

Parent Newsletter

Connecting Parents & Families to UMBC



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND BALTIMORE COUNTY • NOVEMBER 2010 ISSUE

How To Help Your Student Through The Fall Semester

Written by Janet McGlynn, Director of Communications and Outreach for The Office of Undergraduate Education

At this point in the fall semester, parents want to know how to help their students complete their work, learn from their courses, and end the semester with good grades. Here are some tips:

Fall freshmen have begun to receive Freshman Year Intervention (FYI) alerts through myUMBC. FYI alerts are sent when a faculty member identifies a student as in danger of getting lower than a C in the course. Ask your student to tell you about the “alert” process in myUMBC and whether he or she has received any lately. Keep asking, as faculty report to the FYI system over several weeks. An FYI alert will direct the student to a page of resources and advice, including recommendations that the student speak with their professors and sign up for tutoring. It is very important that students not be discouraged at this point. There is time to make a difference in the grades they will receive, if they make changes now. It is also important for students who are struggling academically to realize that they must change their behavior and learning techniques in order to change their grades.

Starting November 1st, students may register to take a course during Winter Session. The courses are posted now for review, along with the application for Winter Session course scholarships. During the four-week Winter Session students can concentrate on just one three-credit course. Discuss this opportunity with your student. Students select their classes and register online through myUMBC. While not required for winter session courses, it is a

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Thanksgiving Break is November 25 - 28

Students must vacate their dorm rooms by 8pm on Wednesday, November 24th and may return to campus at 12pm on Sunday, November 29th. Please consult Residential Life for any further questions at umbc.edu/reslife. Campus will be closed Thursday, November 25th through Saturday, November 27th.



A group of Retrievers pose for a picture at Homecoming. More photos on page 5.

good idea for students to consult with an advisor while selecting a winter session course.

Registration for spring semester will begin in mid-November. Students should start preparing now by reviewing the online Schedule of Classes, making an advising appointment (required for spring registration), and checking their myUMBC account to be sure they are cleared to register. An unpaid bill or missing immunization record can delay registration. Help your student by clearing up any such issues before registration begins.

Scheduling hint for new students: Consider a First Year Seminar. These seminars are limited to 20 first-year students per course and are taught by senior faculty. Students in these small classes get to know a faculty member well and may find a long-term mentor.

Encourage your son or daughter to plan now to make the most of the summer break through research, community service, employment, or an internship related to his or her area of study. These experiences are a valuable supplement to classroom learning. Through such programs, students learn about the kinds of work they like (or don't like) to do. They also meet professionals in their field who may become important mentors. Many valuable programs have application deadlines in early February. The best time to research these opportunities is before the end of the fall semester.

Thanksgiving Weekend

Throughout November, many college students think, "I'll catch up over Thanksgiving break." The four-day weekend appears to be an endless resource for backlogged paper writing.

Often these catch-up plans are unrealistic, the product of wishful thinking. Parents and families can take steps to help students meet their holiday study goals.

Throughout November, many college students think, "I'll catch up over Thanksgiving break." The four-day weekend appears to be an endless resource for backlogged paper writing.

Consider asking, "Is there any school work you wanted to get done over Thanksgiving weekend?" While decisions about school work are the student's responsibility, family actions can support or divert the



Students study with friends for an exam.

student. If your son or daughter mentions a goal of reading three chapters over the weekend, ask when the best time would be for reading. It is a classic principle of time management that a person is more likely to complete something after sharing the intention with others.

If your student has a paper to finish before the end of the semester, remind him or her to consult the Writing Center early in the writing process. Writing Center tutors help students to think through the appropriate structure for papers and to review their logic as well as more technical aspects of writing.

Looking ahead

Ask about final examinations. New student may need to be reminded that the schedule for finals is not exactly the same as the class schedule. Final examinations will be held from December 15 to December 21.

Parents Care: Talking to Your College Student about Healthy Relationships

Written By Mollie Monahan-Kreishman, Women's Center Director

College can be an exciting time for students. It is the first time many of them are given full autonomy to make their own decisions, and the decisions they make now can have a lasting effect on their health and wellbeing in the future.

For parents, college can be an exciting time, too. When the day comes to drop your son or daughter off at school for the first time (or second or third!), many parents experience a shift from celebration to concern. Will my child be okay? Will he be able to find his way to class on time? Will she study well? What sorts of friends will she make? Will he find a special person to care about while he is there? Indeed, the people your student hangs out with will have a big impact on his/her college success.

One of the things you can do as a parent to both ease your own anxiety and help your student make healthy decisions is to continue to be engaged in their life. While you probably don't want to become what's known as a "helicopter parent," hovering over every little thing your child does, you will likely want to find a way to show your support. You might want to consider what that balance looks like for you. You want for your student to have the autonomy to make both good and bad decisions, and to learn from them, but you also want to let them know you're there to help them if need be.

As a parent, one of the best things you can do is talk to your student about who they are meeting and hanging out with on campus. Ask about new and existing friends – what they are interested in, what their majors are, and what is going on in their lives. If and when your student enters into an intimate relationship, you may want to know how they met, what they like about their new special someone, or what interesting qualities they might have. While you are having these conversations with your students, you may want to keep in mind some of the characteristics of healthy relationships.

Partners in healthy relationships exhibit a wide array of positive behaviors. Many of these behaviors include:

- Being trusting and trustworthy
- Encouraging each other to maintain friendships and family outside the relationship
- A desire to know each other's friends and family
- Continued engagement in activities outside the relationship
- Apologizing for being wrong and accepting apologies

when the other person is wrong

- Accepting responsibility for individual behavior
- A supportive environment in which thoughts and ideas can be shared
- An ability to respectfully disagree
- An absence of manipulation (financial, emotional, etc.)
- Kindness and care
- Compliments about physical, intellectual, and emotional attributes
- Shared decision making
- Conflict resolution through conversation without using insults, threats, or violence

If you are concerned that your student may be in an unhealthy relationship, there are many caring campus resources available to you and your student. For more information on available resources, please contact any of the following:

University Police 410-455-5555

Student Judicial Programs 410-455-2453

University Counseling Services 410-455-2472

University Health Services 410-455-2542

VP of Student Affairs 410-455-2393

Women's Center 410-455-2714

Office of Human Relations 410-455-1853

Community Director On-call, Call University Police

410-455-5555

College is an exciting time for both parents and students. Maintaining a caring connection to your student as they navigate a number of challenging college decisions is one of the best things you can do as a parent. Thank you for the care and support you provide to your student! Please know that we are here to provide support, too.



Friends engage in healthy relationships

Winter Undergraduate Commencement

UMBC's Commencement Committee

This year's Winter Undergraduate Commencement ceremony is approaching, and we wanted to share some important information with the parents of undergraduate students who will be participating in Commencement.

Undergraduate Commencement is scheduled for Wednesday, December 22 in the Retriever Activities Center (RAC). The doors to the RAC will open for ticketed guests at 9 a.m. The procession of students, faculty and staff will begin at 9:40 a.m. and the ceremony itself will begin at 10 a.m.

Each student will receive four guest tickets for seating in the RAC. Please keep in mind that there will be unlimited overflow seating for additional guests in Lecture Hall III of the Administration Building.

Your student will be able to pick up his/her regalia and guest tickets from the UMBC Bookstore Graduation Center between Monday, December 6 and Wednesday, December 8. If your student plans to participate in the ceremony, and has not yet ordered regalia, he/she should contact the Bookstore at 410-455-3807 as soon as possible. In addition to ordering academic regalia through the Bookstore, students may purchase graduation announcements and order diploma frames, featuring a mat border with the University seal.

Attached is a Commencement newsletter that has been e-mailed to students. Additional information can be found online at www.umbc.edu/commencement.

Please note that the above information pertains to Undergraduate Commencement. Graduate School Commencement is scheduled for Tuesday, December 21 at 10 a.m. in the RAC.

Your Resident Student and Thanksgiving Break

Written by Jacqueline Wilson, Assistant Director of Residential Operations

In a few short weeks, many of you will be welcoming your students back home. It should be expected that you will be able to see some significant growth and change in your students as the past few months on campus provided some great learning opportunities for them. In Residential Life, we have 4 community living principles that I wanted to share: Live and Study with Integrity, Seek to Understand others, Cooperate and Compromise and Take Action to Improve your Community. These principles were developed by students and are what was determined to be important attributes for living in a community. These principles are applicable to all UMBC students whether they live on campus or commute. In this month's newsletter I want to focus on Take Action to Improve your Community. While here at UMBC there are many ways that your students can take action here are a few examples:

- Attending RA programs
- Joining CAB – Community Action Boards
- Helping a neighbor
- Community Service
- Lock your bedroom/apartment doors
- Read the Residential Life Loop
- Recycling
- Pick up trash you find in the hall

Over the next few weeks, while students are at home, ask them how they are taking action to improve their community. Are they becoming engaged on campus or in their hall, or are they just going to class and coming back to their rooms? Taking pride and ownership in the community ones lives in gives students a stronger tie to that community, making it feel more like home. It also helps to instill a beginning level of civic engagement, which we hope grows within our students over their time at UMBC, so that when they graduate, they are able to be active participants in their communities outside of UMBC.

To learn more, visit umbc.edu/reslife

Homecoming 2010!

Blurb written by Jenny O'Grady

Over the last few months, we've been asking everyone, from parents to alums to students, faculty and staff, one question: Do you have the Fever? At this year's Homecoming, we found our answer.

UMBC kicked off Homecoming with a huge bonfire on Erickson Field, accompanied by a pie-eating contest, performances by the Down and Dirty Dawg Band and various dance groups, an outdoor pancake feast, and a showing of *Twilight: Eclipse*. Event organizers also announced the student and faculty/staff winners of the Spirit Week Decorating Contest.

As the week progressed, many students took part in the annual Talent Show, and UMBC honored some of its top alumni at its Outstanding Alumni of the Year reception. On Friday, the men's soccer team took on the Terriers of Boston University on national television, and although the Dawgs missed the win, the stands were packed with record-beating numbers of Retriever Believers, many of whom later that night enjoyed Midnight Madness festivities, ushering in a new basketball season at the RAC.

On Saturday, a hearty group of more than 100 runners braved the UMBC loop for the 3rd annual 5K Dawg Chase. Later, the Quad came alive as the UMBC community enjoyed a barbecue lunch complete with face-painting, inflatable games, and fun, blow-up dinosaurs. Throughout the afternoon, alums and others enjoyed reunions and athletic matches; later, many partook of an internationally-themed dinner and student performance experience called "Taste of UMBC." The evening came to a close with the topical humor of Lewis Black.

Does UMBC have Retriever Fever? Yes, it definitely does.

Learn more by visiting www.umbc.edu/homecoming.

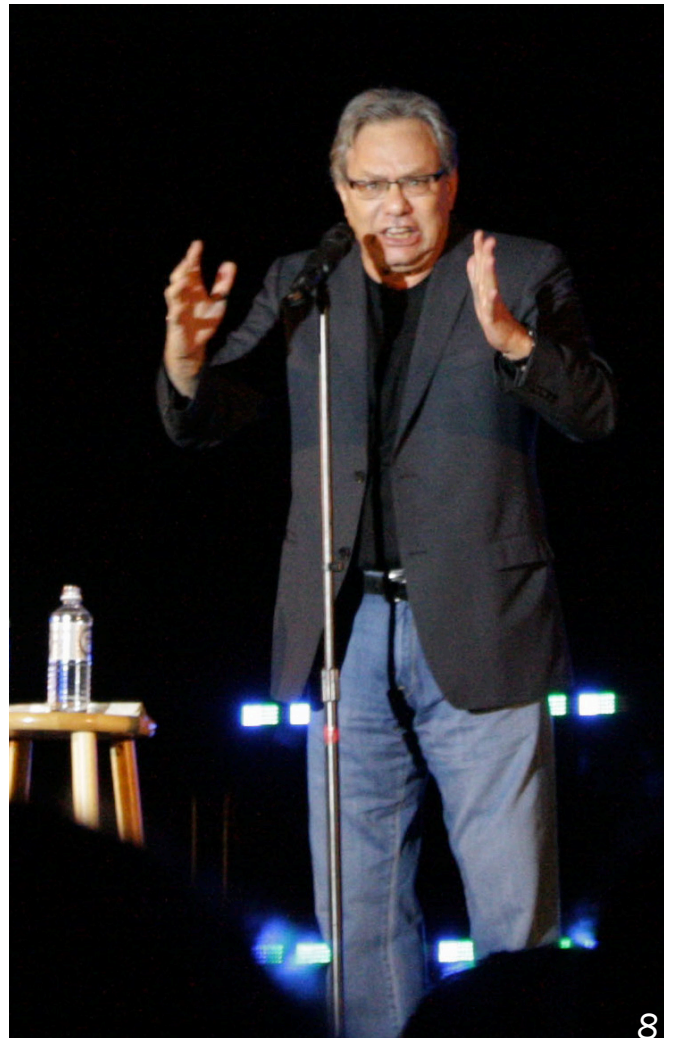




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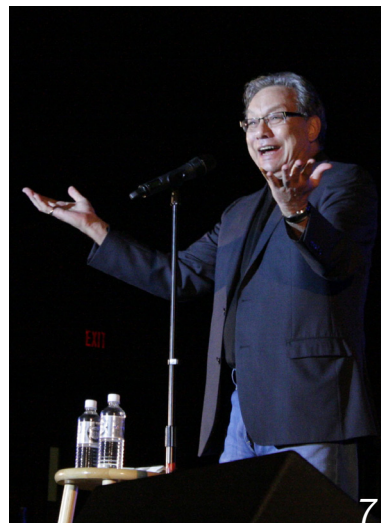
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- 1) Senior Brandon Cottom, a member of the Student Events Board (SEB), parkates in an inflatable game at the Community Picnic
 - 2) Jason Palumbo and Bobby Canner perform a song during the Homecoming Talent Show and win in the musician category.
 - 3) Damien Poole, winner in the Rap category at the Talent Show.
 - 4) Students watch the Homecoming Talent Show which took place in UMBC's Ballroom. 5) From left to right, Stevo Karoleno, Damien Poole, Ed Vincent, and Jason Palumbo after the Talent Show
 - 6) Decorations and promotional material at the Homecoming Comedy Show. 7 & 8) Comedien Lewis Black performed in the Retriever Athletic Center (RAC) on Saturday night to a packed house. 9) Students gather around the yearly kickoff event, a bonfire on Erikson Field. Shortly after students watched *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse* on an outdoor projection. 10) Junior Rich Bussey braves the mechanical bull at the Homecoming Community Picnic. 11) A student gets his face painted at the Homecoming Community Picnic.
- Photos courtesy of Stefanie Mavronis '11



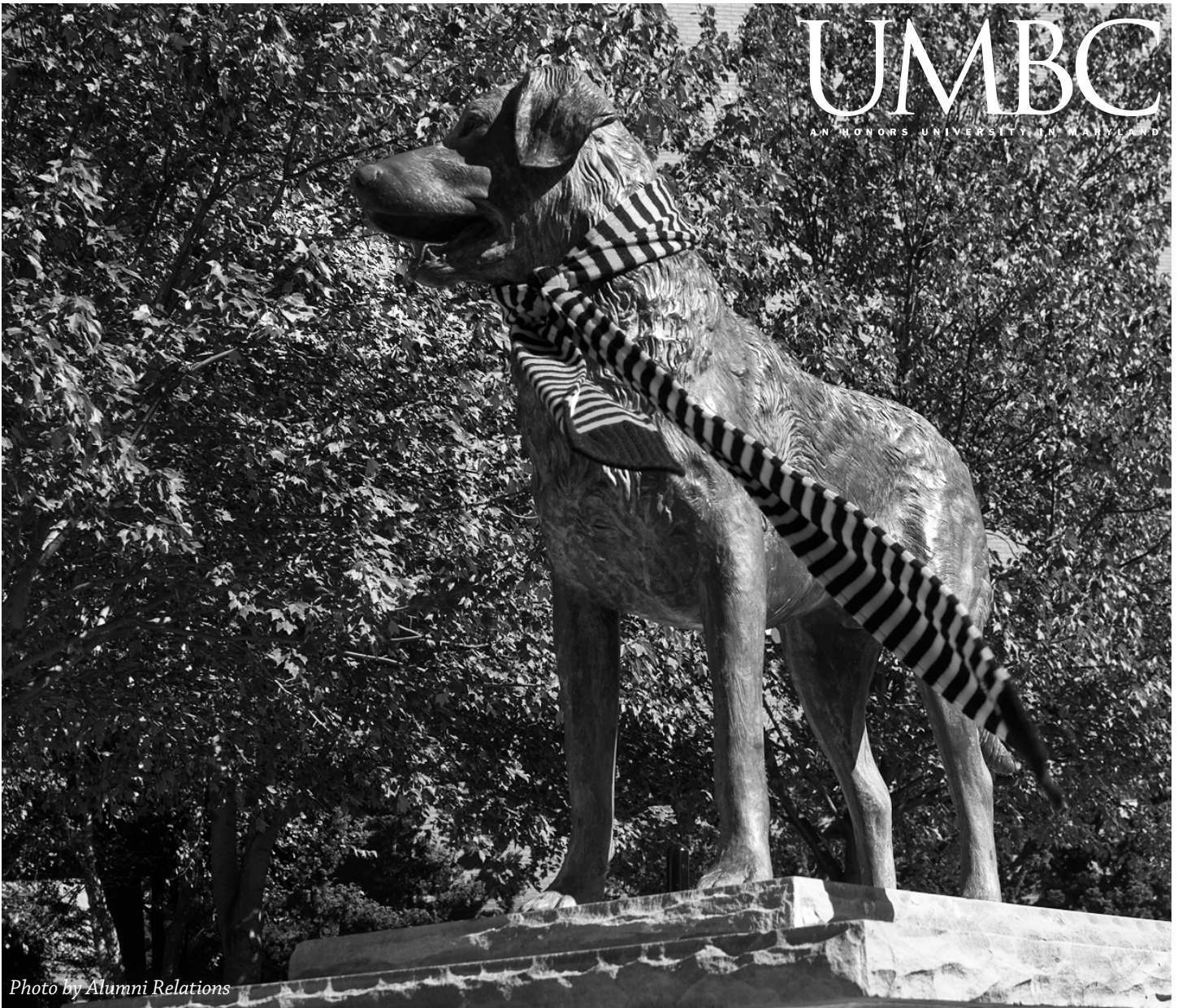


Photo by Alumni Relations

Important Dates For The 2010 - 2011 School Year

Fall Semester

Aug 31	<i>Classes Begin</i>
Sept 6	<i>Labor Day Holiday</i>
Oct 13 - 16	<i>Homecoming</i>
Nov 25 - 28	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>
Dec 13	<i>Last Day of Classes</i>
Dec 14	<i>Study Day</i>
Dec 15 - 22	<i>Final Exams</i>
Dec 22	<i>Undergraduate Commencement</i>

Spring Semester

Jan 26	<i>Classes Begin</i>
March 20 - 27	<i>Spring Break</i>
April (dates TBA)	<i>Quadmania</i>
May 12	<i>Last Day of Classes</i>
May 13	<i>Study Day</i>
May 16 - 20	<i>Final Exams</i>
May 23	<i>Undergraduate Commencement</i>

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