11 Tips for Parents

Your student is starting college. If this is your first, you've never been through this before. We want to help you through this important first year. Here are some recommendations from Seattle University staff who work with students every day.

1. Just say "Not MY job"

Don't take responsibility for business your son or daughter should take care of. It is their responsibility—not yours—to register for classes, visit Student Financial Services to look for work-study positions, obtain a Campus Card, and do all the other chores associated with being a student. Students need to learn to manage their own affairs and think for themselves. College is a great place to start.

2. Don't worry—be patient

It's natural for students to feel overwhelmed at times. It does not always mean that something is wrong. Some first-time students are excited and in high spirits for weeks, but then the adrenaline and novelty subside and the pressures mount: living with a roommate, time management, the intensity of college courses; a dwindling checking account. Homesickness sets in. That's when you might get a phone call and detect some degree of distress. The best approach is to listen, but don't try to fix the problem. Sometimes just talking it out will help your child sort out problems. Encourage him or her to get involved in campus life. Students can work with the Residence Hall Association, the Associated Students of Seattle University, the Spectator, or choose from more than 80 clubs and 35 intramural and recreational sports.

3. Remember, help is there

Don't forget there are lots of people to help on campus:

- If students have issues in the residence hall or with a roommate, they can discuss it with a Resident Assistant.
- Trouble getting the hang of college studying? The Learning Center can help.
- Confused about the core curriculum? Students can make appointments to talk with their academic advisers.
- Wanting to meet people and get involved? The Center for Student Involvement can help.

4. Homesickness remedies

Here are some things you can do to relieve homesickness. Send packages of things reminiscent of home: favorite snacks, hometown newspapers, family pictures, the kid sister's homework, letters from you and other family members. (Don't expect to get many letters back, though. Students rarely write back, but you may get an email or a phone call.)

5. Stay Connected

Call. Show an interest in what your son or daughter is doing, don't just focus on questions about school. Talk about your family, your neighborhood, and what's going on at the high school, etc. Also, send email, letters and a package of treats from time to time.

6. Vacation plans

During breaks from school, plan family events so that students can be back on campus the day before classes begin. Missing classes puts your student at an academic disadvantage.

7. Finals week is not fatal

The first time through finals week is intense. Papers are due, reading assignments are backed up, cocurricular activities are through the roof. Pressure to do well is at its peak. Encourage your student to keep up with school work during the quarter, get plenty of rest, eat regularly, drink lots of water, and exercise. They'll get through it and be better prepared for the next round.

8. Home for the holidays

The first time your son or daughter returns home from college, you'll notice changes. Remember that students have been independent for months, setting their own rules. Students are usually exhausted following final exams. Many parents report that students sleep much of the time they're home from school. Don't worry... that is normal.

9. Family Weekend is a blast

Come to Parents' Weekend where you can experience life at SU; meet faculty, RAs, staff members and other parents; and see what students see every day. You will receive more information in the fall.

10. If you're really concerned, call us

Most problems students experience are things they can manage themselves with support from you and university resources. But sometimes students face problems they can't handle. If you are convinced that your son or daughter may be having serious problems, call the Student Development Office, (206-296-6066). The university provides many options for helping students.

11. Join the Parents' Council

This is a great way to be involved with SU, without your student feeling like you're invading his or her space. The Council assists with various campus events and provides an opportunity for a parent voice. See more information about the Parents' Council on this website.