



## Talking to Your Student About Relationships

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Parents of college students have a tough job as they balance their students’ newfound independence with a desire to stay in touch about complex matters such as academics, careers, and finances.

These difficulties can be compounded when facing topics that your son or daughter may or may not want to discuss with you. In particular, student dating, relationships, and sex are sensitive subjects, but they are also vitally important.

College is the time where students are learning how to build and maintain healthy relationships, including intimate ones. Healthy, balanced relationships foster mutual respect and support, open communication, honesty, and trust. Students, parents, and UW–Madison share a common interest: healthy and rewarding relationships that both lead to a student’s happiness and avoid negative consequences.

*Badger Parent* recently checked in with two leading campus experts who had practical advice and tips for parents on the topics of relationships and intimacy, including how to start conversations with their students.

One important aspect is simply understanding the social landscape at UW–Madison. Students, many of whom are away from home for the first time, are seeking connection and intimacy with each other as part of a very large community, says Linda Roberts, a professor in the School of Human Ecology who studies couple relationships.

Roberts has taught a class that explores the effects of alcohol on behavior, culture and society. She regularly teaches a course on romantic relationships and is the parent of a college student herself. Through these classes, she has heard from students firsthand about their experiences on our campus.

Although some students gravitate toward the party scene to form relationships, many make connections through student organizations, leadership activities, and jobs.

While terms such as “hook-ups” (the new “one-night stand”) and “friends with benefits” are common, it’s a myth that purely sexual — and sometimes random — encounters are the norm. According to 2011 data from

the National College Health Assessment, 73 percent of college students report an average of 1.83 partners during a span of 12 months.

Her key advice is that students should “decide, not slide” into intimate contact. She believes that when students base decisions about sex and relationships on their personal goals and values, they are more likely to make informed, intentional choices.

Roberts says that she doesn’t favor any one method of cultivating relationships in her teaching or via UWire ([www.wire.wisc.edu](http://www.wire.wisc.edu)), a related website she produces that educates students about love, sex, and relationships. UW-Madison has a number of elective classes in which students can apply critical thinking skills to matters relating to relationships, sex, and marriage.

While peer influence is one part of the equation, another is how parents can communicate with their students about this important and complex topic.

Because students want to be independent, they often won’t share the stress they actually feel when faced with so many decisions and pressures to conform, says Danielle Oakley, director of Consulting and Consultation Services at UW–Madison’s University Health Services.

It helps to share your beliefs in a way that empowers your student with information, confidence, and resources to make decisions.

“Students want to be engaged with parents as equals who have opinions and values of their own,” says Oakley. In fact, the 2006 National College Health Assessment illustrates that parents are still viewed as important sources of information regarding healthy decisions.

One strategy that can work is to share some of your past relationships including struggles you faced, then ask your student if he or she has ever faced similar situations. Keep your questions open as a way to engage a conversation. Closed-ended questions that result in yes or no answers can shut down conversations and make it seem like you just want data, when you really want to hear your student’s opinion.

“If you are willing to take risks with sharing some of your past decisions and consequences, your student

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UW–Madison Parent Program



### Key Dates

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### Key Dates

**March 5:**  
Fourth-quarter housing payment due

**March 26:**  
Enrollment begins for summer term

**March 28:**  
Can withdraw without repayment of aid for spring term

**March 31–April 8:**  
Spring recess

**April 9:**  
Enrollment begins for fall term

**April:**  
Badger Family Spring Visit

may feel more open to doing the same,” Oakley adds. “Ask your student if he or she has ideas about how [you could] have handled your situation.”

If your student engages in behaviors you consider risky or problematic, express your fear about the consequences as well as ways to decrease risks. Doing this helps build a foundation for having ongoing conversations about his or her health and safety.

“Express your feelings about your student’s behavior rather than judging it. If students feel judged, they will be less likely to come to you when they want or need your guidance,” Oakley cautions.

Even if you’re shut down on your first attempt to

discuss these topics, be available if your student decides that he or she wants to talk. And if your student does not want to talk specifically to you, encourage him or her to find someone he or she trusts, such as a relative, sibling, or friend who can provide sound advice.

The best way to help your student is by teaching him or her how to have healthy relationships, Oakley says. Parents have the influence to teach and to model healthy behaviors, such as being respectful, assertive, and setting boundaries with others.

“Parent relationships with others speak much louder than anything you can tell your student,” she says.

## Spring Break Alternatives and Safety

Spring break is fast approaching, and students deserving much-needed time off are ready to have some fun and relaxation. Not all students jet off to the sun-soaked beaches. In fact, most students will be working, going home, visiting friends, or participating in volunteer or service projects.

For students looking to do something especially meaningful during the break, Alternative Breaks, offered through the Wisconsin Union Directorate, may be the answer. This low-cost opportunity allows students to travel to economically, culturally, and environmentally diverse locations across the United States. Students grow as they engage in service-learning activities that change their lives and those of the people they help. For more information, visit the Wisconsin Union Alternative Breaks website: [www.union.wisc.edu/wud/altbreaks-about.htm](http://www.union.wisc.edu/wud/altbreaks-about.htm). Students should apply soon: the deadline for applications is February 26.

This year, trips are being planned for Detroit; Kissimmee and Homestead, Florida; New Haven, Connecticut; and more.

If your student is planning to travel, remind him or her about these important safety measures:

- Parents (or other friends or family members) need to be informed about where your student will be vacationing, including departure and return times. Ask that your student call upon arrival and return.
- Your student should carry the minimum amount of

cash and credit or bank cards.

- Have an honest conversation with your student about alcohol, if applicable. Recommend that your student learn about the alcohol laws of his or her destination. Encourage responsibility and moderation.
- Remind your student to travel with others, and to stay together — always use the buddy system.
- Lastly, remind your student to remain aware of surroundings and use common sense. Emphasize safety on balconies, being careful about sun exposure and dehydration, locking the hotel room door, and not swimming alone.



Student Whitney Pafford helps clean a tortoise pen at a wildlife refuge in the Florida Everglades for injured and abandoned wildlife. Pafford participated in one of nine UW–Madison Alternative Spring Break programs. Photo: University Communications



## Introducing m.wisc.edu

Parents have a brand new way to keep up with UW–Madison. The university recently launched m.wisc.edu, a web version of Mobile UW that will run on any device that can connect to the Internet, including the iPhone and iPod Touch, Android phone, BlackBerry, Windows Mobile phone, and other handheld devices.

The site, as well as the Mobile UW app for iOS and Android, has campus news, sports scores, videos, and event listings.



## The Second Semester: Stress and Mental Health

The start of spring semester has a very different feel from the “clean-slate excitement” of the fall. For upper-class students, this semester can feel especially stressful. Whether feeling burdened by undertaking a job search or facing difficult academic issues, this time

can be an emotional four months for students.

During this potentially stressful time, students should remember that Counseling and Consultation Services, part of University Health Services (UHS), ensures quick and easy access to mental-health counseling services for students. UHS Counseling and Consultation Services include individual, group, veteran, and couples counseling; psychiatry services; eating disorder, ADHD, and alcohol and other drug assessments; and referrals to appropriate mental-health resources in the community. A number of wellness services also are available, including yoga and meditation classes, nutrition consultations, and stress-management counseling. The UHS website ([www.uhs.wisc.edu](http://www.uhs.wisc.edu)) also provides wellness tips, videos, and audio relaxation resources.

Students may make an appointment to see a UHS counselor by calling 608-265-5600 Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mental-health crisis services are available 24 hours a day at the same telephone number.

## Your student can study with Bucky this summer!

The dead of winter isn't too early for students to make educational plans for summer. UW–Madison offers more than 1,000 credit courses during the summer term, giving students the opportunity to finish degree requirements sooner. Many of these are cutting-edge residential or international programs offered only in the summer.

**How long do summer courses last, and when are they offered?** Summer courses vary from one to 14 weeks. The most popular is the eight-week general session, June 18 through August 12.

**What does summer tuition cost?** Students pay by the credit based on their classification (undergraduate, graduate, professional master's) and residency. For more information, visit the registrar's tuition

website, [registrar.wisc.edu/tuition\\_&\\_fees](http://registrar.wisc.edu/tuition_&_fees), and select Summer 2012 Term/Semester.

**How does my student enroll?** Through the My UW Student Center, the same way students register for fall and spring courses. Summer enrollment begins in late March.

**Where can my student go for questions?** Academic advisors can help students choose the right courses, understand degree requirements and policies, and achieve academic goals.

**How can parents view summer course listings?** View the Summer Schedule of Classes at: [registrar.wisc.edu/schedule\\_of\\_classes\\_students.htm](http://registrar.wisc.edu/schedule_of_classes_students.htm). Select Public Class Search for listings of credit courses offered by every school and college on campus.



## Fall Dean's List Now Online

The Dean's List is among the ways that UW–Madison recognizes the academic excellence of its students. At the conclusion of each semester, high-achieving students are included on the list and generally receive a letter of recognition from schools or colleges. The honor is also noted on student transcripts.

To make the list more accessible to students and parents, the Registrar's Office hosts a searchable website of honorees at [registrar.wisc.edu/deans\\_list.htm](http://registrar.wisc.edu/deans_list.htm).

To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must complete a minimum of 12 graded degree credits during that semester. Each school or college sets its own GPA requirements to receive honors.

Due to privacy laws, questions about a particular student's eligibility for the Dean's List should come from the student, and should be directed to the academic affairs section of the dean's office in the school or college in which the student is enrolled.

Questions about the website or eligibility can also be directed to [deanslist-registrar@em.wisc.edu](mailto:deanslist-registrar@em.wisc.edu).

In addition to the new website, University Communications sends notices of Dean's List honorees to local newspapers across the state and country. Please note that a student must have a valid home address on file with the university for this information to reach a hometown newspaper.

To change hometown listings, students should log in to the Student Center module of My UW–Madison at [my.wisc.edu](http://my.wisc.edu) and select the Personal Information tab.

Announcements are typically sent to the largest-circulation newspaper in the student's home zip code and take several weeks to process after the end of each semester. University Communications also sends a similar list of graduation announcements.

Questions about newspaper publishing schedules are best directed to newspapers. However, resends or problems related to newspaper distribution can be directed to [jplucas@wisc.edu](mailto:jplucas@wisc.edu).

## The Wisconsin Experience in California

The Wisconsin Experience describes what's unique about getting a degree from UW–Madison: that together, we create and apply learning inside and outside the classroom to make the world a better place. That's exactly what happened during this year's Rose Bowl in California.

Cooperation replaced rivalry the day before the Rose Bowl as groups of volunteers from UW–Madison and the University of Oregon wore the same T-shirts and worked side-by-side at a local food pantry in Van Nuys, California. The Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles SOVA Community Food and Resource Program provides free groceries and services to more than 13,000 people of all ages and backgrounds each month. Volunteers, including Dean of Students Lori Berquam, sorted and packed food to prepare for distribution to the organization's clients.

Lauren Gould, a junior from Cedarburg, Wisconsin, who is majoring in elementary education, described

her experience as one of the highlights of her Rose Bowl trip.

"That morning, as I worked side-by-side with Oregon and Wisconsin fans, I felt a new level of Badger pride. I realized moments like this are the Wisconsin Experience: the opportunity to use my UW education to impact communities across the nation."



UW student Molly Morrissey, right, works alongside University of Oregon professor Robert Kyr Sunday at a Los Angeles-area food pantry. Kyr's father played football for the Badgers. Photo: University Communications

## *The First-Year Experience*

### Starting Fresh: Spring-Semester Transitions

Spring semester is an opportunity for students to start fresh — setting new goals academically and socially, seeking out advising to better understand their long-term career goals, and beginning to plan for summer. These spring-semester transitions can seem daunting, but here are some helpful hints to coach your student through the last stretch of the 2011-12 academic year.

As your student continues to mature and evolve into an adult, keep listening, encouraging, and coaching. If your student struggled with academics during fall semester, encourage him or her to access campus resources. House Fellows, in-hall tutors, study groups, and tutoring services such as the **Greater University Tutorial Services (GUTS)** are all excellent resources that are easy to access.

Encourage your student to get to know his or her teaching assistants and professors and to take advantage of office hours. If your student had trouble finding a social niche last fall, encourage him or her to continue reaching out and making friends in classes or in the residence hall, join a **student organization**, or participate in **recreational sports**.

Many students begin to consider a major at this point. Keep in mind that only a few academic areas require a student to declare a major during freshman year to finish in four years. Many students change their minds and their majors at least once; your student may still be undecided or will want to change

direction. **Cross-College Advising Service** offers a wealth of useful information for students who are undecided or considering changing majors.

Parents play an important role in helping students to explore options. Wren Singer, director of undergraduate advising, says that these are the best questions you can ask your student: “What classes do you like? What are you good at? What out-of-class learning experiences might give you an idea about an interesting major?” Asking these questions can help your student identify next steps.

In March, students will receive an e-mail that includes the earliest appointment times for summer and fall enrollment. Encourage your student to plan ahead and make an appointment with an academic advisor to discuss course selection well before his or her assigned enrollment time. Even though some students are not required to see an advisor to register, it is always helpful to consult with advisors — either through group advising sessions or a one-on-one meeting — when making course decisions. Parents are discouraged from contacting advisors and actively selecting courses for their students.

It’s not too early to start asking your student about plans for the summer: will he or she return home, get a job or internship, or stay in Madison to take classes? These questions will help your student plan ahead and consider different options, and can influence your own summer planning, too.

### UW–Madison Launches Voter ID Card, Voter Education Program

Parents can help encourage their students to learn about civic participation by registering and voting.

Recent changes in state law make it necessary for all Wisconsin voters to present a photo ID at the polls. Students who need a photo ID to can obtain a free UW–Madison voter ID card at the Wiscard office in Union South.

Students must present their current Wiscard to receive the supplemental card.

The UW–Madison voter ID card is clearly marked “VOTER IDENTIFICATION,” includes the student’s signature, and expires two years from the issuance date in compliance with a new state voting law. The card is not valid for any other purpose or service on the campus.

Students who are Wisconsin residents and have state-issued driver’s licenses or identification cards, or a passport are able to vote using those forms of identification and do not need the UW–Madison voter ID.

For more details, visit: [www.uc.wisc.edu/vote/](http://www.uc.wisc.edu/vote/)

### Questions about Financial Matters?

Join the Parent Program for a live web chat Wednesday, March 28 from 6-7 p.m. (CST). Topics may include information about work-study opportunities, financial tips for students, eligibility requirements for aid, and filling out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). We encourage participants to submit questions or simply sit back and observe the chat. For those who are unable to participate in the live chat, a complete transcript will be posted the following day at [parent.wisc.edu](http://parent.wisc.edu).

# BADGER FAMILY SPRING VISIT

APRIL 2012

[www.parent.wisc.edu/visit](http://www.parent.wisc.edu/visit)

## Badger Family Spring Visit in April

Badger Family Spring Visit is back! Registration is now open for another activity-filled, family-oriented April. Free or low-cost, family-friendly events are featured throughout the month. Choose a weekend in April to enjoy these entertainment options while taking in the beauty of springtime in Madison. Here are some of the events taking place:

### Science Expeditions (April 14):

Participate in hands-on explorations of science and technology.

### Dane County Farmers' Market (April 14, 21, 28):

Shop at the largest producer-only farmers' market in the country.

### Undergraduate Symposium (April 18):

View the displays and presentations that showcase creativity, achievement, research, and service-learning by more than 400 students.

### Wisconsin Film Festival (April 18–22):

View more than 150 films, showcased in 10 downtown Madison theaters.

### UW Band Concert (April 19–21):

Delight in the extravagant performances of a top collegiate band.

### Midwest Horse Fair (April 21-22):

Visit one of the top three-day horse fairs in America, bringing together all facets of the industry.

### Badger Football Annual Spring Game (April 28):

Support the team, and take part in Jump Around and the Fifth Quarter.

### Crazylegs Classic (April 28):

Join fans of all ages, and participate in this run/walk event that raises money for Badger Athletics.

**New this year**, we have added open houses and a coffee-and-conversation hour as a way for you to connect to campus. For details and times, see the program in your bag or check the website.

Just by registering for this event, you will receive a **complimentary welcome bag** filled with great Wisconsin giveaway items, a parking coupon, a program listing events taking place throughout April, and more.

Don't miss out on these events and attractions, as well as the opportunity to connect with your student. View the complete list of weekend events and reserve your welcome bag by registering at: [www.parent.wisc.edu/visit](http://www.parent.wisc.edu/visit).

Consider making your hotel reservations soon. Blocks will fill up closer to the event. Visit [www.parent.wisc.edu/visit/hotel](http://www.parent.wisc.edu/visit/hotel).

**For more information about this event, call 1-877-262-3977 or e-mail your questions to [parent@uwmad.wisc.edu](mailto:parent@uwmad.wisc.edu).**

**NEW: Try Babcock Dairy's newest ice cream flavor, created just for you: Berry Proud Parent! A red-and-white delight, chocolate and raspberries unite in pure vanilla ice cream to create this Badger treat.**

**We hope to see you in April!**

