



Dear Parents and Families of First-Year Students,

Fall semester classes will be coming to a close this week and final exams will begin. Soon your Friar will be heading for home. I am sure that you can hardly believe that your student has just completed the first semester at Providence College. Congratulations! As you are aware, semester break is usually the first extended period of time that most students spend at home since arriving on campus in late August. For both parents and students, this can be a time of great excitement, as well as some unwelcomed anxiety. As Director of the Providence College Parent & Family Program, I am pleased to share with you some thoughts and strategies to keep in mind as you prepare for your student's homecoming.

- As you look forward to this time, get ready for a period of readjustment as your student returns home to live with family after a semester of independence. Readjusting to home life and routines after being on their own can sometimes be a source of tension for everyone. Don't wait for conflict to arise. Share your expectations early on. Be prepared for change and try to be flexible.
- The holiday season represents a time for family traditions and gatherings. Parents may be looking forward to spending some "quality" time with their student. On the other hand, your student may need to decompress after a long semester of classes and finals. Catching up on sleep, eating lots of home-cooked food, and reconnecting with friends may be at the top of their list of priorities while on break. Be realistic about the amount of time you expect your student to spend at home. For many first-year students, semester break is a time to renew high school friendships in an effort to reassure themselves that things are still the same. This is especially the case for commuter students who are looking forward to connecting with hometown friends who have been away at school for the semester.
- First semester grades provide an opportunity for students and parents to evaluate what has occurred and what might be done differently. It is important to keep an open dialogue about strengths, feelings about the semester, and anticipation of second semester.
- If your student has done well, give praise and celebrate! With so much to balance during that first semester, your student's good academic performance was no easy task. Take some time to

discuss strategies that were implemented and study skills that worked best. Encourage realistic goal setting for the next semester to avoid your student getting stressed and anxious about the level of performance.

- A student who has done poorly may be reluctant to share grades. If your student does not bring up the subject—make sure you do. Be supportive while helping your student to re-evaluate what has occurred. Help to re-focus on strength's, evaluate weaknesses, review study habits, discuss time management issues, and reassess the balance between academics and extra-curricular activities. Most of all, don't panic! Remind your student that all is not lost and that now is the time to develop a positive plan of action for the next semester. For help with this process, encourage your Friar to make use of the resources of the PC Student Success Center. To learn more about how that office can assist them to move forward, please visit: <https://student-success-center.providence.edu/>.

- Remember that grades aren't the only measure of student success. Did their academic performance improve over the course of the semester? Are they adjusting to living on their own? Are they making good decisions about how to spend their free time? Are they feeling a sense of belonging at PC? For students looking to increase their campus involvement next semester and meet new friends, the Office of Student Engagement and Leadership will be sponsoring a Spring Involvement Fair on Friday, January 17. Remind them to check their "Morning Mail" for more specific information about the event. To help plan ahead, during the break, students might want to take some time to learn about the many clubs and organizations the College has to offer, and they can check them out at: <https://student-engagement-leadership.providence.edu/clubs-and-organizations/>

- If your student's overall adjustment to college may not have met expectations, don't overreact. First semester brings some unique challenges that may take some time to resolve. Your encouragement and support are especially important now.

Please keep in mind that families and the College can work together to reinforce messages to students that support good and healthy choices.

- Take some time during the break to revisit your expectations and values as they relate to peer pressure, how students spend their time, and their money. Help students to reflect on personal choices and how they coped with new freedoms and academic and social challenges.
- Remember, the goal is to keep communication open, not to close it. You can be open and honest about your expectations without coming across as judgmental.
- The more you know about support services and resources, the better able you will be to help your student to reflect on past decisions and explore options. Please visit the

Providence College Parent & Family Program website
at: <https://parents.providence.edu> for helpful information.

Finally, remember to listen, listen, and listen some more. Cherish and enjoy your time together and try to keep things in perspective.

I wish you and your family many blessings during this special time of year.

Jackie

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