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.

- Difficulty getting into study mode
- Things become routine... school finally becomes home
- Missing family and friends
- 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
- Spring break planning underway

Take Care of Your Heart This Valentine’s Day

Yes, Valentine’s Day is about hearts. But it doesn’t have to just be about the “lovey-dovey” kind. Valentine’s Day can also be about taking care of your own heart. After all, if you love your heart, it will be ready to love others, right?

Here are four ways you can encourage your student to focus on loving her/his heart this Valentine’s Day:

- Maintain a Healthy Diet and Watch Your Weight. One of the biggest things you can do to love your heart is to eat foods that are low in fat, cholesterol and salt. High fiber foods are also great for your heart, as are plenty of fruits and veggies. If you eat a healthy diet, it will be easier to watch your weight.
- Exercise, and Exercise Some More. When you exercise, your heart rate increases, which builds up your strength and endurance. Try to get daily exercise if you can, but at least work up a sweat three times a week. This is how your heart gets the workout it needs.
- Take Care of Your Blood Pressure. High blood pressure is very bad for your heart. One way you can take care of your blood pressure is to try reducing stress and anxiety, as both can take a real toll on your body.
- Keep Your Heart Clean. If you smoke, take drugs or drink alcohol excessively, you make your heart work extra hard. And your heart can only do this for so long.

You and your student can also take advantage of the Heart Health Toolbox by heading to www.americanheart.org and typing “Heart Health Toolbox” in the search box. This website is a great starting point on the journey to a healthy, well-loved heart.
Imagine: You’ve studied hard and you feel prepared for the exam you are about to take. You sit down in class and your professor begins passing out the exam. Suddenly, you blank out—completely. You are frozen and feel so nervous that you can’t get it together. You can’t remember any of the answers you knew without hesitation last night.

This is what it’s like to have test anxiety—and some college students experience test anxiety so strongly that it interferes with their concentration or performance.

What is Test Anxiety?
Test anxiety is actually a type of performance anxiety, which occurs in a situation where someone might have to do really well. Just like when someone feels pressure on the opening night of a play or during a big competition, test anxiety can cause a stomachache, a tension headache, a racing heartbeat and more. Someone with a severe case of test anxiety might actually feel like he could pass out or be sick.

Who Gets Test Anxiety?
Anyone can experience test anxiety, but those most likely to have trouble with test taking are those who worry a lot or who are perfectionists. Additionally, when a student doesn’t prepare for a test but really wants to do well, she/he might experience test anxiety.

How Can Students Combat Test Anxiety?
You can help your student prepare to take—and do well—on exams by sharing the following tips:

◆ Handle stress in a positive way. Stress is the body’s warning mechanism, and in this case, it can remind you to do what needs to be prepared. Instead of complaining or worrying, let stress serve as a guide for planning out a study strategy.
◆ Get help when needed. If you are getting so stressed about a test that you are forgetting everything you know, you might want to talk with a counselor or your academic advisor. They can offer some additional coping strategies.
◆ Develop a study schedule. The more students study, the more prepared they feel. Developing a study plan—and sticking to it—can reduce your test anxiety because you’ll feel more confident and expect to do well.
◆ Think positively. Acting and thinking positively generally ends in positive results. Sending negative messages to yourself can contribute to anxiety.
◆ Be accepting of mistakes. Nobody is perfect—and nobody expects that you are. Doing your best is the best you can do.
◆ Take care of yourself. Eat well and get a good night’s sleep leading up to the test. This will keep your mind working at its best.
◆ Learning to manage the stress that comes along with performing will help your student in so many ways, beyond just taking tests.

For more information visit the Niagara’s Office of Academic Support web sites:
http://www.niagara.edu/oas/ http://www.niagara.edu/oas-general-study-skills/
Celebrating Valentine’s Day Creatively

Who says Valentine’s Day is just for those who are dating or married? Valentine’s Day is about love! Show your love for your student this month by...
❤️ Sending a gift basket with your student’s favorite treats from home
❤️ Making a CD mix or mp3 compilation with songs your student loves
❤️ Calling or writing to share some of your favorite stories from her/his childhood
❤️ Putting together a family newsletter dedicated to your student—have siblings and extended family members write “articles,” submit pictures and more!
❤️ Sending a creative e-card or mail message

If you are looking for some good ideas click on the “gifts” tab on the NU campus dining website www.niagaradining.com

Teach Students How to Market Themselves

In today’s tight job market, you can assure your student that the skills and experience he/she has gained are in high demand. These skills and experiences need to be shared. Remind your student that his/her name is a brand, telling people what they’re going to get when they are hired. Is he/she trustworthy? Responsible? A hard worker? Smart? Innovative? Someone with a good attitude? Encourage your student to explore these questions. Students also need to understand that branding is about emphasizing what makes them stand out. What would your student say about himself/herself? What would others say? Suggest that your student ask a few trusted friends and mentors these questions.
Your student might want to talk about a few things:
♦ How do I add value to the things I’m involved with?
♦ What are some characteristics that I’m proud of?
♦ What are my interests and passions?
♦ How do I make myself visible to others?
♦ What makes me stand out?
♦ Translation and Transferability
You can also educate your student about the importance of translating transferable skills. Part of branding is focusing on transferable skills rather than just knowledge and experience. Continued on Page 4
Teach Students How to Market Themselves (Continued from page 3)

What is a transferable skill? It is a core skill that most employers value and that students can take with them to apply to professional roles. Encourage your student to consider how the following can be demonstrated:

- Leadership—campus positions, job roles, committees and group projects
- Trainability—able to take direction and open to learning
- Reliability—punctual, meets deadlines, time management
- Management—administration, supervision, training
- Trustworthiness—handling confidential information
- Teamwork—collaboration, common vision, mutual goals
- Diversity—travels, immersion into diverse cultures, a second language

In today’s job market, employers are looking not just at what responsibilities an applicant had, but what they ACCOMPLISHED! Employers are more results-oriented than ever before. Hands-on experiences, with supportive supervisors and mentors, can provide students with the opportunity to “sell” the results they have achieved.

Ultimately, students need to let potential employers know who they are, what they stand for and what makes them a potential asset.

Examples You Can Offer ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Experience</th>
<th>Transferable Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Served as a tutor</td>
<td>Teaching, working with diverse people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned events with a group</td>
<td>Teamwork, event planning, multi-tasking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designed theater sets</td>
<td>Building, planning, facilitating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinated an intramurals team</td>
<td>Coaching, organizing, teamwork, motivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presented research in class</td>
<td>Public speaking, teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Created organization’s social network</td>
<td>Using new media, technological skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational fundraising</td>
<td>Sales, organization, outreach, cooperation</td>
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</table>

Visit our Career Center web site [www.niagara.edu/career](http://www.niagara.edu/career)

Focusing on Relationship Wellness

February is Relationship Wellness Month. Strong, healthy relationships take nurturing and tending to. Encourage your student to spend time with someone he/she likes with these fun, free “date” ideas:

- Grab food “to go” from the dining hall and have a picnic
- Visit a local nature center or park and take a stroll.
- Go to a bookstore and peruse books of places you would like to travel.
- Make up fun scavenger hunts for one another and see who can gather all of the items the fastest.
- Volunteer together at a local soup kitchen or animal shelter.

- Go to a campus event, such as an athletic contest or educational speaker.
- Have a game night.
- Make some hot chocolate, bundle up and sit under the stars.
- Study together for an upcoming exam.
- Borrow a movie from a friend or sign one out of the library and watch it together.
- Build a snowman (or snow village) together.
- Go to the recreation center and play basketball or swim and dive in the pool.
12 Ways Your Student Can Beat the Clock

February is Time Management Month. Here are 12 time management tips you can share with your student:

1. Write Things Down. You have far too much going on to remember everything you have to do. Use a planner or notebook to keep track of assignments, engagements and other goings on.

2. Set Realistic “To Do” Lists. Maintain realistic goals and you won’t be disappointed when you don’t finish everything.

3. Control Your Surroundings. You can’t control the noise throughout your house, but you can control where you set yourself up to concentrate on a task. Don’t waste time getting frustrated. Instead, do whatever you can do to stay on task.

4. Get the Tough Stuff Done First. You’ll get more done in the long run if you do the stuff that requires more of your mental energy first. Plus, you’ll spend your day less stressed.

5. Do One Thing at a Time. Multitasking isn’t all it’s cracked up to be—in fact, multitasking can actually make things take longer.

6. Break Big Tasks Up into Smaller Tasks. Don’t let yourself get overwhelmed with big projects. Break them up into smaller tasks and tackle a piece each day. You’ll feel productive and confident.

7. Don’t Wait Until the Last Minute. You never know what might crop up. Nothing is more stressful than cramming.

8. Motivate Yourself with Rewards. Halfway through a project? Head out to grab a quick cup of coffee or go for a 20-minute workout. Using things you like as rewards will keep you motivated during the long hours—and will likely help you speed up your work.

9. Remember That All of Your Time is Equally Important. Go, go, go. That’s what life is all about, right? It doesn’t have to be. Hanging out and relaxing are just as important as completing a task. Balance is where it’s at.

10. Use Your Time Wisely. Procrastinating isn’t a good idea. Get the tasks you need to done without wasting time—and then you’ll have more time to do the things you enjoy!

11. Give Yourself Some Leeway. Someone will always need your help just when you have something else to do. Make sure you maintain some flexibility in your schedule to accommodate these interruptions.

12. Don’t Forget about Sleep. It can’t be said enough: sleep is incredibly important. If you don’t get enough, everything will suffer.

For more information: [http://www.niagara.edu/oas-general-study-skills/](http://www.niagara.edu/oas-general-study-skills/)

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Financial Aid

See pages 6 and 7 for Important Information on Financial aid for 2010-2011
Dear Niagara University Student and Families:

This letter contains important information about re-applying for financial aid for the 2010-2011 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 2010-2011:

**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. If you need a paper FAFSA, you will need to call Federal Student Aid Information at 1-800-433-3243 and request one be mailed to you or you can download and complete a PDF FAFSA at www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov which must be mailed for processing.

**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’ 2009 federal AND New York State tax returns** – Submit copies of signed tax returns directly to Niagara University’s Financial Aid Office. You do not need to send copies of federal and state tax schedules.

**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 NYSHEC.

It is important that you mail your financial aid application forms by the deadlines indicated on the next page. THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE CANNOT REVIEW THE RENEWAL FAFSA UNTIL BOTH THE NU APPLICATION AND SIGNED COPIES OF THE PARENTS’ AND STUDENT’S 2009 TAX RETURNS ARE RECEIVED. A return receipt postcard was enclosed in our mailing to students. 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.

If you need additional information, or require assistance in completing the applications, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,
Maureen E. Salfi
Director, Financial Aid
# 2010-2011 Renewal Financial Aid Deadlines

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<th>FORM</th>
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<th>DEADLINE DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)</strong></td>
<td>Apply on-line at <a href="http://www.fafsa.gov">www.fafsa.gov</a> (recommended) OR call Federal Student Aid Information at 1-800-433-3243 for a paper FAFSA or complete a PDF FAFSA at <a href="http://www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov">www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov</a> which must be mailed for processing</td>
<td>March 15, 2010</td>
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<td><strong>2. NU Financial Aid Application</strong></td>
<td>Niagara University</td>
<td>April 15, 2010</td>
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<td>Financial Aid Office</td>
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<td>PO Box 2010</td>
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<td>Niagara Univ., NY 14109</td>
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<td><strong>3. Express TAP Application (ETA)</strong></td>
<td>Most renewals are automatic. If ETA required, NYSHEC will send you an e-mail to go to TAP on the Web (TOTW) at: <a href="http://www.hesc.org">www.hesc.org</a></td>
<td>Submit immediately to HESC if ETA is required</td>
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<td>New York Residents only</td>
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<td><em><em>4. SIGNED COPIES OF</em>:</em>*</td>
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<td>Parents' 2009 Federal &amp; NYS tax returns</td>
<td>Niagara University</td>
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<td>AND</td>
<td>Financial Aid Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student's 2009 Federal &amp; NYS tax returns</td>
<td>PO Box 2010</td>
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<td>Niagara Univ., NY 14109</td>
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**NOTE:** Please print your student’s name and social security number at the top of PARENTS’ tax returns.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** COPIES OF SIGNED FEDERAL TAX RETURNS ARE REQUIRED FOR RENEWING FINANCIAL AID EVEN IF AS A FRESHMAN YOU WERE NOT REQUIRED TO SUBMIT TAX RETURNS TO THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE.