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## FYI

This is the last issue of FASTPASS for this academic year. Archives of all issues are available online at <http://www.shepherd.edu/university/FASTPASS>.

If you would prefer to receive a printed copy of current or past issues of the FASTPASS newsletter, please send an e-mail to [retention@shepherd.edu](mailto:retention@shepherd.edu) or call 304-876-5482.

The Parents Web page will be completed by June 1 and will be used to communicate important information to new and returning parents throughout the summer. Please check the Shepherd University home page for the link.

## MAY FOCUS: LESSONS LEARNED (THE EASY, NOT THE HARD, WAY)

As I have worked with Shepherd students over the past year or so, I have come across several areas which I think would be helpful for all students to continue to remember, and which will hopefully help students avoid some common mistakes. As parents, you can help us by offering these friendly reminders to students as well.

### 1. College vs. High School

Everyone has heard the old adage/truism that college is very different from high school. This applies across the board from study habits to sleep habits. Some of the key issues that I have observed are:

**Attendance:** Class attendance is a Catch-22. Even though it is not nearly as monitored as it is in high school, in many cases it is much more important. Professors who do take attendance will often lower a student's grade (even to the point of an F) for excessive absences. Those who don't take attendance still expect students to be responsible for all the work covered. Also, even though an absence is "excused" doesn't necessarily mean it goes away; a student is expected to be in class to benefit from lectures, questions, and discussions, and some professors don't distinguish between excused and unexcused in their total count. If a student anticipates being out a lot for excused reasons (e.g., athletics) her or she should plan on attending ALL other class meetings.

**Study Habits:** Work in college is cumulative and often tests are as well. Saving all studying up to the last minute will not work. And despite the fact that professors DO know that students have 4-6 other classes, much of the work is often due at the same time. Classes as normal continue, even during mid-term week.

**Extra vs. Co-Curricular Activities:** In an effort to educate the "whole person," colleges take a much more active role in providing opportunities for co-curricular opportunities. But the "co" (as opposed to the "extra" of high school) means that they often occur along side and during many of the other required aspects of college life (e.g., studying). Finding the right balance is even more important in college; unfortunately, the absence of the structure of a high school

program makes striking that appropriate balance more difficult for college students. Students having difficulties with time management should talk to their advisors or the Academic Support Center for help.

### 2. Don't Look to the Left and Right of You

Remember the famous line that the college president supposedly says to the incoming freshman class: "Look to the left of you, look to right of you; only one of you will be here in four years?" Well, nowadays nothing could be further from the truth. The better line would be: "Look to the left of you, look to the right of you. Hopefully, the three of you will be throwing your graduation caps in the air together four years from now." Colleges want to keep all students on their campuses until graduation and will do whatever they can to help students be successful; however, students have to seek out the resources. We have discussed a lot of these in issues of FASTPASS throughout the year. When the parents' Web page is up and running, we will have a whole section with campus resources and links to other important pages on the Shepherd Web site.

### 3. It's Not Over When the Bell Rings

The beginning and end of a college day are much more fluid time than in high school. The ability to e-mail and communicate electronically has extended the hours (at least from the student's perspective) to a 24/7 operation and made coordinating communication between student, staff, and administrators much less challenging. If your student knows he or she is going to be absent from class, for instance, there is no excuse for not letting the instructor know in a timely fashion. Questions thought of at 2 a.m. can be asked at that time (via e-mail) and responded to (probably before the student gets up) only a few hours later when offices re-open. Don't let your student get in to a rut or a place-of-no-return because he or she doesn't ask the right questions in a timely fashion. Students should never assume there is not a solution or an alternative path to take.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## Helping Your Student Remain Excited About School Over the Summer Months

If your son or daughter is not taking classes, the summer months can be time for students to earn some extra money or just relax a bit before it time to get back to the grind in August.

For most students, this can be a chance to do something different other than classes, studying, classes, etc. Many will reconnect with old friends or stay in contact with new ones from Shepherd. (See the November issue for tips on dealing with your now more "independent" student for this lengthy period of time). Some will get antsy to get back to school very quickly as they miss the friends and communities they have established here (well maybe not the study, classes, study part). Others, however, might talk about not wanting to go back to school, wanting to transfer or may just be thinking about taking some time off.

If the latter is the case with your student, do not panic! This can be a natural reaction after a year of really hard work. Talk to your student about why he or she does not want to return. There may be reasons apart from anything school-related that you can address separately. Taking time off for the right reasons can be appropriate and, if done at the right time, may help assure a more timely return to school as well.

If the reasons seem focused on some aspects of his/her experiences here at Shepherd, or just a frustration with college in general, please contact the retention office at [retention@shepherd.edu](mailto:retention@shepherd.edu) or 304-876-5482. We can talk about specific strategies for helping your student return and continue to persist until graduation.

Remember, we want to partner with you on promoting your student's success!

Thank you for seeing FASTPASS through its first year. Whether you have been regular visitors to the site, have eagerly anticipated receiving your hard copy each month, or are reading FASTPASS for the first time, we hope you have enjoyed it and found it beneficial in working with your Shepherd student. We also hope to have you return next year!

Before we sign off for the summer, however, we wanted to give you a recap of what we discussed. Past issues are archived on the FASTPASS Web page at <http://www.shepherd.edu/university/FASTPASS/>.

In September, we introduced you to FASTPASS, the work of the Retention Office, and spoke to you about homesickness. We encouraged you NOT to allow your student to come home every weekend and suggested that you visit them instead. We also gave you some information on campus resources and ways to respond to the more common student complaints.

In October, we talked about the mid-term exams period and grades and gave you some tips on how to speak to your student about his/her performance. Knowing that in October the "honeymoon period" is often over for roommates, we discussed strategies for students to resolve roommate conflicts. We also went over the upcoming registration process for the spring semester.

In November, we took the homesickness issue one step further and discussed how to work with your newly independent student returning (or spending more time at) home for the Thanksgiving and

semester breaks. We stressed compromise as the key to success! We also gave information and advice on preparing for final exams and updated you on some of the initiatives being sponsored by the Retention Office.

In December, we took it "class year by class year," and gave you conversation starters for talking to your students about their academic experiences at Shepherd. We stressed the importance of showing them that you were interested in helping them stay interested as well. We also discussed how to navigate the world of changing majors (not major changes) and introduced you to some fun facts about Shepherd University.

In February, we focused on beating the winter blues and the challenges involved in coming back to school after the long semester break. We also wrote about how to stay focused on school work and gave an update on applying for financial aid.

In March, we gave tips for parents on helping their students have a safe spring break and revisited the issue of midterm exams. We also discussed the countdown to the end of the semester and listed what students should be doing in the second half of the semester.

In April, we focused on the upcoming room selection process and registering for summer and fall classes. We also looked ahead to the summer and gave some advice on landing a temporary position when the economy is down.

Again, thanks for reading and we look forward to seeing you in the fall!

## FINAL EVENTS AND DEADLINES

<b>May 4-8</b>	<b>Final Exams</b>
<b>May 8</b>	<b>Residence Halls Close to Non-Graduating Students at 6 p.m.</b>
<b>May 12</b>	<b>Second Semester Grades Tentatively Available on RAIL</b>
<b>May 16</b>	<b>136th Commencement Ceremony</b>
	<b>Residence Halls Close to All Students at 6 p.m.</b>
	<b>Apartments Remain Open to Students with a Summer Housing Contract</b>
<b>May 20-June 22</b>	<b>Summer I Session</b>
<b>May 20-July 30</b>	<b>Summer II Session</b>
<b>May 20-July 30</b>	<b>Summer III Sessions</b>

For full dates and deadlines for summer sessions, visit <http://www.shepherd.edu/register/pdf/Summer%202009.pdf>