything that seems an extreme or extended pattern of atypical behavior.

If you see one or more of these behaviors in your student, you may want to call the Dean of Students Office. We can talk with you about the behaviors you have observed and make appropriate recommendations to help you support your student. We are willing to talk with your student or have an RA or mentor casually check on things.

We also can refer your student to counseling services or health services located in the Wellness Center, and you can encourage your student to do the same. Students who are willing to visit the doctor at health services may hesitate to see a counselor. Talking through personal issues with a counselor can be very healthy. It does not mean that something is “wrong” with the student, merely that he or she is facing challenges and may benefit from outside counsel. Students should also know that many of their peers at DePauw take advantage of resources available through counseling services at some point in their college experience.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOUR STUDENT COME HOME?

Some students go home a few times each semester, and others only go home during breaks. Both are perfectly healthy responses to the college experience. While some families would like their student to come home more frequently, the academic schedule or busy life your student is now leading simply may not allow for it.

If your student comes home every other weekend or every weekend, consider the nature of these visits. Does your student have a close relationship with your family and want

to stay connected, or is your student coming home because of unhappiness at school? For students who are having difficulty adjusting to DePauw, going home every weekend may make the situation worse. Students who feel fully connected to our community know their peers and take advantage of opportunities to socialize, usually on weekends. Missing out on these shared experiences will make your student feel less connected to DePauw and consequently, less satisfied.

WHAT DOES DEPAUW DO TO ADDRESS ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION ON CAMPUS?

Alcohol consumption is part of the student social culture on most college campuses today, including DePauw. Our primary objective is to help our students reduce the harms associated with alcohol use and abuse. We are committed to a community that values, teaches and models healthy life choices, and creating conditions that provide a safe learning and living environment. We support all state and federal laws regarding alcohol consumption and direct our greatest educational efforts toward curbing high-risk alcohol use. We work to help our students become responsible citizens who make intentional and wise decisions.

Because first-year college students across the nation are significantly at risk for alcohol-related problems, the student services staff continues to focus much attention on this population. Our alcohol education program for first-year students includes speakers, discussions, mentor group activities and interactive programs such as “Floor Party.” For more information about our alcohol education and prevention programs, visit www.depauw.edu/student/affairs/ and ask your student about the programs he or she has attended.

No matter how strong an alcohol education program we develop, some students will choose to consume alcohol illegally, and some will do so at dangerous levels. An underage student found consuming alcohol by a resident assistant, public safety officer or any member of the student services staff is referred to the University judicial system. While each case has different circumstances, a lower-level violation of the University Policy on Alcoholic Beverages may result in documentation being placed into a student’s judicial file, meeting with a member of the Community Standards Committee, a formal warning or being placed on Level I probation. Higher-level offenses and repeat offenses are treated more seriously and could eventually lead to the loss of social privileges (such as not being able to participate in fraternity or sorority rush/recruitment or hold a leadership position) or even suspension. For more detailed information, visit www.depauw.edu/student/affairs/judicial/index.asp.

CONVERSATION TIMELINE: TOPICS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR STUDENT

Continuous conversations

Here are suggestions for topics of conversation you may want to begin throughout the year:

Regularly communicate your expectations to your student, both academic and social.

Have your student set academic and personal goals and share them with you. Ask your student,

- What do you hope to get out of the DePauw experience?
- How will you take advantage of the many opportunities at DePauw?
- What will a “successful” DePauw experience look like to you?
- What do you want to accomplish academically and socially?

- What activities and organizations appeal to you?

Discuss potential scenarios your student may face and how he or she will respond to these situations. Ask your student:

- What if you are at a party with friends who are drinking alcohol, and you do not want to drink? Will you stick to your convictions? How will you communicate your decision to your friends? Will you feel pressure to conform?
- Will you confront a friend or roommate who is doing something that makes you uncomfortable? If so, how?
- What will you do if your floor is loud at night and the noise starts to interfere with your right to study or sleep?

Talk with your student about alcohol use. Remind them that abstaining from alcohol is an acceptable, healthy and safe decision. Talk about the risks and harms associated with any level of alcohol use, such as injury, health risks, sexual assault or other violence or arrest.

August – September

In August and September, talk with your student about the transition to DePauw and to college life.

Find out how your student feels about his or her experiences at DePauw thus far. Be open to talking when your student wants to talk. An initial inability to articulate new experiences is common; sometimes students feel conflicted about having fun and exciting experiences away from home, friends and family members.

Ask your student how he or she is spending his or her free time. Ask your student,

- Have you joined any student organizations?
- What do students do on the weekends?
- What role has alcohol use played in the lives of your new friends? In your life?
- Have you started any good friendships? What are these students' names? How do your new friends compare to your friends at home?

Talk about your student's experiences related to living with a roommate. Find out if your son or daughter is getting along with his or her roommate as well as other students who live on the floor. If they have had disagreements or the relationship does not seem to be going well, remind your student that open communication with the roommate is vital, and assistance is available from the resident assistant.

Send an e-mail, letter or care package; e-mail is a quick and easy way to send a note of encouragement or a "thinking of you" message.

Discuss your student's classes. By mid- to late September, students generally have had their first round of tests. Ask your student,

- How much time are you putting into your studies?
- Are you using time between classes to study?

- How do you like your professors? Have you gone to talk with them during their office hours? If your student has not done this, strongly encourage it. Using office hours to develop a relationship with professors shows your student cares about academics and makes your student feel more comfortable approaching a professor for extra assistance in the class.

Discuss your student's plans for Winter Term, which takes place during the month of January. Very early in the Fall semester, your student will be asked to propose how he or she will be spending Winter Term. Students may choose to complete an on-campus course, participate in a Winter Term In-Service trip or do an internship or independent study.

Visit campus during Family Weekend. This is a great time to meet your student's friends and observe your son or daughter's growth.

October – December

October through December is a good time to pay attention to a student's stress level. From midterms in October, to deadlines on final projects and papers in early December, to finals at the end of the semester, this is often a stressful time.

Provide constant encouragement. Remind your student to put forth tremendous effort yet maintain perspective that the learning process is more than the semester grade.

Send another card or small care package for positive support.

If you are concerned about your child's stress level, a reminder about available resources reinforces the idea that students are smart to ask for help – from their professors, peers, mentor or RA, tutors, and consultants in the Academic Resource Center. Let your student know that visiting a counselor in Counseling Services is a healthy and effective way to manage stress.

Remind your student that healthy eating, regular sleep and moderate exercise are vital to staying healthy and strong. Stress the importance of leading a balanced life.

Winter Break

At the end of the semester, encourage your student to reflect on the semester's experiences and to share his or her thoughts with you.

Review how classes went. Could anything be changed or improved upon next semester? Were any classes so enjoyable that the subject area could be a potential major? Discuss the classes your student will be taking next semester.

Ask your student if DePauw is meeting his or her expectations. If not, why?

Review your student's goals from the beginning of the year. Would your student modify any of the goals?

January

For students who choose to remain on campus during Winter Term, the academic environment is slightly more relaxed, which is designed to allow students a chance to explore a topic they might not otherwise pursue. Students take one class and may choose to participate in programs or workshops offered by Student Services. The lighter load is intentional in order to provide a period of reflection and to let students mentally prepare for the spring semester. However, students may not choose to spend their free time in healthy ways, and alcohol use is more prevalent during Winter Term. With this in mind, ask your student:

How are you spending your free time? Has the social environment changed? Has students' alcohol use changed? Are you going to the many social programs that DePauw offers?

Are you planning to go through the Greek recruitment and rush process next month? If not, make sure your student knows that you support his or her decision. If so, why? What values does the Greek system hold that are attractive to you? How will you decide which group to join if you choose to be in a fraternity or sorority?

February – March

February and March are critical months in your student's first year at DePauw. A new semester is underway, and professors expect

more from students now that they have had time to adjust to college-level work. At the same time, Greek recruitment and rush occur, which is an important time in the social lives of many students.

If your student chooses to participate in the Greek recruitment or rush process, provide constant support and be prepared for a variety of emotions. Be available to talk through options and help your student think through the process. Remind your son or daughter not to abandon academic work during recruitment or rush.

If your student pledges a fraternity or sorority, ask why he or she likes that chapter. Ask about Bid Night (the evening when students learn which house has offered them membership). Students then go through a "pledge" or "new member education" period of 6-10 weeks in which they learn about the history and values of their organization and get to know the other members. During the new member education period, frequently ask how your student is spending time at the fraternity or sorority house. Not being able to provide specific information may be cause for concern. During your student's pledge process, if you become aware of information that concerns you, contact the Fraternity and Sorority Life Office at (765) 658-4270. We are happy to talk with you and investigate your concerns.

During this time, continue to ask your student about his or her classes and studies. If your student's grades are ever going to suffer at DePauw, it will most likely happen during the pledge or new member education period. Help your son or daughter remember the importance of being a student above all else.

March – April

Late March to early April is a good time to begin discussing your student's plans for the summer. If your student has not yet considered an internship or summer job, refer him or her to the Career Services Center. Our staff can provide valuable assistance in developing a résumé, practicing interview skills, and exploring internship or job opportunities.

May – August

Your student returns home for the summer having experienced a year of tremendous growth and change. We hope that through a variety of new experiences, he or she will have developed in new directions. Faculty and staff members and other students have challenged your student's preconceived notions and thinking, perhaps leading to a young adult that you hardly recognize. Some students even look different if they have a new hairstyle, have lost or gained weight, and have developed greater self-confidence and a clearer identity. Communicate your expectations for the return home, and be prepared: The readjustment may be temporarily difficult – for you and your student.

During the summer, help your son or daughter reflect on his or her experiences and review the goals he or she set earlier in the year. Ask your student:

- What are your thoughts at the end of your first year? What were the highlights and the low points? If you could, is there anything you would change? Are you happy with your DePauw experience?
- Have you thought more about declaring a major? (Students must declare a major midway through their sophomore year.)
- Where will you be living next year, and with whom?
- How do you plan to stay in touch with your friends throughout the summer?