

UAAC FAMILY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2009

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WELCOME TO VIRGINIA TECH

Your student is either excited or nervous and you too are either excited or nervous. Both of you are experiencing a wide range of emotions as your student is settling in at Virginia Tech.

You are wondering how your student is faring and they are wondering whether you have changed their bedroom in any way. You are hoping they are eating well and are making friends. They are wondering if you miss them and if they will they like it at VT.

This is a new stage of life for you and your student and we in University Studies would like to assist you in this transition. Each month our center will publish an on-line newsletter to

help you anticipate concerns your student may be having. It is our hope you find the articles informative and helpful. We will supplement the newsletters with occasional emails regarding upcoming academic or major related events that advisors have shared with your students. Having this information will enable you to initiate conversations about many of these issues found in the newsletters.

Talking through the excitement and nervousness can help both of you transition smoothly into the college years, especially during your student's first year at Virginia Tech.



Burruss Hall

DID YOU KNOW???

Did you know that the University Academic Advising Center was a recipient of Virginia Tech's University Exemplary Department Award? This award recognizes departments or units which have excelled in their mission to serving students. A university press release stated "Although the process of transition can be daunting University Academic Advising Center advisors must have the knowledge and leader-

ship to know all the details and requirements of every single major Virginia Tech offers. University Academic Advising Center advisors are remarkably informed, incredibly thrifty for their ability to accomplish so much on a relatively small budget, highly organized, and more importantly, valuable resources to the entire university community". The article continued, "Although the primary goal of the center is to

provide high quality academic advising to a sub-population of students who are exploring their options, evidence strongly exists that this department has gone beyond the expectations of a typical advising center".

It was an honor to accept this public acknowledgment and distinction based on the work we conduct day to day with your students.

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STUDENT EMOTIONS

The beginning of fall semester. . . decorating the new room . . . meeting the roommate for the first time . . . freedom from mom and dad!!!! These new experiences are wonderful and exciting for your first semester student but this can very quickly change. Before you know it, those feelings of elation have been replaced by feelings of apprehension

and sensory overload. This can vary from day to day so don't be surprised if your giddy sounding student thinks VT is "awesome" one day and the next day calls you with a sad voice with evidence of being so homesick your student wants to leave the university.

Of course your student will not use the word "homesick"; they may talk about not fitting in, not knowing anyone, or even having to wear flip-flop in the showers. Some students adjust to these changes quicker than others, but most homesickness eventually passes. As with all transitions it will take time.



Student studying outside resident hall

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Most of the questions students ask themselves early in the semester are about navigating their way through their new environment. They often want to know how to get help in courses or with a roommate situation. They are unsure when or how often to contact their advisor or the professors.

University Studies created an advising handbook that student will use with their aca-

demic advisor. This handbook addresses many of those questions and much more. Some of the subjects discussed are:

- Resources to help choose a major
- List of support services and their functions
- Important policies to know
- Structured Study hall information

- Help that is available to help with writing assignments
- Glossary of terminology they will need to know throughout their academic career at Virginia Tech.

If your student has questions about how to handle situations or get assistance, please refer them to the Student Handbook or their University Studies academic advisor.

"They say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself"
—Andy Warhol

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

- LISTEN to your student
- Show interest in student's school and environment by asking open ended questions
- Send care package or card (e-card will do) to let your student know you are thinking about them
- Encourage your student to make an appointment with or visit the course instructor if he/she is having difficulty in a course
- Ask your student how he/she is using his/her time and where he/she is studying
- Encourage your student to meet with his/her advisor to discuss adjustment issues and to get acquainted
- While it would be nice to see them again so soon, encourage your student to stay on campus for the first few weekends. This is when many friendships are formed.



Moving Day

**ACADEMIC RESOURCE:
UNIVERSITY STUDIES ADVISOR**

Beginning college can produce a roller coaster of emotions for students. The excitement of a new journey coupled with the uncertainty of leaving home may be overwhelming, especially when attending a large university like Virginia Tech. Your students should know, however, that their University Studies academic advisor is available to them as a great resource should they need some advice!

Perhaps the most recognized service we provide for students is helping them plan their class schedules, but we provide so much more. If a student's intended plan of study changed or new interests developed between ori-

entation in July and the beginning of classes, their University Studies academic advisor can provide information about what Virginia Tech offers that matches their newfound interests, whether in the form of a class or a student organization.

Students may also find themselves in a jam and not be sure of the appropriate avenue for resolving the issue. Some common situations students never had to deal with in high school could include last minute billing issues through the Bursar or ensuring delivery of immunization records to the Schiffert Health Center. Academic advisors can help students sort through many problems

that may arise and point them in the right direction and make the appropriate referral to ensure the problem gets solved. It should be noted, however, that academic advisors do *not* function in the same capacity as a guidance counselor. Academic advisors are always willing to lend a friendly ear, but for more serious issues, students should seek support from Virginia Tech's Cook Counseling Center.

We, in University Studies, are looking forward to working with your students and hope they will turn to us as a resource as they make their transition to Virginia Tech!

IMPORTANT SEPTEMBER DATES

- September 7 LABOR DAY— Classes DO Meet
- September 7 Dr. Cathy Skinner in the English Department is accepting appointments through September 25th for students wishing to change their major to English. Students MUST go to 329 Shanks Hall to sign up for an appointment date and time
- September 14 The departments of Political Science and International Studies are accepting applications through September 18 for students to transfer to their majors
- September 15 Last day for students to receive a full refund on texts from University Bookstore and Volume II Bookstore - must have receipt
- September 15 "Math Empo Tempo", Student Panel of those who have "mastered" the Math Emporium, 6:30 pm-7:30 pm, CHEMP Bldg., Rm 140, sign up at www.caee.vt.edu
- September 24 Majors Fair, Commonwealth Ballroom, Squires Student Center, 10:00 am-4:00 pm



Femoyer Hall, location of the University Studies Office

**"Advice is one of those things it is more blessed to give than to receive".
—Carolyn Wells**

