TIMELY TIPS FROM COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

Over the years we have gotten great advice during Coffee and Conversation. Here are some of the ideas and tips that are particularly pertinent to the summer conversations and preparations.

FINANCES:

- Credit ratings really do matter: Explain what it is, why it is important and how they can ruin theirs.
- Give small amounts of money throughout the semester rather than just one lump sum; while we would like to think all of our students can budget, temptations to spend can be overwhelming.
- While it is often necessary for students to take out student loans, it is important for them to understand how long it can take to pay them back. This will help them think of college as a four year (rather than 5 or 6 year) endeavor.
- Identify theft—students tend to be a little too trusting and a little too casual with their important information. Students leave identification and credit cards on the top of the dresser, and then fail to lock their doors when they visit a friend next door or just run to the bathroom for a minute. It's important that students know about the dangers of identity theft and take simple precautions. Don't leave financial or personal information lying around, lock the door, and don't give passwords to anyone.
- Keeping records: Discuss the importance of keeping receipts and other financial records. Examples: If they drop a course, they will need the receipt to return any books they bought. Be sure your student knows what records are needed for tax purposes (yours and theirs).

ENCOURAGE YOUR STUDENT TO EXPLORE “CASHCOURSE,”
http://cashcourse.org/uwec/Default.aspx a web-site designed specifically for college students. Go through it together.

IMPORTANT FORMS/PHONE NUMBERS

- One parent created a binder with tabs—containing all the important documents a student might need; another parent put it all in a folder. It would be even better to put the folder together with the student. Include:
  Health insurance information
  Any important health records
  Car insurance, if a student is bringing a car
  Passport
  Social Security card
  Loan forms
  Bank information
- Make certain that your student has important phone numbers stored somewhere else other than their cellphone--- in case that is lost.
Go through the “Family check list” in the front of the binder for more information about what information the student needs.

EMERGENCIES/HEALTH ISSUES

- Make certain that the student has your emergency information written in a wallet and that the roommate and/or close friend has it. (The Residence Halls will also collect it).
- Also make certain that you have the phone number of your student’s roommate so you can get in touch with someone if your student doesn’t.
- If your student has medical conditions that emergency personnel should know about, make certain it is easily available in their room and, preferably, is carried with them. (There are commercial products to help with this for example: http://www.portablehealthprofile.com).
- You should also make certain that Health Services has these records.
- Make certain that the student has the health insurance card and knows which clinic and hospital to use for after hours/emergency medical needs, as well as any limitations on pharmacies.

MOVE-IN

- Students do not need to bring everything when they move in. Clothing in particular can be brought according to seasons.
- You can order things on-line through Walmart or Target and have them delivered to the Eau Claire store.
- A container with common medicines and first aid supplies is really important.
- You can never have too many extension cords or power strips.
- Walk around your house and have your student make a list of what they use from every drawer or closet (scissors, masking tape, screw drivers, batteries, iron, etc). Think about things you share: do you use the same hairdryer, for example?
- Bring things in plastic containers that can easily be stacked.
- Pack a surprise in one of those plastic containers--- a card, pictures, a gift certificate, etc.
- Try to say your mushy goodbyes before you arrive on campus--- especially if you have a son.
- While there will be students to help you move in, if you have access to a dolly or small collapsible cart, it can be helpful.
- Check out the move-in list on the Housing web-site http://www.uwec.edu/housing/NewStudents/index.htm

ROOMMATES

- Communicate with roommates as soon as possible in order to decide who is bringing what as well as how they want their rooms arranged. Fill out the lofting request on line. (link) http://uweauclaire.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_41Mil6lZsawxN0&SVID=Prod
- Don’t believe everything they see on their roommates “Facebook” page. Try to have a REAL conversation. Even meeting ahead of time is great.
• Talk with your student about sharing a room. Encourage open communication with roommates. Have your student think about what behaviors he/she will accept and those that are “deal breakers.” Most residence halls will have the students do a roommate contract at the start of the semester.

• If you have had roommates, be honest about what worked and didn’t work. Give an example of how you handled a difficult situation---- even if you have to admit it wasn’t the right way!

COMING HOME/HOMESICKNESS

• Talk to your student about when they should come home. Preferably, discourage them from coming home during the first few weeks.
• Remind students that homesickness is normal (it would be scary if they didn’t miss their family, friends, pets, house, etc). and that it takes time to make new friends.
• Sometimes tough love is necessary. Sympathize with homesickness, but don’t give in and bring your student home unless you know something is really wrong. Come to visit them instead.