



## Time to Talk

For parents and families of new and returning students, August can be extremely hectic. You and your student are likely running errands, buying “must-have” housewares, and beginning the packing process before embarking on the trip to Madison later this month.

At the Parent Program, we know that you’re busy, but we encourage you to add the following important conversations to your summer checklist.

UW-Madison is concerned about all facets of a student’s life on campus. Over the past few years, topics that include safety, high-risk drinking, and student involvement have emerged as areas where parents have key influence, and can play an important, positive role. Whether you are a parent of a new or continuing student, we encourage you to talk with your student about these topics before the fall semester begins.

“Keep in mind that your relationship with your student is already changing,” says Wren Singer, director of the Center for the First-Year Experience. Rather than giving your student directions, she encourages parents to adopt the role of a mentor who uses influence to guide and advise.

“Catch them at a time when they want to talk, and encourage a discussion with gentle questions,” she says, noting that meaningful summer conversations about college life can help begin a smooth transition into new ways of communicating.

“These topics are important, but what you say is less important than the fact that you’re interested and are talking about it with your student,” she adds. “You want to create a line of communication that will remain open throughout the college years.”

**Student involvement.** When new students arrive on campus, parents can support that transition by understanding that students need to shift their mindset toward the actual practice of learning and thinking critically, as opposed to simply completing assignments, papers, and tests, says Aaron Brower, vice provost for teaching and learning.

Students can just attend class and fulfill basic academic requirements, but UW-Madison offers so much more in the way of leadership, cultural, and activism opportunities.

“Compared to high school, college is more challenging, the expectations are greater, and there are longer hours,” says Brower. “But it’s more interesting.

The more you put into it, the more you get out of it.”

In fact, UW-Madison has a history of graduating students who become extraordinary citizens, community members, and national and global leaders. The university has the unique distinction of producing unusually high numbers of Peace Corps and Teach for America volunteers, as well as CEOs of major corporations.

The idea that students can be engaged outside of the classroom in activities that matter is the core philosophy behind the *Wisconsin Experience*. Although every student is different, Brower says that parents can encourage students to become active participants in their education by taking advantage of opportunities such as study abroad, volunteering, or undergraduate research.

The beginning of the fall semester brings a flurry of organizational meetings and activity fairs that students can use to check out their options. Encourage your student to participate in these events and ask what sparked an interest.

**Safety.** Madison is a generally safe community in which to live and work, but it is not immune to the challenges of a growing city, including crime.

Violent crime is relatively rare, but one recent tragedy touched the campus community. Britany Sue Zimmermann, a UW-Madison senior from Marshfield, Wisconsin, was the victim of a homicide in her downtown Madison apartment on the afternoon of April 3, 2008. The case is still under investigation.

UW-Madison is aggressive in its safety efforts, offering a full-service, sworn police department, SAFEride and SAFEwalk nighttime transportation programs, lighted walkways, and emergency telephones. Since many UW-Madison students live off campus, the university works closely with City of Madison Police to collaborate on student safety issues and initiatives.

Dean of Students Lori Berquam leads many safety education and awareness campaigns on campus. Parents can help their student’s understanding of safety



SAFEwalk staff escort a student to a campus location at night. SAFEwalk is a free service available to faculty, staff, and students.

### The Parent Program is here for you.

www.parent.wisc.edu  
parent@uwmad.wisc.edu  
608-262-3977  
877-262-3977

Parent Program staff:  
Nancy Sandhu  
Patti Lux-Weber  
Julie Bohl  
Megan Buboltz  
Kim Mueller



## Time to Talk (continued)

issues by talking about ways to reduce risk, and Berquam encourages parents to frequently follow up on safety matters, checking in throughout the semester.

"It's important to help displace fear with greater awareness of the safety resources we have in place as a campus and community," Berquam says. "Students can take a measure of responsibility for their personal safety. Crime is never the fault of the victim, but there are easy steps students can take to decrease their risk."

The most important messages for students to remember are:

- Never walk alone to or from campus, especially at night; use the SAFE services offered on campus.
- Lock your doors or windows, even if you're home.
- Carry a cell phone and dial 911 for help.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and use common sense. Report suspicious activity as soon as you observe it.
- Use the "buddy system": travel together and stay together.

Lastly, ask your student if he or she has signed up to receive WiscAlerts-Text Messages about campus emergencies. Students can log into the My UW Portal and input their cellular phone numbers.

**Alcohol.** One of the most important conversations to have with your student is on the topic of alcohol. Now living on their own—many for the first time—students will have newfound freedoms and responsibilities. The first few weeks of the fall semester are critical, as high-risk drinking is more prevalent.

The availability of alcohol and its excessive consumption is an issue that all college campuses struggle with. UW–Madison is especially concerned about the negative consequences of high-risk drinking, for the drinker and also for his or her friends, roommates, and classmates.

Research shows that these consequences can include disrupted sleep or studies; unplanned and unprotected sexual contact; sexual or physical violence; vandalism; or even nights that end at the detoxification center.

Brower, who also heads the campus PACE Project to reduce high-risk drinking, encourages parents to approach the topic in a way that fits their own style and relationship with their student.

First and foremost, it is important to note that many students choose not to drink alcohol while at UW–

Madison. There are hundreds of social activities that do not involve drinking, including joining one of 700-plus student organizations and/or an educationally-focused fraternity or sorority, attending residence hall events or late-night activities offered at the student unions, working out at our recreational facilities, volunteering, or getting a job on campus or in the community.

The legal drinking age in Wisconsin is 21. Underage drinking is against the law in Wisconsin and can carry significant legal, academic, and financial consequences.

We recommend that parents initiate conversations about alcohol from a safety perspective, asking students to develop a safety plan for themselves and friends. Talking about how excessive alcohol use is directly linked to personal health, safety, and academic success is a good way to open the conversation.

Discussing campus and community transportation options, individual drink limits, and safety responses for persons who are passed out or ill, are often good opening topics that can lead to deeper conversations about the effects of alcohol. Realize that setting "hard" limits may make a student feel uncomfortable ever discussing the topic in the future, especially if he or she has tried drinking or believes that you may be judgmental.

Another way to approach the issue is to talk frequently with your student about the person he or she wants to become and wants to accomplish while on campus, Brower says. For most students, accomplishing their academic and personal goals at UW–Madison is difficult, if not impossible, when also balancing a heavy load of partying.

UW–Madison strongly encourages students to complete the e-Chug program at home before coming to campus. E-Chug is available through the University Health Services Web site and will provide your student with personalized feedback and education about alcohol use. (See [www.uhs.wisc.edu](http://www.uhs.wisc.edu); search for E-chug.)

"Ultimately, we want students to learn from their experiences and mistakes, and begin making the right decisions," Brower says.

For more information about these topics, including additional tips on how to start and continue these conversations, visit the Parent Program Web site or contact Parent Program staff.

*"Students can take a measure of responsibility for their personal safety ... there are easy steps students can take to decrease their risk."*



## Carolyn “Biddy” Martin Appointed New Chancellor



Carolyn “Biddy” Martin was recently named chancellor of UW–Madison, succeeding John D. Wiley, who has led campus since 2001.

Martin served as provost at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., since 2000. Prior

to that, she spent four years as senior associate dean in Cornell’s College of Arts and Sciences. A professor of German studies and women’s studies, she served as the chair of the Department of German Studies from 1994–97.

Martin received her doctorate in German literature at the UW–Madison and has been on the faculty at Cornell since 1985. She begins in the post this month and plans to introduce herself to students at the Chancellor’s Convocation for New Students on August 29.

## Textbooks

Students can purchase textbooks and other course materials from a variety of sources. To find out what textbooks they need in advance, students can check the University Book Store or Underground Textbook Exchange Web sites. Shortly before classes begin, some faculty will e-mail the syllabus, which lists course materials and locations for purchase, and/or post it online at Learn @ UW (<https://learnuw.wisc.edu>). Keep in mind there are sometimes “required” and “recommended” materials, so it can be advantageous to wait until after the first day of class before purchasing books.

Textbooks can be expensive, but below are some cost-saving alternatives.

- Look early for used copies, being careful to purchase the correct textbook edition.
- Shop at an online marketplace such as Amazon, eBay, or Exchange Hut. Again,

be sure to purchase the correct edition.

- With support from the UW Foundation Parent Fund, the campus libraries keep some copies of high-cost textbooks on reserve.

Students may also be required to purchase course packets, lab equipment, and/or art materials. These items are available at campus or local stores.

Please note that the bookstores and online marketplaces listed above are private companies not affiliated with or endorsed by UW–Madison.

## Student Employment at UW–Madison

Working a part-time job often proves to be a very important and beneficial piece of student life, both financially and for learning valuable time-management skills. In fact, studies have shown that students who have a job while taking classes receive higher grades because they learn how to effectively budget their time. Many campus positions can be scheduled around your student’s class schedule with a reasonable time commitment; in fact, University Housing has positions available in which students work as few as seven hours each week.

Whether working in a residence hall, food service line, office setting, or a position related to an academic interest, student employment can enhance the college experience. Many campus divisions recruit and hire over the summer for jobs in the following school year, so encourage your student to begin job hunting today.

For more information about student employment, visit [www.jobcenter.wisc.edu](http://www.jobcenter.wisc.edu) or [www.housing.wisc.edu/jobs](http://www.housing.wisc.edu/jobs).



Student Photographers, courtesy of University Housing

## August 14 and 15: Off-Campus Moving Days

Every year on August 14 and 15, thousands of students move in and out of apartments and houses throughout downtown Madison. This is an exciting time, especially for those students who are moving off campus for the first time. Below are some ideas on how to help the process go smoothly, including ways you can be supportive of your student during this important transition.

### Students should develop a plan

- Students currently residing in Madison may want to consider moving the bulk of their possessions out early to make move-out day easier. They can donate usable, unwanted items at Goodwill and St. Vincent de Paul Society satellite donation centers strategically placed in the downtown area. Students should correctly dispose of recyclables and trash following City of Madison policies.
- If a moving truck is needed, reserve it well in advance. Some students choose to pool resources and split the cost of a larger truck and/or share personal or family vehicles.
- Have all paperwork and payments for their property owner or management company taken care of ahead of time to make move-in day check-in go more smoothly.
- Set up any utilities in advance to help ensure that they are available at move in.
- Consider coordinating move-in times with roommates and/or plan a move for off hours—if possible, avoid first thing in the morning and noon time, as they tend to be the busiest.
- Encourage your student to discuss shared responsibilities and their approach to keeping their new home safe and secure with his or her roommates. The Tenant Resource Center offers a roommate agreement form that students can complete and sign ([www.tenantresourcecenter.org](http://www.tenantresourcecenter.org)).
- Students are strongly encouraged to have their personal property insured. If property



cannot be insured under your policy and you are not able to add them as a rider to extend coverage to them, students are encouraged to take out a renter's insurance policy. Students may also want to consider renting or buying a closet safe so that they can secure their valuables.

- Students should talk with their property owner or management company if they find themselves with 12 to 24 hours between when they need to move out of one apartment/house and into their new one. Sometimes they are able to negotiate the move-in or move-out time.

#### Advice to parents on moving day

- Students appreciate the help of friends and family during this hectic time period. Offer to provide a vehicle, storage, and/or lend a helping hand. This is a great opportunity to involve siblings!
- Be patient and work cooperatively with everyone you encounter, including property owner and management company staff as well as future neighbors to help the process go as smoothly as possible. Anticipate that unexpected things will arise.
- Stay positive about your student's housing decision. Expect that your student's new home may not be perfect—Downtown Madison properties range from one to 150 years of age. In addition, the previous resident may have just moved out, and may not have left the property in the condition you would hope for. Students should keep cleaning supplies handy when moving in.

- Allow enough time for loading and unloading. There are a number of ongoing road and building construction projects happening in the downtown area that may affect moving day. For current information, visit the city of Madison traffic alerts Web site: [www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/TrafficAlerts/index.cfm](http://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/TrafficAlerts/index.cfm) and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation highway construction projects Web site: [www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/road/workzones.htm](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/road/workzones.htm).
- Encourage your student to keep property safe and secure by not propping open doors or leaving valuables unattended.
- Finding a place to park and unload can be difficult. If long-term parking is needed, check posted signs; some offer on-street parking while others are more restrictive. Your student's property owner or management company may be able to help.
- Encourage your student to thoroughly complete a check-in form upon move-in and keep a copy for his or her records. Students should take photos of areas of concern. If the property owner or management company does not provide this form, your student can download one from the Tenant Resource Center Web site. Students should promptly notify property owners of issues with outdoor lighting, smoke detectors, and locks.

For more information about the overall move-in process and the resources listed above, contact the Parent Program.

### August 27 or 28: University Housing Move-In

The University Residence Halls Web site features updated information for families to help you plan your move—including tips for moving day, measurements for carpeting and futons, driving directions that factor in campus construction, parking information, and more.

Visit: [www.housing.wisc.edu/parents](http://www.housing.wisc.edu/parents)

#### Did you know?

Students can now leave their cars, the hassle of parking, and the high cost of gas at home! On the occasion that they need to leave campus, Community Car is available for their use. Community Car is a member-based carsharing service that provides high-gas-mileage and hybrid-electric vehicles by the hour. Students aged 19 and older are eligible to become members.

For more information on transportation alternatives visit the Parent Program Web site [www.parent.wisc.edu](http://www.parent.wisc.edu) and click on "Transportation and Parking."

## The First-Year Experience

### First-Year Parents' Weekend

Parents of new UW students are invited to campus for First-Year Parents' Weekend, November 14–16, 2008. Develop your connection to UW–Madison and actively participate in your student's experience by exploring campus, interacting with staff and faculty, supporting the Badgers during a Big Ten football game, and more!

Invitations to First-Year Parents' Weekend will be mailed from the Wisconsin Alumni Association in August with instructions for online registration. Please visit the Web site [uwalumni.com/fpw](http://uwalumni.com/fpw) for full details on package options, pricing, hotel accommodations, parking, and FAQs for this event. Questions or concerns may be directed to the Wisconsin Alumni Association toll free 888/WIS-ALUM or e-mailed to [fpw@uwalumni.com](mailto:fpw@uwalumni.com).

Additional information on where to stay during First-Year Parents' Weekend is available through the Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau by phone, 800/373-6376 ext. 3957, or by e-mail, [senz@visitmadison.com](mailto:senz@visitmadison.com).

### What to Bring to Campus: Hear from the Students!

As move-in day approaches, parents may wonder what might have been overlooked. Will their student have everything he or she needs for the year? To help, we conducted an informal survey of some current undergraduate students and asked for suggestions on what to bring to campus and what to leave at home. Here is a sampling:

"I wish that I would not have brought a car. I had a car my second year in the residence halls and it was a nightmare. I had to move it every other day and got plenty of parking tickets. Use the bus!"  
—Andrea L.

"I couldn't have lived without those 3M sticky hooks for my holiday lights. Also, I couldn't have lived without my reusable battery pack with the charger for my wireless keyboard, mouse, and digital camera."  
—Sarah H.

"I was the only one on my floor who thought to bring a hand-held can opener."  
—Mary M.

"I could not have survived without pictures of my friends and family from home plastered on my walls and bulletin board. It reminded me of the good times from high school and home when I felt home-

sick. Bring LOTS of underwear so you can do laundry less frequently. Bring slippers: I walked everywhere in my hall with them."  
—Christie R.

"I'm glad I had earplugs because my roommate snored."  
—Kyle L.

"I didn't need to bring all of my clothes and shoes from home, since the "closet rotation" could be done at Thanksgiving break and it would have given me more room. I would have loved to have good-quality winter and rain boots."  
—Marissa L.

"I wish we had brought a box fan to put in the window. It can get hot without air conditioning!"  
—Matt E.

"I absolutely could not live without my water-filter pitcher. It was so nice to have fresh, cold water right in my room!"  
—Julie B.

For more information about what to bring to campus, visit the Parent Program Web site or contact Parent Program staff.

### Wisconsin Welcome

As your student prepares to move in this fall, you may be looking for ways to encourage getting involved when he or she arrives on campus.

The Center for the First-Year Experience encourages your student to participate in the many Wisconsin Welcome events offered the first month of the semester. During Wisconsin Welcome, your student will attend student socials, academic orientations and welcomes, and a tailgate and 5th Quarter. These activities (plus many more) are a great way for your student to meet people, learn about campus and adjust to life at UW–Madison.

Beginning in mid-August, students can visit the Wisconsin Welcome Web site [www.newstudent.wisc.edu/wiwelcome](http://www.newstudent.wisc.edu/wiwelcome) to learn about various campus events and create a personalized calendar.





### Survey Results

In a recent survey, we asked parents to reflect on which of their student's accomplishments from the previous academic year made them the most proud. Of the 96 parents who responded, 62 percent

indicated academics, 18 percent responded that their student was more independent, 9 percent were proud of their student's time-management skills, and 7 percent indicated that they could not choose just one area because their student excelled in many. Several parents commented that they were impressed by their student's personal growth and healthy balance of academics, employment, community service, and social life.

We appreciate your honest feedback! Please visit the Parent Program Web site to reply to our latest question and see what other parents are saying. View comments from previous survey questions at [www.parent.wisc.edu](http://www.parent.wisc.edu).

Produced by the Parent Program and University Communications.  
Funding provided by the UW Foundation.  
Photos by University Communications, except where noted.

### A Note from Parent Program Staff

As we enter our second year, we're pleased to announce that you are one of more than 7,600 families who are a part of the Parent Program. We are thrilled to work in partnership with you to help your student make the most of his or her *Wisconsin Experience*. College can be a time of joy and discovery, as well as stress and anxiety. We believe that parents and family members—along with faculty, staff, and fellow students—are part of an important support network that assists students in coping with and overcoming the challenges they may face during their college career.

We know how influential you can be in the life of your student. It is our goal to provide regular and honest information about key issues your student may be facing at different times during the academic year. In turn, we hope that you will continue to offer encouragement and support as your student embarks on his or her transition to adulthood.

If you have questions about a topic that is not included in our newsletter, visit us online at [www.parent.wisc.edu](http://www.parent.wisc.edu) or contact us directly by e-mail, [parent@uwmad.wisc.edu](mailto:parent@uwmad.wisc.edu), or phone, 877/262-3977.

Thank you for being a part of the UW-Madison community. We look forward to connecting with you throughout the year!

