

October 2006

Seasonal Student Issues

There's a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- ➔ realization that college life may not be as perfect as they were expecting it to be
- ➔ diversity issues become apparent as students learn to interact with those who are different from them
- ➔ conflicts between friends can occur
- ➔ anticipating midterms and fearing academic failure
- ➔ feeling behind in classes and needing to make contact with instructors
- ➔ people start being more "real" after the first month on campus and showing their true colors—both positively and negatively
- ➔ may be inclined to skip classes to catch up on sleep and other tasks
- ➔ feeling like they need to set intentional goals to make the most of the remainder of the semester
- ➔ cliques can form, leading to feelings of inclusion or exclusion

Understanding your student's technological world

Techno Glossary

Technology is second nature to your student as he text messages a friend, emails you and downloads a professor's podcast, all in the span of minutes. Wouldn't it be nice to have that wealth of techno-knowledge? Here is a simple glossary to help you understand those terms that are part of your student's everyday academic and personal worlds.

BlackBerry—A device that combines a cell phone, Personal Data Assistant and web browsing. Known for its handling of email, it is wireless and can handle other wireless information services.

Blogs—Short for Web log, a blog is a web page that serves as a publicly available personal journal. It does not allow visitors to adjust the original posted material; you can only add comments to the blog.

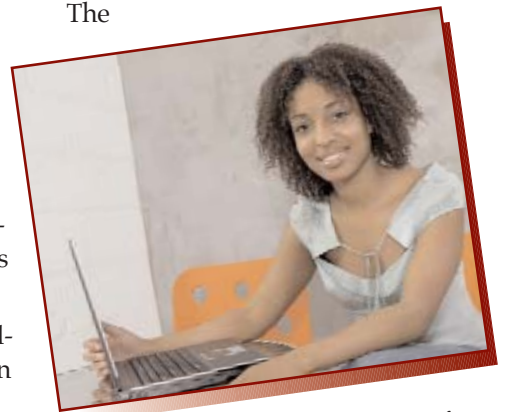
Bluetooth—Short-range radio technology designed to simplify communication among Internet devices and between devices and the Internet. It also aims to shorten data synchronization between Internet devices and other computers.

CDRW—Short for CD-ReWritable disk, it's a type of CD disk that enables you to write onto it in multiple sessions.

Cookie—A computer "cookie" is a small file which contains a unique identification tag, placed on your computer by a website. The website saves a com-

plementary file with a matching tag. When you revisit, the website can be acquainted with you again by matching the cookie on your computer with the corresponding item in its catalog.

Cyber Communities—These virtual communities are online "locations" where people correspond with other people on a grassroots, many-to-many basis. They include Facebook, MySpace.com and others. The



practice is often referred to as "social networking."

Firewall—A software program that protects your computer from offensive Web sites and potential hackers.

Firewire (also known as IEEE 1394)—A piece of hardware made up of two components: (1.) the plug in the back of your computer and (2.) a wire that connects devices working

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with lots more data—things like camcorders, DVD players and digital audio equipment.

HTML—Short for Hyper Text Markup Language. It is a category of computer language used for files that are posted on the Internet and viewed by web browsers. HTML allows you to create web pages and emails, displaying text, graphics, clickable links or interactive forms. HTML allows customization but does have its drawbacks including taking up space in your email account, slow downloading and an increase in viruses, etc.

IM—Short for Instant Message, a type of communications service that enables you to create a kind of virtual chat room with another individual in order to correspond in real time over the Internet, similar to a telephone. While text-based and not voice-based, instant messaging systems such as Yahoo or AOL alert you whenever somebody on your private list is online. You can then initiate a chat session with that particular individual.

iPod—A type of portable media player marketed by Apple Computer. It stores music and other media in a built-in hard drive. Small and compact, it is very easy to use. Plugging your iPod into your computer allows you to download and transfer songs.

iTunes —The bundled software used for transferring music, photos and videos is called iTunes. As a music jukebox application, iTunes stores a comprehensive library of the user's music on their computer

and can play music from a CD. iTunes is used in conjunction with an iPod.

Jump Drive—A jump or thumb drive is portable, stable memory storage. It is about the size of a human thumb—hence, its nickname. It is a plug-and-play portable storage device that uses flash memory and is lightweight enough to attach to a key chain. You can save files, music and pictures on a jump drive and when the user plugs the device into their USB port, the computer's operating system recognizes the device as a removable drive and assigns it a drive letter.

Podcast—An audio file that you download and listen to on your computer or a portable MP3 player such as an iPod. The word itself comes from the combination of two other words: iPod and broadcast. It is similar to a RSS.

RSS Feed—Stands for Really Simple Syndication. RSS collects news from various websites and provides it to your computer in a simple form. One stays up to date by retrieving summaries of the latest content from the sites you are interested in. You save time by not needing to visit each site individually. RSS does this automatically and there is no need to join each site's email newsletter.

Sidekick—Identical in function to a BlackBerry, the T-Mobile Sidekick has a small keyboard that pivots out for a different style of typing.

SMS Short Message Service (SMS) —A service available on most digital

cell phones that allows the sending of short messages, also known as text messages, between mobile phones, other handheld devices and even regular telephones. Other uses involve ordering ring tones, wallpapers and entering competitions.

Text Messaging—A convenient way to send a brief electronic letter directly to a friend's cell phone. It has developed into a kind of new language that uses abbreviations. It is used in BlackBerrys, Sidekicks, AOL and Yahoo Instant Messaging, etc.

Vcard —An electronic business card or virtual card that can be attached to email messages.

VoIP—Stands for Voice over Internet Protocol and is a technology that allows you to make telephone calls using a broadband Internet connection instead of a regular (or analog) phone line. Basically, you make calls over your computer.

Vodcast—Online "video on demand" identical to a podcast but has a video component to it.

Wi-Fi—Is a play on the term Hi-Fi. Students with laptop computers that have Wi-Fi components communicate with one another over a radio frequency in much the same way that walkie-talkies do. No wires are needed to access the Internet.

Wiki—A type of webpage where visitors can make modifications to the content of the pages. For example, Wikipedia.org is a web-based encyclopedia that is created and maintained by visitors to that website. *Wiki* means "quick" in Hawaiian.

Researched and written by Tony Agati, a teacher and former student affairs professional from Virginia



Supporting your student during this hectic time

Midterm Madness

The time is here—the year’s first round of midterm exams. Your student is likely preparing to show how much he learned, or didn’t learn, when midterms kick into high gear later this month.

As a parent or family member, you can help alleviate some of the panic associated with this high-stress time of year. For instance, you can:

- **Be Understanding When She’s Not in Touch.** Preparing for midterms often throws students off schedule, causing them to be unable to get to everything on their To Do list. One of those things may be calling or visiting you as frequently. Try to understand and not take it personally.
- **Keep Burdens Away.** This may not be the best time to tell

your student that money is tight or that the house is up for sale, especially if there’s nothing she can do about it.

- **Encourage Healthy Eating.** Good nutrition will help your student stay focused and on track. Too much caffeine during late-night study sessions can throw his system out of whack.
- **Send Positive Stuff.** An encouraging e-card, a piece of real mail, a fun magazine to read when midterms are over... all of these “little” things can mean a lot!



- **Don’t Add Academic Pressure.** Making all or nothing statements like “You better pass this test” or “If you fail, we’ll pull you out of school” adds a whole other layer of stress to an already stressful time. Try to steer clear of ultimatums and unnecessary pressures so your student has a shot at doing her best.

And let your student know that you are there, ready to talk and process through things, when he needs you. Having the support of people who believe in you can make a huge difference in getting through midterms successfully.

Tapping Into School Traditions

Chances are that your student’s school has some interesting traditions: the Homecoming Parade featuring elaborate floats, a annual lecture series that brings a distinguished speaker to campus or the Fall Carnival, complete with “cow pie bingo.”

Whatever the case may be, these traditions can be great conversation starters between you and your student. For instance:

- How does he feel about existing traditions?
- Are there some that he’s proud of and others that he feels are foolish?
- What new traditions would she be interested in starting?
- How could she go about that?
- Are there any traditions that you can see yourself participating in as an alum after you graduate?
- What part do traditions play in the life of the school?

Traditions can be a cherished part of the school experience, something students will remember for years to come. Let them become part of your family’s experience, too.



Watch Where You Walk!

Each campus offers unknown terrain, from curbs to cul-de-sacs. So, no matter how sure-footed you are, watch where you're walking during campus visits. It's easy to be so engrossed in what your student is saying that you stumble off a curb. While that's awfully complimentary to your student, it could mean a twisted ankle for you!

So...

- ▲ Check out where the sidewalks end.

- ▲ Don't walk in the street.
- ▲ Beware of loose gravel/stones that can turn your ankle with one misstep.
- ▲ Look down now and then to see if the path you're on has cracks or stumbling spots.

By watching where you walk now and then, you can easily avoid any mishaps—and continue to enjoy your day on campus!

Helping students set realistic goals

The Goal Post

Fall and football are now upon us! What does that have to do with student leadership? In football, there's a goal post. And in the leadership world, you need to post some goals.

To help your student keep on track, you can share these five elements of a successful goal:

1 Achievable. Set goals that are realistic within the context of your life. Too often the reason any of us fail is that we set unachievable goals.

2 Measurable. Use quantifiable words in your goal lingo rather than fluffing them up with airy concepts. For instance, saying, "I'll spend two extra hours per week on writing assignments" is easier to measure than "I'll put more effort into my writing assignments."

3 Short. Keep your goals to short paragraphs. That way, they're easier to commit to memory and always keep in mind.

4 Positive. State your goals in a positive manner that makes them appealing. It's a good way to motivate yourself mentally.

5 Begin/End. Determine when you will start working on each goal and when it should be achieved. This will help you focus... and succeed!

It's never too late for students to set some reasonable, attainable goals. At this point in the academic year, they know what lies ahead school-wise and where they need to extend extra effort. They also know what activities, sports and other commitments go into their days. Help them develop both short- and long-term goals—and then offer your support.

It always helps students to have a fan waiting in the stands as they strive for their personal goal post.



Personal Safety Tips for Students

Since it's National Crime Prevention Month, what better time to remind your student of some basic personal safety tips?

Walking—Don't walk alone, especially after dark. Call the campus escort service or use the buddy system. Stay on populated, well-lit paths.

The Element of Surprise—Make it tough for someone to take you by surprise—don't wear headphones when walking, jogging or studying alone.

Obscene Calls—Don't engage an unknown caller in conversation or give away any personal details. Keep track of when calls are made and what is said. Save voice-mail messages, too. Turn everything over to staff members who can help.

Stalkers—If someone is stalking you, report it to public safety immediately. A restraining order or some other action may be taken to keep you safe.

Being Followed—Head toward crowds, lights or buildings if someone is following you.