



Timing the Message:  
Talking to Students  
and Families about  
the First Year of  
College.



Communication  
begins long before  
move-in!



...And Should  
Continue Until they  
Graduate



...but let's not get  
ahead of ourselves

# What do parents need to know?

- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- Why



# Admission Process - Prospective Students/Parents

- Brochure describing your college's first year experience program. (One for parents, one for students)
- Connect through social networking - First Year Experience (Facebook, Blog, Tweeter, etc.)
- Personalized letters - to parents and students - FYE Director, VPAA, VPSA, etc.

# What messages at this stage?

- Define your program in terms of the curricular and co-curricular areas.
- Describe who the student will be meeting. (Advisor, RA, OA, FYE Director, Academic Center, Personal Counseling, etc.)
- Emphasis on housing and how selection is managed for new students.
- Keep in mind that parents are your best partners

# Summer - before fall semester - Parents

- Summer Orientation
- Spend a day educating parents
- Seek out their hopes and dreams for their student (what they are excited about, what they are most concerned about)
- Share the issues involved with transitioning to college
- Show how your FYE program engages and enhances a student's experience - communicate the outcomes and return on their investment.
- Share information on services: TLC, Tutors, Writing Center, Counseling Services, Living-Learning Environment, Student Activities, SST, Athletics - Study Hall, F-Y Seminar

# Summer - before fall semester - Parents

- Academic Calendar and Student Stress Calendar
- Payment Plan - Finances at this point need to be clear and presented in a respectful way to demonstrate that the institution , student and family are indeed partners in financing the costs of higher education.
- Health Service - Insurance - Immunizations
- Develop a plan for the rest of the summer - how to wash clothes, get up on their own, alcohol, dating, diversity, etc.
- Explain the college work load compared with the high school work load.

# Summer - before fall semester - Students

- Session with the FYE Director
- Introduction of the first-year seminar course(s)
- Design a fun activity about FYE so they will get excited about the seminar and related activities and those faculty/staff they will be learning from
- Challenge the student to begin making a strategy for success

# Fall semester - Parents

- Design a parent webpage, blog, etc.
- Post student activities on the blog and important information for parents on the webpage.
- Explain four week reports, mid-term reports, grade distribution, registration, advising
- List of important people (phone numbers and e-mail addresses)

# Fall - Parents

- Explain the challenges that are ahead for their student - how to eliminate stress:
- Get organized and stay organized
- Get exercise every day
- Maintain a healthy diet - the dining hall really does have good food!
- Get enough sleep
- Maintain a proper work (classes/studying) life balance

# Spring - Parents

- Tuition letter to parents and students
- Time to renew the FAFSA - message to both parents and students
- Communicate changes in programs, majors, minors, construction
- Tell parents about your Sophomore Experience

# Tricks of the Trade



# Things to Consider

- FERPA
- Mental Health Issues
- First Generation
- Talking to students when parents call

Questions?  
Comments!

