PARENTING COLLEGE STUDENTS

BALANCING ACT

By Mark D. McCarthy, Ph.D. — Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Student Development

Whether you are the parent of a first-year or a returning student, the transition from summer activities to the fall semester can be a challenging one for your students and, for that matter, the whole family. With a few months of classes behind us, if you are like most parents some of your worries have been put to rest, while new ones have taken their place.

Your college student’s movement from being dependent on you for structure, wake-up calls, personal meal and laundry services, and undivided attention to becoming a more independent adult is not always easy for them—or you.

As the dean of Student Development and the father of two college-age students, the best advice I can give is to be available, listen carefully and help your child identify strategies and resources that are available to them should they encounter difficulties academically or socially.

As students approach midterm exams, the expectations they and you might have for very high grades can quickly be deflated. On this year’s New Student Survey, completed during orientation in August, 98 percent of students indicated that they expected to have grade point averages above 3.0 at the end of their first year. In reality, only about 50 percent will achieve this.

Finding one’s place in a new situation is difficult for many students. For most, homesickness comes and goes during the course of their years in college. Leaving the comfort of friends and family is difficult, but it is also an important developmental step in the lives of young adults. It is important for parents to find a good balance between being in constant contact with them via cell phone and e-mail and simply being available.

If your student is experiencing separation anxiety, here’s how you can help:

• Listen and take them seriously, but know that often when your son or daughter calls you in an excited or upset state they just need to vent to someone with a sympathetic ear. Unfortunately, after a call like this you might end up feeling stressed out and worried, while your student has already moved on to the next thing.

• Encourage your student to get involved in one or two activities, organizations or service projects at Marquette. Being with people with similar interests can really help students feel more connected with their new home and neighbors.

• Students should know that they are always welcome at home, but encourage them not to come home every weekend. Help them to focus their attention and energy at school.

• Encourage your student to seek out the support of others, such as their resident assistant.

• If your student continues to feel overwhelmed, recommend an appointment at the Marquette University Counseling Center. Finally, much has been written about “helicopter parents” — parents who hover around their students and swoop onto campus to try to solve any problems or concerns their children have encountered. While it is hard to sit back while your children experience difficulties, you can help them most by discussing possible steps they might consider to work through a problem — resources that you have seen on the Marquette Web site, or people you may have met during orientation or campus visits. The sooner your students learn skills in negotiation and problem solving, the better.

There are many people at Marquette University who are here to help you and your sons and daughters find success. You can also make use of the Marquette University Web site and the pages especially designed for you at www.marquette.edu/parents/

Best wishes for a successful school year.

Dr. McCarthy’s Parenting Book Picks

The literature about parenting college students that’s available online and in your local bookstores is growing. Here are two good books to start with:


• Letting Go: A Parent’s Guide to Understanding the College Years, by Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger (HarperCollins, 1997)

STUDENTS COLLEGE PARENTING

• Let your student know that Marquette’s Office of Student Educational Services provides assistance to students who struggle with writing.

• Don’t offer to or try to contact faculty members directly. Instead, strongly encourage your student to meet with their professors.

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Welcome to Facebook!

By Stephanie Quade, Ph.D. — Associate Dean of Student Development, Marquette University

Whether it’s a ski trip, a summer vacation or some other good time, students usually can’t wait to share the pictures with all their friends. Popular social networking Web sites like Facebook and MySpace make it easy to share these and a whole lot of other data, such as interests, activities and contact information. Just fill out a profile, upload photos and hit the return key.

And if a couple of these photos just happen to show your student and his or her underage friends doing shots of tequila at the beach house, no harm, no foul. Right?

Students might think so, but a June 11, 2006 New York Times article warns that what they’re putting out there could be seen by more people than they think:

Many companies that recruit on college campuses have been using search engines like Google and Yahoo to conduct background checks on seniors looking for their first job. But now, college career counselors and other experts say some recruiters are looking up applicants on social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, Xanga and Friendster.

Students might brush this off by saying, “But I won’t be graduating or looking for a real job for a while, so what difference does it make?”

It makes a big difference, and here’s why: To get an account with Facebook, which is comprised mostly of student users but also includes corporate and nonprofit organizations, users must sign off on this agreement:

By posting member content to any part of the Facebook Web site, you automatically grant, and you represent and warrant that you have the right to grant to the company an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive, transferable, fully paid, worldwide license (with the right to sublicense) to use, copy, perform, display, reformat, translate, excerpt (in whole or in part) and distribute such information and content and to prepare derivative works of, or incorporate into other works, such information and content . . .

Which means in short, anything your student posts on Facebook can be used by Facebook — forever. This means that years from now, when your student is running for Senate, pictures of that bad haircut — or worse — could surface.

Because university alumni, faculty and staff also make up a distinct Facebook user segment, there’s another thing to think about: Marquette faculty and administrators can and will make up a distinct Facebook user segment, there’s another thing to think about:

Marquette’s student conduct code. While Marquette’s student conduct system, I am often asked if I regulate students’ Facebook accounts or search Facebook for possible violations of Marquette’s student conduct code. While we will respond to violations of Marquette’s student conduct policy on Facebook that are brought to our attention, the university’s primary concern is that Facebook can be a barrier to in-person communication. For example, roommates will often post comments about each other rather than just talking to one another. Instead of resolving conflict, posting on Facebook often leads to an escalation of e-mails and a total breakdown of communication.

Together, perhaps the greatest thing we as parents and Marquette staff can do is encourage our students to get back to basics and talk face-to-face more often.

As recently and widely reported in the national media, Facebook will soon be making accounts available to anyone with an e-mail address. While this means your student will have to be even more diligent, as a parent, you might be thinking, “Oh, good, now I can view my student’s Facebook page and see what they’re up to.”

Be aware that Facebook does allow students to restrict access to their profiles to a select group of people, called “Facebook Friends.” This means that, as a parent, you’d only be able to view your student’s page if you are accepted as his or her Facebook Friend. Not likely to happen, as echoed by a student quoted in a recent USA Today article: “I don’t even want to think what will happen [to Facebook] when Mom and Dad can join.”

As the primary coordinator of Marquette’s student conduct system, I am often asked if I regulate students’ Facebook accounts or search Facebook for possible violations of Marquette’s student conduct code. While we will respond to violations of Marquette’s student conduct policy on Facebook that are brought to our attention, the university’s primary concern is that Facebook can be a barrier to in-person communication. For example, roommates will often post comments about each other rather than just talking to one another. Instead of resolving conflict, posting on Facebook often leads to an escalation of e-mails and a total breakdown of communication.

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Ways to be a savvy parent of a Facebook user:

• Getting your own Facebook page does not automatically mean you can check up on your student. To view your student’s pages, you have to be invited.

• Rather than getting your own account to surreptitiously check up on your student, model face-to-face communication and simply ask about his or her Facebook account.

Ways you can encourage your student to be a savvy Facebook user:

• Protect yourself. Use privacy settings.

• Because Facebook is being accessed by more and more non-university folks, avoid posting too much personal contact information, including class schedules, and cell phone and room numbers.

• Make sure that your online persona isn’t saying more, and to more people, than you want.

• Before posting something about another person, get that person’s permission.

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125 Years of Faith and Learning in Action

Happy Anniversary, Marquette!

It all began on Aug. 15, 1881, the day Marquette College was dedicated at 10th and State Streets in Milwaukee. Years later — 125, to be exact — Marquette University kicked off a yearlong celebration of its heritage with a prayer service attended by students, faculty and staff by Marquette President Robert A. Wild, S.J., and Archbishop Timothy Dolan.

From that day on, Marquette’s anniversary celebration has been highly visible in the form of banners placed throughout campus that celebrate pivotal moments in Marquette history. And it doesn’t stop there. A year’s worth of events and places to go enable everyone in the Marquette community to take part in the revelry.

Go to www.marquette.edu/125/ and there you’ll find an entire Web site devoted to commemorating Marquette’s 125 years, including:

- Calendar of events
- Online photo galleries and yearbooks
- Marquette University timeline
- This Week in Marquette History
- 125th Anniversary wallpaper

"This Week in Marquette History" brings a weekly dose of times gone by in short stories and historic images. Sponsored by Marquette’s Department of History, it can be accessed at either www.marquette.edu or www.marquette.edu/125thiaveaweek.

A new digital collection called “Women in Blue and Gold” celebrates women’s sports at Marquette from Title IX to today, brought to you by the Department of Special Collections and University Archives in Raynor Memorial Libraries. Go to www.marquette.edu/library/MUDC/, where you’ll also find other historic digital collections including:

- Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions
- St. Francis Mission
- Hilltop Yearbooks, 1916-1996
- The public career of Tommy G. Thompson, 1966-2001

Be sure to check out the 125th Anniversary events, coming up throughout the academic year. Just a few highlights include:

- “Marquette University Then and Now: Images Celebrating 125 Years of Faith and Learning in Action,” a photography exhibit at the Patrick and Beatrice Haggerty Museum of Art, Jan. 25-April 1, 2007
- “History of Scholarship at Marquette,” April 24, 2007
- 30th anniversary of the NCAA Championship, TBA

Want to be a part of the celebration? We want you to be, too! Watch the official 125th Anniversary calendar of events at www.marquette.edu/125/ for updates and additions.

Make your impact
Support the Parents Fund

Thank you, Marquette parents! Together, we raised over $390,000 for the Parents Fund in fiscal year 2006!

The Parents Fund supports Marquette Today, the university’s family of current use funds, including:

- The Marquette Fund — Faculty recruitment, technical resources and student programs
- The Scholars Fund — Scholarships directed to college programs
- The Blue & Gold Fund — Athletic programming and scholarships

Our new goal for this year is to raise $450,000 for the Parents Fund by June 30, 2007. To reach this goal, we need your support. Every gift counts, no matter the size, no matter where you direct it — it all adds up!

Checking with your employer’s human resource department to find out if your company has a matching gift program could enable you to double your gift to Marquette.

Supporting the Parents Fund is the best way that we, as parents, can support Marquette and the outstanding education our children receive. Please make your gift today.

John and Katie Nolan
Parents Fund National Co-chairs

Check out the Marquette Parents Web site
www.marquette.edu/parents

Learn everything you need to know about Marquette:

- Important news and events
- Paying tuition online
- Where to park when you visit
- Where to call in case of family emergency
- Replenishing your student’s Marquette Card
- And much, much more

A message from the Parents Association co-chairs

Rob and Maureen Hart Parents Association National Co-chairs

IMPORTANT DATES

Dec. 22-26: Thanksgiving break
Dec. 23: Last day of classes
Dec. 11-16: Finals week
Dec. 16: Residence halls close at noon
Dec. 17: Mid-year graduation
Jan. 1: Financial Aid Online mailed to parent/guardian homes
Jan. 16: Residence halls open at 10 a.m.
Jan. 18: Classes resume
Jan. 16-30: Winter Flurry (sponsored by MUSG)
Feb. 1: Deadline to file FAFSA so that it is processed by March 1
Feb. 4-8: Mission Week
Feb. 15: Spring WorkForce Career Fair
Mar. 1: Priority deadline for processed 2007-08 FAFSA to be received by Marquette
Mar. 10: Residence halls close at noon
Mar. 16-18: Spring break
Mar. 18: Residence halls open at 10 a.m.
Apr. 1-5: Easter break
Apr. 1: Job Search Boot Camp (sponsored by the Career Services Center)
Apr. 15 & 21: Open House for high school sophomores and juniors interested in Marquette
Apr. 20-22: Lil’ Sibs Weekend

 finance@marquette.edu – www.marquette.edu/parents
“There was nothing out there that reached all of our students or an entire class,” Lazzar says. Marquette’s new approach is what is sometimes called “herd immunity”: The theory is that if you get 70 percent, you’ve essentially reached the entire population. This fall, AlcoholEdu was given to more than 2,000 students, including incoming freshmen, resident assistants, orientation leaders and others. Requiring the program before the school year started was key.

“We’re realistic about knowing that students might face the decision to drink on their very first day,” Lazzar says. Marquette selected AlcoholEdu because it’s comprehensive, objective and addresses how alcohol affects learning. University officials also thought it would be good support for non-drinkers because of the focus on the second-hand effects of drinking, including sexual assault, vandalism and other problems.

Learning how alcohol affects the brain was especially interesting to Heidi Heyrman, an orientation student coordinator and senior majoring in communication and elementary education. “Most of your alcohol education is through friends or family, so you’re not sure what to take at face value,” Heyrman says. “You hear the basic things, like you don’t have such good balance and it can impair your judgment, but it’s good to know the science behind it.”

Matt Robinson, another student orientation leader and a junior biomedical sciences major, appreciated the program’s objective tone. “They weren’t preaching at you,” he says. “It was just more informational, ‘here’s what you need to know the science behind it.’”

The university has purchased a two-year agreement with AlcoholEdu.

Quick:

What’s your blood alcohol concentration level an hour after you’ve consumed one beer?

Marquette wants to make sure students can answer that question and many more after completing AlcoholEdu for College, a new requirement for this year’s incoming freshmen and other student leaders.

AlcoholEdu is an online, science-based course designed to arm students with as much knowledge as possible so they can make informed, healthy decisions. To fulfill the requirement, students must score 70 percent on AlcoholEdu’s final exam. Students who do not complete the program could face harsher disciplinary consequences if they violate the student conduct code.

Marquette is the first school in Wisconsin to use AlcoholEdu with an entire class. More than 500 colleges and universities — including half of the nation’s Jesuit colleges — already use the program, and for good reason.

“Much of the data suggests that students use alcohol before college. And when they get to college, that escalates drastically,” says Erin Lazzar, assistant to the vice president of student affairs.

Research shows that the problem is more serious than researchers once thought. College drinking contributed to 1,700 deaths and 2.8 million cases of driving under the influence in 2001, according to data released last year by the National Institute of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse.

Marquette has always worked hard to keep students safe and healthy. “Certainly our interest in our students’ alcohol use isn’t new,” Lazzar says. But while campus officials have always been quick to respond to concerns, they decided it was time to be more proactive with prevention. Previously, alcohol education came from a smattering of sources, including resident assistants, peer health educators, conduct administrators, advisers and the Student Health Service.

We’re going digital

The Spring 2007 Parents Association Newsletter is moving out of your mailbox and into your inbox. To make sure you get your copy, we need your e-mail address.

A few years ago, Marquette began collecting parent e-mail addresses via the Parent Information Form, found in the Next Step book mailed home to your incoming freshmen. But because completing this form is optional, we don’t have e-mail addresses for every parent.

To see if we have yours, on Dec. 15, 2006, Marquette University will send an e-mail to everyone who is not already in our database. To update your information or register your e-mail address, visit www.marquette.edu/parents/.

After the 15th you may register your e-mail address by visiting www.marquette.edu/parents/.

To date, 96.5 percent of new freshmen have completed Part 1 of AlcoholEdu.

Parents Association Board Members

Mary Wells Akers • Brookfield, Wis.
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Candee and Ray Arnold • Brookfield, Wis.
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*Indicates Marquette University Alumni

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To see if we have yours, on Dec. 15, 2006, Marquette University will send an e-mail to every current parent. If you do not receive an e-mail from Marquette University on Dec. 15, that means we do not have your e-mail address.

After the 15th you may register your e-mail address by visiting www.marquette.edu/parents/.

Doing so will ensure that you receive the next issue of the Parents Association Newsletter.

Questions? Please call the Parents Association office at 1414-288-7050 or 800-344-7544.

E X C E L L E N C E   F A I T H   L E A D E R S H I P   S E R V I C E