Dear Incoming UB Student and Family:

We would like to welcome you to the University at Buffalo and introduce ourselves, the staff of UB Counseling Services. Our diverse staff includes licensed psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, as well graduate students from those mental health disciplines. Counseling Services can be an invaluable resource for you and your family as you transition to college, as well as throughout your academic career at UB.

The college transition can be both an exciting and challenging time for students and families. While an adjustment period is expected and normal, some students may find themselves struggling a bit more and in need of additional support. When students come to Counseling Services, they frequently report concerns related to adjusting to college life, academics, peers, and other relationships, as well as pre-existing mental health concerns. Counseling Services helps students explore and address these concerns through individual counseling sessions, special interest groups, educational programs, and medication management (if indicated). We also collaborate with UB Wellness Education Services and Health Services, which allows us to link students with medical providers and health educators. The health educators specialize in helping students make healthy lifestyle choices, particularly regarding issues of alcohol and other drug use, nutrition, and sexual health.

The support provided by Counseling Services is flexible and attentive to individualized needs. All services are covered by a mandatory health fee. Counseling Services is located at 120 Richmond Quad, in the Ellicott complex on the North Campus and our phone number is (716) 645-2720. We also have a satellite office at Michael Hall (Health Services) on the South Campus.

We are looking forward to your arrival on campus and invite you to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have. Please visit our website (http://counseling.buffalo.edu) which also offers additional information.

Best wishes for a great year!

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Mitchell, Ph.D.
Director, Counseling Services
Family Transitions

“We never know the love of our parents until we become parents.”

- Henry Ward Beecher
Overview of Topics

- What parents can expect during this transition
- What changes you might experience
- What works
- What doesn’t work
Rights and Responsibility

“UB welcomes your student with all the rights and responsibilities of an adult.”

- Who feels their child is ready for that?
- What are you most worried or concerned about?

“When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to be around the man. But when I got to be 21, I was surprised at how much he had learnt in 7 years.”

- Mark Twain
Changes you can expect

Beliefs, Ideas, Friends and Appearance

- Child is being exposed to lots of new things.
- They are “trying on” different hats.
- Give them space to explore.
- Pick your battles wisely.
- Resist lecturing, this can negatively impact communication.
Children might pull away, want to spend more time with friends or studying.

They are exploring their independence.

Try to respect and encourage autonomy.

Let them make mistakes (receive feedback).

Utilize the patience you used when they were learning to walk.

Parents who have older children already in college – what changes have you seen?
Changes for you as a parent

Empty nest • More time for self • More freedom
Opportunity for new adventures • Sadness, letting go
Opportunity for an adult relationship with child

“After the kids leave home, some parents experience the empty nest syndrome; some change the locks!”

- anonymous
The only constant is change

- Chance to know your child on a different level
- A catalyst for good, sometimes necessary conversation
- An opportunity for you both to try new things and stretch beyond your comfort zones
- A way to determine other means of communication
- A chance to learn things about one another
- An opportunity to miss and often gain a renewed sense of appreciation for one another
- The start or continuation of your adult relationship with your child
Parents of Commuters

- Many similar transitions and losses/opportunities
- Challenges around feeling in-charge “I’m in college, but do I have to listen to your house rules?”
- How will you negotiate your child having more freedom than when they were in high school?
- How might you support them in making connections on campus?
First Generation College Students

- Unique challenges faced by these students
- What wisdom can parents use from when they were this age?
Technology: Friend or Foe?

- You can reach them all the time
- You can reach them ALL THE TIME??!!
- Boundaries should apply to technology as well
- Have the phone/texting be a bridge, not a leash
- Discuss your expectations with your child
Technology and Communication

- How often do you hope to/expect hear from them?
- What topics do they need to discuss with you?
- What works for you and them in terms of who initiates contact?
- How might previous communication patterns change?
Changes you can expect

**Communication** – less communication or more clingy

- Parents should maintain communication even if the child ignores.

- Listen to your child’s problems, don’t always rush to solve, help them learn problem solving skills.

“Teach them how to fish…”

- Chinese Proverb
Roles that could help

- Cheerleader
- Weather reporter
- Encourager
- Holder of faith
- Consultant
- Safety net

“It is not enough for parents to understand children. They must accord the children the privilege of understanding them.”

- Henry Ward Beecher
Roles that might not work

- Lecturer
- Dictator
- Dropper-Inner
- Private Investigator
- ATM
- Ignorer (you’re not done yet)
Trust or don’t trust

**Students that feel trusted:**
- have more self confidence
- can stand up for what they believe
- know they have support back home
- are better able to say “no” when the situation warrants

**Students that don’t feel trusted:**
- may defy authority because it is expected
- won’t communicate about what is happening in college
- will look to others for support, some may be bad influence
- will keep secrets that can be harmful
Veterans advice/ Rookie advice

- What words of wisdom do you each have for each other?
- What have you learned that works well?
- What mistakes have you made that you would like your fellow parents to avoid?
- Have faith in your parenting skills - You got them this far!
Thank you

UB Counseling Services
120 Richmond Quad
716.645.2720
counseling.buffalo.edu

Questions?
Parent Resources

My Freshman Year
What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student
by Rebekah Nathan

Cherishing our Daughters
How Parents Can Raise Girls to Become Strong and Loving Women
by Evelyn Bassoff, Ph.D.

College of the Overwelmed
The Campus Mental Health Crisis and What to Do About It
by Richard Kadison, M.D. & Theresa Foy Geronimo

Letting Go: A Parent’s Guide in Today’s College Experience
by Karen Levin Coburn & Madge Lawrence Treeger

My Roommate is Driving Me Crazy
By Susan Fee
Don’t Tell Me What To Do: Just Send Money
By Helen Johnson and Christine Schelhas-Miller

When Your Kid goes to College: A Parent’s Survival Guide
By Carol Barkin

Empty Nest...Full Heart: The Journey from Home to College
By Andrea van Steenhouse

Let the Journey Begin: A Parent’s Monthly Guide to the College Experience
By Jacqueline MacKay and Wanda Ingram

Websites:
College Parents of America
www.collegeparents.org

National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Student in Transition
www.sc.edu

Alcohol, Other Drugs, and College: A Parent’s Guide
www.higheredcenter.org

College Times (NY Times)
www.nytimes.com/college

PFLAG (Parents, Family, Friends of Lesbians and Gays)
www.pflag.org

http://myroommateisdriyingmecrazy.com/