

Niagara University

The Campus Link

Niagara's Newsletter for Parents and Friends

October 2011

It's Cyber Security Month: Helping Your Student Stay Safe Online

If you're like many parents, you worry about your student's safety in today's virtual world. College students use a wide variety of devices, making them all the more vulnerable to security threats and identity theft. In fact, the 18-24 age group is one of the most susceptible to cyber-related crime. So, your worries are justified. But students can be proactive in keeping themselves safe online. Help your student this month by sharing these "do's and don'ts" as a reminder that cyber security should be taken seriously:

Do:

- Treat people online like you would treat them in person.
- Use social networks as a way to highlight something positive that happened, gather feedback on an idea or advertise campus events.
- Use Facebook privacy settings – they are available because your page <<really>> shouldn't be a public free for all!
- Understand that you can be held responsible for harassing and threatening statements you make or actions you take online and via Mobile Internet Devices (MIDs).
- Use a secure password and set privacy settings to protect personal information you don't want the world to see.
- Make sure your anti-virus and anti-spyware software programs are properly working.
- Monitor your online reputation regularly.
- Practice common sense when connecting to wireless access points.

Don't:

- Give out personal information or passwords.
- Leave firewalls and anti-virus software programs disabled.
- Respond to rude or mean comments – responding gives bullies the response they want.
- Send a message to someone else when you're angry – it's so hard to undo the damage and nearly impossible to erase its history completely.
- Use gossip servers and social networks as a way of gaining negative momentum for a dangerous or hurtful crusade about a campus issue or a fellow community member.
- Post anything you would not want your mother – or a future employer – to see.
- Trust a webcam without a visible recording light—it may still be on.

Students who establish good habits for protecting their identities online now will lay the foundation they need for a safe and healthy future.

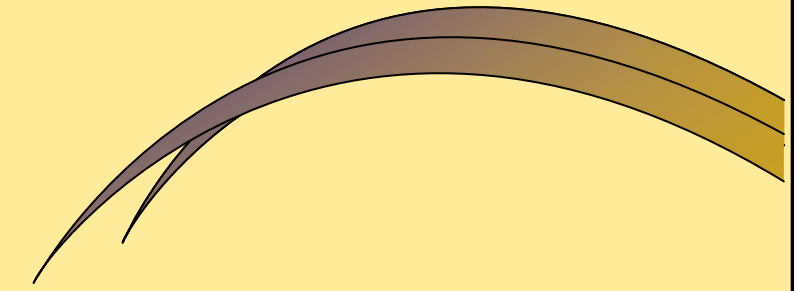


Seasonal Student Issues

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:

October

- ◆ first year students begin to realize college life is not as perfect as they were expecting it to be
- ◆ diversity issues become very apparent as students begin interacting with others who are very different from them
- ◆ conflicts between friends – both new and old – can occur as students settle into rhythm of the new academic year
- ◆ feeling behind in class work and wanting more contact with instructors
- ◆ anticipating mid-terms and questioning their abilities
- ◆ people start to show their “true selves” – masks start to come off as students begin to feel more comfortable in their surroundings
- ◆ job panic of mid-year graduates as the realization settles in that they will be graduating soon

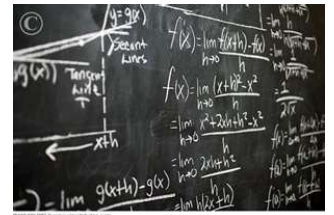


What's the Class of 2015 All About?

Want to know more about your student and her peer group? Check out the Beloit College Mindset List. The list is published annually in August by faculty members at Beloit College (WI). Its 70 items provide a look at the “cultural touchstones” that have shaped the lives of the incoming freshman class. Perusing the list can help you get into the “mindset” of today's traditional-aged students. Here's a teaser...

For them:

- ◆ Ferris Bueller and Sloane Peterson could be their parents.
- ◆ As they've grown up on websites and cell phones, adult experts have constantly fretted about their alleged deficits of empathy and concentration.
- ◆ Their school's “blackboards” have always been getting smarter.
- ◆ American tax forms have always been available in Spanish.
- ◆ Women have never been too old to have children.
- ◆ Dial-up is sooooooooooooo last century!
- ◆ Most have grown up with a faux Christmas Tree in the house at the holidays.
- ◆ They're the first generation to grow up hearing about the dangerous overuse of antibiotics.
- ◆ Major League Baseball has never had fewer than three divisions and never lacked a wild card entry in the playoffs.
- ◆ When they were 3, their parents may have battled other parents in toy stores to buy them a Tickle Me Elmo while they lasted.



Go to www.beloit.edu/mindset/2015/ for the complete Class of 2015 Mindset List.

The Influence of Peer Drinking Behavior

It's quite likely that your student has or will come into contact with drinking behaviors this semester. Unfortunately, whether or not your student is choosing to partake, risky drinking doesn't just impact the students who are doing the drinking.

Consider talking with your student about this "secondary drinking effect" to make sure that he/she is standing up for his/her rights as a campus community member too. It can be a tough topic, yet it's important.

Some of the ways that students may be negatively impacted by others' alcohol abuse are:

- taking care of an intoxicated roommate or other student
- experiencing an unwanted sexual advance
- having a loud hallway on nights when intoxicated residents return
- getting into an argument with an intoxicated individual
- not getting enough uninterrupted sleep or study time
- having property damaged



If your student identifies experiencing any of these situations, encourage him/her to talk with his CA or another staff member on campus. We want to know this information so we can address these behaviors and their community impacts.

Setting Goals

Invite your student to ask:

"What two topics would I like to intentionally work on throughout the semester? How will I go about doing this? And what kind of support could I use along the way?"

Then, invite her/him to talk with you about these goals, asking for advice and support. By saying things out loud, they become more real, and you can help your student realistically work toward becoming her/his most genuine self.

Planning Ahead with Your Student for Next Term

If your family is like many others right now, you are spending smartly and saving as much as you can. The strain of sending a student to college is tough, especially in this worrisome economy. And it's likely that your student is feeling the financial pressure too. It's smart to start talking about what next semester will look like financially now. Consider:

Budget Assessment: How much money is your student spending in a month? Encourage him/her to keep track during the month of November so you can get an accurate assessment of what is needed for next semester. Keep in mind that students tend to do more social activities in the spring. Not only have they met more people by then, but clubs and organizations tend to be more active then too.

Winter Break Plans: Will

your student be working over winter break? If so, now is the time to begin putting these plans in motion.

Upcoming Expenses: Ask your student to talk with peers to find out what expenses to anticipate for the next term. From academic responsibilities to social commitments, he/she can get a sense of what is needed from students who've been there before.

Once your student has a sense for what is need for next semester, your family can determine what you can make happen. Talking now offers ample time to have conversations with financial aid officers and a reminder to your student to make smart choices about spending.



Midterm Support: Being at the Ready

It's happening. Midterm madness is here. Your student is likely gearing up to demonstrate the knowledge – or lack thereof – on the first set of midterms of the year. You can be more helpful in this process than you think, no matter whether you are close or far.

Be Supportive. When talking with your student over the next few weeks, try to remember that he/she may be stressed to the max. Midterms can cause many students to panic. Offer your reassurance and a reminder that you just want him/her to do their best. If he/she is struggling, he/she shouldn't hesitate to contact the professor for help or to get some extra tutoring on campus.

Send Some Encouragement. Now's a great time to put a little something in the mail to let your student know you're thinking about him. A bit of home cooking or a humorous card will do the trick!

Don't Take Things Personally. If your student seems unaware of things happening with your family or is cutting conversations short, it most likely is due to feelings of being overwhelmed. Many midterms are given as take home exams, which take a great deal of time to complete. For those happening in class, students are often expected to know everything they've learned up until this point in the semester. Some classes only offer two opportunities for assessment – midterms and finals. So, you can imagine the pressure she/he might be feeling to do well.

Encourage healthy eating and sleeping habits. This is probably the last thing your student wants to hear, but the reminders are important. Make sure to gently remind your student to eat well and to get plenty of sleep. A tired student doesn't remember things very well!



Advance Registrations Set for November

Registration for spring 2012 will begin November 7th and run through the 17th. Each class is broken down by the number of credit hours that have been completed at the end of the spring 2011 semester. Included in this total of completed hours is credit given for AP, CLEP, IB, and, previous college coursework that has been transferred to NU. The registration breakdown will be posted at <http://www.niagara.edu/records/registration.htm> on October 7th. The spring 2012 course schedule will also be available on October 7th at <http://www.niagara.edu/courses/>.

All undergraduate students must meet with their advisor prior to registration. In addition, they need to check and edit, if necessary, their profile which is found on their myNU page. Failure to do this will prohibit registration.

Sometimes students are not able to register. This could be due to having an outstanding account, missing some financial aid paperwork, non-compliance with health services regulations and/or having an incomplete admissions folder. In these cases, the student's record has a 'hold' put up and notification of a 'hold' is emailed to them at their NU email account and is displayed on their myNU. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the office which put up the hold and submit what is necessary to have the hold lifted. Offices have started posting hold codes and the codes are removed as soon as the student becomes compliant.

For your student to have the best opportunity for course selection, please remind and encourage your student to see their advisor, edit their profile and take care of their hold codes to insure that they can register at their appointed time. It is also important to recommend that your student check their myNU for the 'total completed credit hours'. Often times, outside credit is not recorded because the student neglected to have the credit forwarded to the university.

Becoming Their Genuine Selves

College offers ample time and experiences for students to explore their genuine selves. Although the daily life is busy, encourage your student to take some quiet moments to think about who they really are. What makes them truly happy? When do they experience pure glee? When do they feel most comfortable? Most talented? Taking some time to assess where they're currently at when it comes to some important aspects of their life and also where they'd like to go will help them in so many ways.

This type of reflection and self-awareness can give students a place to begin, so they can make intentional choices that'll help them grow. For instance, ask your student how she/he feels about things such as:

- Serving others
- Being a learner
- Knowing what you value
- Embracing diversity
- Treatment of others
- Work ethic
- Being a leader
- Being a friend
- Being a sibling
- Being a son/daughter
- Being in a relationship
- Being an informed citizen

Encourage your student to add other topics that are important. Examining these traits now will help set some semester-long goals and areas to focus on. Perhaps she/he is interested in serving others on a more regular basis by steadily volunteering for the same agency. Or maybe just working on becoming a more informed citizen.

Whatever the case may be, taking an honest look at oneself will help to set specific goals that can help her/him work toward becoming the most genuine self in the year ahead.

