

Passages: A resource for parents/families of incoming A&S students

Dear Parent(s) and Family Members,

Transitioning your child to college is never easy. There will be times of joy, sadness, anxiety, frustration, and celebration. Your relationship with your son or daughter will evolve as they grow and mature through their new experiences at Niagara.

The Niagara University community is filled with learning opportunities in and outside the classroom. Encourage your daughter or son to get involved by taking full advantage of the broad spectrum of academic, campus life and community-service programs that are available at Niagara.

Also, encourage your student to ask for assistance. Learning is a cooperative effort, and asking for help is a vital part of the effort. Students are not expected to find all of the answers for themselves; faculty, staff, and upper-level students have lots of knowledge and they enjoy sharing it.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions you might have about Niagara University. We will try to provide the answers or at least direct you to where you can get the information you need.

*Dr. Nancy E. McGlen
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences*

Online Resources

College of Arts & Sciences (716) 286-8060

Website: www.niagara.edu/coas

Parent Site: www.niagara.edu/as-parents

Niagara University

Website: www.niagara.edu

Parent site: www.niagara.edu/parents

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), we cannot discuss any academic information with parents or others without express permission from the student. A student may log into the FERPA link on MyNU to access the permission settings. Our practice is to contact the student rather than the parents should an issue come to our attention. We recommend keeping open lines of communication with your college student which may make a FERPA release unnecessary.

Tips for Parents & Families

Ready or not...it's time to let go.

CARE and college are some of the first opportunities for your son or daughter to make adult decisions. During advisement, he or she will discuss goals and interests with an adviser. It is important for him or her to take this first step independently. Trust in your parenting and let your college student begin to handle his or her own decisions, learning along the way.

Keep in Touch.

The first year at college can be challenging. Phone calls, emails, texts, letters and packages from home can help the transition. Be sure to take an interest in your student's classes and activities. Encourage them to become involved in new opportunities but also talk about how to balance them with their studies. Some areas of communication include: classes, homework, grades, activities, work, money management, organization, relationships, or even laundry.

Have reasonable expectations for your first year student's academic success.

For many students the transition from high school to college is rocky. Encourage them to be proactive and ask for help if they need it, as changes in study habits, time spent studying, and self-discipline may be necessary. Even though they are not in class as much as in high school, they will have many more study hours. For every hour of class time there are three hours of preparation, homework and studying. For students living at home you should be sensitive to levels of non-academic expectations.

Get to know the Financial Aid Processes

Financial aid may seem like a daunting process, particularly if this is your first son or daughter to go to college. However, learning the financial aid processes and deadlines may help your student avoid unnecessary registration holds.

Fortunately there are many resources available to assist you. Remember if you need assistance you can always contact a financial aid counselor by calling (716) 286-8686.

Financial Aid: www.niagara.edu/financialaid
Student Accounts: www.niagara.edu/accounts
Scholarships: www.niagara.edu/scholarships

Academic Advice for Students / Parents

If you need academic assistance, contact:
College of Arts & Sciences, Dean's Office
(716) 286-8060, www.niagara.edu/coas

Advisers & Advisement

Students will be assigned a faculty adviser, who will be an academic resource for them during their time at NU. Students must meet with their adviser each semester to select or add/drop courses. During a semester students will need to see their adviser for assistance with add/drop procedures. Online registration extends from mid-semester to the beginning of classes. Scheduling is set by student status (seniors register first).

www.niagara.edu/coas-advisement

Transfer Credits & Advanced Credit

Students who took Advanced Placement (AP, CLEP, IB) or transfer courses at other colleges should inform their advisers. Credit cannot be awarded for duplicated courses. Official transcripts are required for credit to be awarded and must be sent directly from the institution to the Office of Admissions.

Attendance is Critical to Success

Attendance policies are set by each professor in the course syllabus. Students should be aware that attendance in class is expected and necessary to the learning process. If a student stops attending a class without following appropriate drop or withdrawal procedures, the student may receive an "F" in the course. It is extremely important to speak with the adviser before a student stops attending a particular class.

Academic Support Services

A variety of academic support services are available to assist students in their studies. Students who struggle are encouraged to ask for assistance early on or contact the Dean's Office for help. Student Checks are one way we try to help students to proactively explore their options and stay on track for graduation.

www.niagara.edu/academic-support-links

Double Majors & Minors

Over 70% of A&S majors have a minor or double major. Such opportunities complement any degree program by offering flexibility after graduation. Visit the link below for options.

www.niagara.edu/coas-academic-programs

Major Changes are Normal:

If a student is not happy in his or her initial major or struggles with the coursework, considering a new major may be advisable. Students may make an appointment in the Dean's Office to discuss potential major changes or explore their options.

www.niagara.edu/departments-majors-minors

Final Exams

Students may have finals through the end of finals week. *Please avoid scheduling flights or family vacations before those dates.* Times and dates of scheduled exams include common exams and exams based on class schedules.

www.niagara.edu/exam-schedule

Grades

Grades are determined by faculty according to the rubrics in their syllabi. Midterm grades are available for some courses and can be checked by students on MyNU. At the end of each semester, student transcripts are sent to the student's preferred mailing address. Students may also log on to MyNu to check their grades.

mynu.niagara.edu

Student Recognition

At the end of each semester, students with a semester grade point average (GPA) of 3.25 are placed on the Dean's List. To be eligible for the Dean's List a student must be registered for a minimum of 12 credit hours.

www.niagara.edu/coas-deans-list

Career Planning & Options

There are numerous career choices available to all our majors. Many majors provide research, internship and coop experiences to help students gain practical experience. In addition a variety of services and program are available through the Career Development Office.

www.niagara.edu/career-planning-as

Illness or Family Emergency?

Students who become ill and cannot return to school, are called up for active military duty, or need to withdraw should contact the Dean's Office.

Students who have to go home for an emergency (illness or death of a family member) should contact the Dean's Office. If possible contacting your professors is recommended. When students return they should provide a doctor's note or obituary notice which the Dean's Office will forward to their faculty.