Vice President’s Welcome

As the Vice President of Student Affairs, I am delighted that the University of Florida is able to provide the Florida Opportunity Scholarship to so many talented first-generation college students, such as your sons and daughters.

You should be proud of what these outstanding students have already accomplished, and I am certain many of them will leave their mark upon this university.

As a family member of a Florida Opportunity Scholar, you probably have a number of questions. In addition to wanting to know about UF policies and procedures, you may be wondering how you can best support your student and what your student can expect in college.

It is my hope that this Florida Opportunity Scholars Family Newsletter, which we plan to send out twice a year to the families of first-year students, will provide you with useful information that will enable you to begin to answer these questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Patricia Telles-Irvin
Vice President for Student Affairs

UPCOMING CRITICAL DATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>November 22</td>
<td>Deadline to Drop or Withdraw from a Class</td>
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<td>November 25-27</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday - No Class</td>
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<td>December 8</td>
<td>Classes End</td>
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<td>December 11-17</td>
<td>Final Exam Week</td>
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<td>December 18</td>
<td>Residence Halls Close</td>
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<td>December 21</td>
<td>Final Grades Available Online on ISIS</td>
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<td>Dec. 24 - Jan. 2</td>
<td>University of Florida Closed</td>
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<td>January 3</td>
<td>Residence Halls Open</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 5</td>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 11</td>
<td>Drop/Add Period Ends</td>
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<td>January 17</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Day - No Class</td>
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<td>March 5-12</td>
<td>Spring Break - No Class</td>
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Families are an integral part of a student’s life and whether students admit it or not, they value their family’s support. Knowing how to support your student may be difficult at times, but we are here to help direct you to resources which will enrich your student’s experience. Here are just a few of the many resources available to support your student. The University of Florida provides ample opportunities for students who are looking for academic advising and support. Often, students wait until too late in the semester to seek out help, so please encourage your student to ask for assistance as soon as possible.

Academic Advising

Each UF college offers major-specific advising for students who plan to pursue a degree in one of its departments or areas of study. These advisors offer a wealth of knowledge to students, from course selection to college and university policies to what options are available to them under virtually any circumstance they encounter. Please encourage your student to discover what the college advising office has to offer. A helpful place to start is the UF advising Web site, www.ufadvising.ufl.edu. Contact: (352) 392-1521.

Tutoring

UF’s Teaching Center offers free tutoring to students in many of the subject areas in which students frequently experience difficulties, including math and chemistry. The Teaching Center, located in Broward Residence Hall is also the home of the UF Reading and Writing Center, which provides additional assistance to students who are interested in improving their college-level reading and writing skills. The Teaching Center Web site address is www.teachingcenter.ufl.edu. Contact: (352) 392-2010.

Academic Departments and/or Individual Instructors

Many UF academic departments offer help that is tailored to the specific course in which your student is enrolled. In fact, among the most helpful resources for students are their course instructors, who are available for office hours and by appointment throughout the week. Though many students are reluctant to approach their instructors with questions, most professors are concerned about their students’ academic success and will go out of their way to assist students in any way that they can. Please encourage students to either go to their instructors’ office hours, or to schedule an appointment to meet with them in person. Phone calls and emails are never as productive as face-to-face interaction.

FOS REQUIREMENTS

- Florida Opportunity Scholar Checklist
- Maintain a 2.0 GPA
- Earn a minimum of 24 UF credit hours by the end of Spring Semester
- Take First-Year Florida, the first year student seminar course at UF, in their first year at UF
- Connect with their FOS peer mentor
- Attend two Financial Literacy Workshops, one in the Fall and one Spring Semesters
- Renew the FAFSA by March 15, 2011

For questions regarding FOS please contact:

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155 Tigert Hall
P.O. Box 113250
Gainesville, FL 32611-3250
(352) 392-1265
lesliep@ufsa.ufl.edu
OAS Workshop
The Office of Academic Support (OAS) program will be having their Keys to Success workshop in Weimer Hall 100 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on November 18. This workshop helps students achieve academic success. During the workshop, students will be given tips and strategies on how to study for their exams. Mentors will share personal experiences and tips on how to properly prepare for exams as well. Please encourage your student to attend. Contact: (352) 392-0788

Changing Majors
If your student decides to change majors, we recommend that he or she makes the most informed decision possible by utilizing the Career Resource Center (352-392-1601, www.crc.ufl.edu). The Career Resource Center (CRC) provides help in many areas, including developing a résumé, finding internships, searching for a job, interviewing for jobs, and preparing for graduate school. In order to officially change their major, your student needs to meet with their current college advisor. For a complete list of colleges advising departments, please visit http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/soa/advisers.html.

Personal, Academic, and Career Concerns
Student have to make many important decisions while in college about career, friendships and their future. It is normal for students to experience some stress during their college years. However, if you notice your student withdrawing from friends or family, acting abnormally or beginning to engage in unhealthy patterns of behavior, recommend that he/she speak to a counselor. The Counseling & Wellness Center (352-392-1575, www.counseling.ufl.edu) provides free and confidential counseling for students.

Disability Resources
The Disability Resource Center (DRC) (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc) provides services to students with physical, learning, sensory or psychological disabilities. DRC educates students about their legal rights and responsibilities so they can make informed decisions. The DRC provides quiet test taking environments and additional time to complete test if it’s determined that a student needs such accommodations.

Student Health Care Center
The Student Health Care Center (SHCC) responds to students who need treatment for illness, shots including the free flu vaccine, and prescriptions and pharmaceutical needs. Encourage your student to check visit the SHCC if they are sick and to check the Web site at http://www.shcc.ufl.edu/ for flu shot updates. Contact: (352) 392-1161

First Final Exams
The time just before students’ first final college exams can often provide a great deal of stress and anxiety as they anticipate how the exam will be structured and how much time they must devote to studying. Exam success in high school or earlier course exams doesn’t always translate into success on final college exams because of the amount of course content often covered on final exams.

How can you help your student? Talk about how classes are going. Encourage your student to regularly attend class and exam review sessions that may be offered. Also encourage your student to take breaks while studying. A walk around campus or a short power nap can help them stay focused and energized.

How can students help themselves? It’s advisable for students to start studying early. In addition to spending enough time studying, students can seek out other resources on campus, including:

- Peer study groups
- Tutoring
- Professor/Instructor/Graduate Assistant
- Exam reviews, depending on the class

Homesickness
Leaving home for the first time may be exciting at first, but for many students, homesickness hits sometime during the fall semester.

How can you help your student? Listen to your student’s concerns. Be encouraging. Let your student know she or he is not alone by sending letters or care packages. Suggestion your student visit home periodically, but don’t encourage that they come home every weekend. It’s important that students start to feel connected to UF and to Gainesville during their first year. Going home every weekend does not allow for this connection to happen. Be patient as your student adjusts to a new environment; encourage your student to get involved, but recognize that it may take time. Suggest they discuss this with their peer mentor or meet with Leslie Pendleton, director of the program.

How can students help themselves? Getting involved helps combat homesickness. Students can participate in campus activities, residence hall activities, and other events where they can begin to feel more at home at UF. GATORNIGHTS! is one of our more popular events which takes place every Friday night at the Reitz Union. It’s a great opportunity for your student to make new friends or try new activities. Also, if your student wishes to talk to someone, counseling services are available.

Latoya Christopher
4th year, Communications Sciences & Disorders Major
Tampa, FL

“Life as a first generation student at UF was an eye opening and valuable experience for me. When I was a first-year student, I was nervous and scared of how well I would adapt college life. I joined organizations and got involved with clubs and organizations that sparked my interest. Being first in my family to attend college has taught me how to be fearless, confident, adjust to change and learn about myself. I am happy to call UF my home!”

Rochelle Rolle
4th year, Food & Resource Economics Major
Orlando, FL

I never thought I’d moved to New York City to pursue a master’s degree after my time at UF. Thanks to FOS, I am considering PhD programs because I love school and I love making my family proud. UF prepared me academically, emotionally, and socially. Now, everyday I am settling an example for children who aspire to go to college someday too. My advice for parents is to unconditionally love and support your student to achieve their dreams - even if it means moving far away to New York City!

Juan S. Rojas
4th year, Food & Resource Economics Major
Orlando, FL

Life as a first-generation student at UF was challenging for me. There are so many new things to learn and both my parents and I found it confusing. However, I suggest you, as family members, try your best to support your student emotionally. We miss you when we’re not at home and when you call and are interested in us, it goes a long way! If it weren’t for my family’s interest in my experience here, I may not have made it to my senior year!