



NIAGARA UNIVERSITY
Education that makes a difference.



The
Campus
Link

*Niagara's newsletter for
parents and friends*

7 Ways to Focus on the Heart This Valentine's Day

Get Heart Smart!

As Valentine's Day rolls around, it's easy for students who aren't in relationships to feel left out. But you can help! Make this Feb. 14 about focusing on your hearts—those living, pumping mechanisms that keep us going when we treat them right—instead of flowers and stuffed animals. You and your student can start a Heart Smart challenge, whether you're communicating from afar or living in the same household. Some components of such a challenge could include:



- ◆ Both of you going to the doctor to get your heart health checked.
- ◆ Becoming aware of your resting heart rate.
- ◆ Committing to eating a heart healthy meal at least five times per week and then sharing recipes for and photos of those meals.
- ◆ Learning something new about cholesterol, nutrition, weight management and more on the American Heart Association site (www.heart.org) once a week that you can share via email or text.
- ◆ Sharing a goal that you'll walk or run a 5K in the late spring or early summer—and then getting into an exercise program that'll help you prepare! Talk about your fitness goals and accomplishments along the way.
- ◆ Tracking your heart health through the online Heart360 tool (www.heart360.org).
- ◆ Helping each other manage stress more effectively through online encouragement, de-stressing phone calls and taking walks when you're together.

This is just the tip of the healthy heart iceberg. Yet, if you and your student focus on getting heart healthy together this Valentine's season, the difference could be dramatic. It's the ultimate sign of love.

So Many Options, So Much Time!

The college years are ripe with opportunities for students to get involved. Whether they choose to pursue new hobbies or hone skills they've been developing for quite some time, NU's campus community will open your student's eyes to a wealth of new experiences in which they can choose to take part.

It's not unusual for students, especially those in their first year of college, to spend the fall semester getting the lay of the land. Oftentimes, students really focus their energies on joining clubs and organizations or getting involved on campus in other ways in the spring. Plus, many groups will hold election or selection processes for the following year over the next few months.

Now is a really good time for students to consider how they want to spend their out-of-class time. Do they want to try out a sport they've always wanted to play? If so, intramurals might be the ticket. Are they looking for a way to make a difference in the local community? Volunteering through a campus organization could work. Or maybe they want to develop a particular leadership skill? Joining a programming or advocacy club could be the way to do so. There are so many options!

You can help your student by encouraging him/her to get out there and explore. Talking with student staff in the residence hall is a good place to start. You can also suggest that your student check out the following resources on campus to see all that is available:

- ◆ The Campus Activities Office: for a list of clubs and organizations go to: <http://www.niagara.edu/cao/>, or <http://www.niagara.edu/clubs>

- ◆ The Housing Office for information about getting involved in the residence halls: <http://www.niagara.edu/housing> Off Campus Housing: <http://www.niagara.edu/offcampus>
- ◆ The Kiernan Recreation Center for a list of intramural teams, club sports and fitness classes: <http://www.niagara.edu/kiernan-recreation-center>
- ◆ Learn and Serve, Campus Ministry offices for a list of local volunteer opportunities and immersion trips : <http://www.niagara.edu/learnserve> <http://www.niagara.edu/ministry/>
- ◆ The Career Center for a list of internships and practicum options: <http://www.niagara.edu/career>
- ◆ The academic departments for academic-related opportunities such as working with youth groups: <http://www.niagara.edu/departments-majors-minors>
- ◆ The SOS - Student Outreach and Support - If students encounter problems and don't know where to turn, they can visit the Student Outreach and Support Office. <http://www.niagara.edu/sos>
- ◆ Studying abroad. <http://www.niagara.edusap>

Students should definitely be focused on their academic work, but getting involved in co-curricular experiences is so important too. Students spend so many of their weekly hours out of the classroom. When they choose to use their time wisely, they can really round

Honoring Black History Month

This month we honor Black History Month. You and your student can, too, by:

- Listening to Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech on YouTube
- Reading a book by a black author
- Going to a gospel choir concert
- Finding out something new about the Underground Railroad and abolitionists
- Reading biographies, fast facts and timelines featuring famous Black Americans at www.biography.com/blackhistory/

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.



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:

- ◆ Difficulty getting into study mode
- ◆ Things become routine... school finally becomes home
- ◆ Missing family and friends at home, and friends who did not return to school
- ◆ Cliques become stronger within residence hall communities, student organizations and in classes
- ◆ Cabin fever and burnout
- ◆ Pressures to figure out living plans for next year as the room assignment process draws near
- ◆ Valentine's Day depression if not dating
- ◆ Vocational choice/ internship search causes anxiety
- ◆ Spring break planning underway



The Realities of Distracted Driving

Too many of us are focusing on texts and phone calls, instead of keeping our eyes on the road. Just last year, nearly 5,500 people were killed and 500,000 more were injured in distracted driving-related crashes. But, these aren't statistics. They are children and parents, neighbors and friends. Distracted driving is any non-driving activity a person engages in that has the potential to distract him or her from the primary task of driving and increase the risk of crashing.

There are three main types of distraction:

- **Visual** — taking your eyes off the road
- **Manual** — taking your hands off the wheel
- **Cognitive** — taking your mind off what you're doing

While all distractions can endanger drivers' safety, texting is the most alarming because it involves all three types of distraction. Did You Know?

- Research on distracted driving reveals some surprising facts:
- In 2008, almost 20 percent of all crashes in the year involved some type of distraction. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration—NHTSA).
- Nearly 6,000 people died in 2008 in crashes involving a distracted driver, and more than half a million were injured. (NHTSA)
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. (Insurance

Institute for Highway Safety)

- Using a cell phone while driving, whether it's hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent. (University of Utah)
- So, as your commuting student gets in the car each morning, talk with him/her about distracted driving. As your on-campus student catches rides with friends, talk with her/him about distracted driving. It's a real issue with tragic consequences. The text or call can wait. It's time to keep our eyes on the road.



Sources: Distraction.gov/stats-and-facts/; Fastlane.dot.gov, 11/16/10
According to Distraction.gov, younger, inexperienced drivers under 20 years old have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes.

Other distracting activities include:

- Using a cell phone
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a PDA or navigation system
- Watching a video
- Changing the radio station, CD, iPod or Mp3 player



Important Information About Financial

January, 2011

Dear Niagara University Student:

This letter contains important information about re-applying for financial aid for the 2011-2012 academic year in a timely and accurate manner. This information is also available at www.niagara.edu/financialaid.

The following forms are **required** in order to determine your financial aid eligibility for 2011-2012:

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) - You should apply on-line at www.fafsa.gov. If you have a PIN, you can electronically sign your FAFSA. Parents with PINs can also electronically sign. If you don't have a PIN, you should apply for one now by going to www.pin.ed.gov.

Niagara University Application for Financial Aid (enclosed) – This form is required to apply for renewal of Niagara University grants and scholarships **even if you do not apply for federal and/or state aid.**

Signed copies of both student's and parents' 2010 federal AND New York State tax returns – Submit copies of **signed** tax returns directly to Niagara University's Financial Aid Office. Do not send copies of federal and state tax schedules, but do send copies of your 2010 W-2 Wage Statements. **New for 2011-12:** IRS Data Retrieval Tool is available when you file the FAFSA electronically. If you select this option and **do not change** the IRS data, you do not need to submit copies of your federal tax returns.

Express TAP Application (ETA) – An e-mail notification will be sent to you, only if required, by the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) once you have submitted your FAFSA. You can check the status of your TAP application anytime at www.hesc.org. Most TAP renewals are done automatically by NYSHESC.

It is important that you mail your financial aid application forms by the deadlines indicated on the enclosed Information Sheet. **THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE CANNOT REVIEW THE RENEWAL FAFSA UNTIL BOTH THE NU APPLICATION AND SIGNED COPIES OF THE PARENTS' AND STUDENT'S 2010 TAX RETURNS ARE RECEIVED.** A return receipt postcard has been enclosed for your convenience. Please submit it with your NU Application and tax forms, and it will be returned to you as verification that the Financial Aid Office received them by the deadline.

Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, financial aid award letter notifications will be mailed electronically to your NU email address. If you need additional information or require assistance, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Maureen E. Salfi
Director, Financial Aid

FINANCIAL AID OFFICE NIAGARA UNIVERSITY
NIAGARA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK 14109

**NIAGARA UNIVERSITY'S
FEDERAL SCHOOL CODE
002788**

**NU'S NEW YORK
UG TAP CODE
0560**

2011-2012 RENEWAL FINANCIAL AID DEADLINES

<u>FORM</u>	<u>SEND TO</u>	<u>DEADLINE DATE</u>
1. FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)	Apply on-line at www.fafsa.gov (recommended) OR call Federal Student Aid Information at 1-800-433-3243 for a paper FAFSA or complete a PDF FAFSA at www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov which must be mailed for processing	March 15, 2011
2. NU Financial Aid Application	Niagara University Financial Aid Office PO Box 2010 Niagara Univ. NY 14109	April 15, 2011
3. Express TAP Application (ETA) New York Residents only	Most renewals are automatic. If ETA required, NYSHESC will send you an e-mail to go to TAP on the Web (TOTW) at: www.hesc.org	Submit immediately to HESC if ETA is required
4. SIGNED COPIES OF: Parents' 2010 Federal & NYS tax returns <u>AND</u> Student's 2010 Federal & NYS tax returns	Niagara University Financial Aid Office PO Box 2010 Niagara Univ., NY 14109	April 15, 2011

NOTE: Please print student's name and social security number at the top of PARENTS' tax returns.

NEW FOR 2011-12: IRS Data Retrieval Tool is available when you file the FAFSA electronically. If you select this option and **do not change** the IRS data, you do not need to submit copies of your federal tax returns.

Positive Thinking Leads to Positive Results

Helping Your Student Make the Most of Tough Times

Although forecasts predict the economy will improve this year, many college students are still worried about what their future will look like when they graduate. For this “can do” generation of students, not being able to have it all, right from the get go, can be hard to reconcile. Although most are being conscientious about how they are approaching their college education and trying to make smart decisions, it can be hard not to let the negative thinking creep in.

Encourage your student to stay positive. There is so much waiting! Planting the seed of positivity can remind your student that the college years are meant to be enjoyed and that life will unfold as it is meant to be.

Spending the Summer in a Positive Way

Now is the time for students to consider how they will spend their summer. For many college students, securing a summer job, especially in an arena that is related to their academic major, has been tough. But your student doesn't have to spend the summer moping on the couch. Your student can do purposeful work. Encourage him/her to check out campus resources to find out what the summer options are. Internships and volunteer opportunities are out there for those who seek them!

Many of those college students who are securing opportunities these days are being smart about their options and thinking positively about outcomes. As your student looks ahead to the summer, encourage these five things:

- * Ask a Career Center staff member to help develop a sound resume that really speaks to skills and previous experiences.
- * Keep an open mind about the types of summer experiences he/she can have.
- * Ask other college students how they spent their summer last year to get ideas.
- * Pursue as many leads as possible and keep track of the network of connections.
- * Be proactive in his/her approach, as opportunities will be highly sought after.

Above all else, encourage your student to maintain a positive mindset. No matter what, there are always skills that can be learned or honed. A seemingly dead-end job or position often turns into something never imagined!



On-Campus vs. Off-Campus: Things to Think About

Where will your student call home next year? It's room selection and apartment-looking season, as students determine whether they will live on- or off-campus.

To help with these decisions, here are some things to take into consideration:

- ◇ What is your student involved

- ◇ in? Will it still be doable to be that involved if he/she lives off-campus?
- ◇ What about work? If the job is on-campus, will your student be able to find parking?
- ◇ What about transportation? Will a car be in the equation?
- ◇ Who will your student live with?
- ◇ What about eating options? Will your student get enough nutrition if she/he is cooking?
- ◇ What about summer storage?
- ◇ When does a lease run? Will your student be paying for time that he/she won't be living there? If so, how will that be handled?
- ◇ What costs are involved with housing, transportation, food and more? How do these balance out when comparing the realities of on- and off-campus living?