Making the Most of Summer Opportunities

Some students dream about the end of the semester when they’ll get a break from classes and the daily grind. Yet, summer isn’t a time to slack off completely. Instead, it can be a great time for students to get ahead or catch up.

**Summer Classes.** Taking a summer class can be a way for your student to get ahead for the next semester. Some students find it helpful to take a class during the summer that they expect to be difficult so they can focus more time and attention on it. If your student struggled with a class during the academic year, he might be able to re-take the class to help his overall grade point average. Just make sure he talks with the Registrar’s office before signing up for the class. He’ll need to make sure his school will accept the credits.

*Note: Your student may be able to take these types of classes at a local college, rather than staying on campus. Again, he’ll need to check with his advisor and the Registrar’s office to see what’s possible.*

**An Internship or Job.** Summer is a great time to get a job. Even better is getting a job that counts as an internship so your student can get credit for her work experience. For instance, if she is an engineering major, perhaps she can intern at a local manufacturing plant, helping design new equipment. If she is an elementary education major, she could work at a day care center or summer camp.

Internships are a great way to apply what she’s learned in the classroom while gaining practical experience. It’s also a great way to understand what a career really entails so your student will know if she really wants to continue in this major. Most internships are done during junior or senior year, but sophomores may still apply. Some internships are paid, while others just offer experience.

**Test Taking.** For older students who will be going on to graduate, law or medical school, the summer is perfect for taking entrance tests, like the LSAT or MCAT. Or for younger students, summer is a chance to take a preparatory course, so that when the time comes to take the exam, she’s ready. Encourage students to check out [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org/) or [www.thesca.org](http://www.thesca.org/) for opportunities.

**Do Research.** Summer is also downtime for faculty, which allows them time to focus on research. Your student may get the chance to actively conduct research in a field related to his major – faculty often ask good, committed students to assist them. If he’s lucky, the professor will include his name when the research is published. What a great thing to add to a resume!

**Money Expectations**

Talk with your student about your mutual expectations for the summer when it comes to finances. Knowing what she needs to earn to help with school costs will help her make more informed choices about summer plans.