Critical Dates

- Workshop: How to Achieve Success in Math and Science at Pugh Hall Room 170
  October 6, 5:10 p.m.
- Family Weekend
  October 21-23
- No Classes, Homecoming
  November 4-5
- No Classes, Veteran’s Day
  November 11
- Drop or Withdraw without Failing Grades
  November 21
- No Classes, Thanksgiving
  November 24-26
- Residence Halls Close at 4 p.m.
  December 7
- Residence Halls Open at Noon
  December 10, 12-16
- Class End
  December 12
- Finals
  January 5
- Spring Semester Classes Begin
  January 9

Notes from the Director: Leslie Pendleton

I am delighted that the University of Florida is able to provide the Florida Opportunity Scholarship to so many talented first-generation college students.

You should be proud of what your outstanding student has already accomplished. I am certain your student will leave a 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,
Leslie Pendleton
Director of the Florida Opportunity Scholars Program

FOS Fun Fact

Florida Opportunity Scholars are from all over the state of Florida, representing 48 out of 67 counties.

Academic Advising

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. Please encourage your student 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. Your student should be prepared to tell instructors exactly what he or she needs help with. Some students are shy in asking for help, but many professors are concerned about their students' academic success and will go out of their way to assist students. If your student is having difficulty in a course, please encourage him or her to 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.

Changing Majors

If your student decides to change majors, we recommend that he or she make a decision as early as possible by utilizing the Career Resource Center (CRC) provides help in many areas, including developing a resume, finding internships, searching for a job, interviewing, and preparing for graduate school. In order to officially change their major, your student needs to meet with their current college academic advisor. For a complete list of colleges advising departments, please visit registrar.ufl.edu/soa/advisers.html.

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. 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 Departments and/or Individual Instructors

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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, uadvising.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 teachingcenter.ufl.edu. Contact: (352) 392-2010

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The Office of Academic Support has been charged with the mission to provide academic and personal enrichment programs and services for all UF students who are interested and would benefit. A primary objective of OAS is to serve students who are first-generation, low-income, AIM, or from underrepresented groups at UF. All UF students are welcome to participate in the activities of OAS. OAS’s services support the success of students who participate and the broad diversity of the student body, which are important to the achievement of UF’s educational, research and service mission. Learn more online at oas.aa.ufl.edu/

Workshop 2 OAS Blueprint to UF Courses October 19 in McCarty A G186
Workshop 3 Networking (Speed Dating) November 16 in Ustler Hall
Workshop 4 Healthy Gators: Wellness December 5 in McCarty A G186

Personal, Academic, and Career Concerns

Students 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 abnormal or engaging in unhealthy patterns of behavior, recommend that he/she speak to a counselor. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides free and confidential counseling for students. Learn more - contact 352-392-1575 or visit counseling.ufl.edu.

Disability Resources

The Disability Resource Center (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 tests if it’s determined that a student needs such accommodations. Learn more - contact 352-392-8565 or visit dso.ufl.edu/drc.

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 visit the SHCC if they are sick and to check the Web site at shcc.ufl.edu for flu shot updates. Contact (352) 392-1161

U Matter, We Care

The U Matter, We Care initiative was created to help students if they are in distress or if they see a friend, classmate, teammate, or a roommate in trouble. Let your student know about this program and encourage him/her to reach out. Students can call 352-294-CARE or email umatter@ufl.edu to get help for themselves or another member of the campus community. Learn more at umatter.ufl.edu/

Student Organization

The FOS Student Organization is open to all UF students, but caters to First Generation University undergraduates. The purpose of the group is to build community among the scholars through social events, and campus awareness, give back to the Gainesville and UF community, and provide students with the necessary skills to have a smooth transition out of college. Membership is free. Students can activate their membership by emailing skye@uofs.ufl.edu.

Martin “Marty” Parks
UF class of 2011; BA in Math and Statistics
Hometown: West Palm Beach
The Florida Opportunity Scholars Program has allowed me to freely explore majors and career options. I’ve been able to find my true passions, music and math, and have used them to help other students as a tutor at the Broward Teaching Center on campus. I graduated from UF with a job offer and the and the knowledge that I assisted my peers.

I’m now working as a full-time technical consultant at EPIC, a healthcare software company, in Madison, WI.

Alex Klein
UF class of 2011; BA in Communication Sciences & Disorders
Hometown: Orlando
The Florida Opportunity Scholars Program not only gave me the financial support I needed to be successful in college, it made me feel part of something bigger than myself. I knew I had a community at UF.

Currently, I am in my 2nd year of my Doctor of Audiology program at the University of South Florida and just received my white coat. Recently I was recognized for performing the best academically in my class. I’m thrilled to have found a field I’m passionate about and can excel in.

Harnard Sinclair
UF class of 2011; BS in Telecommunications
Hometown: Ft. Lauderdale
The Florida Opportunity Scholars Program allowed me to realize the importance of being an independent learner. I was able to take courses which challenged me to effectively communicate my point of view.

I started Syracuse University for graduate school in TV, Radio and Film Production this fall. I hope to work behind the camera with sports news.

Common Issues

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. Suggest your student visit home periodically, but don’t encourage that they come home every weekend. It is 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. GATORIGHTS! 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. Contact the Counseling & Wellness Center at 352-392-1575 or online at counseling.ufl.edu.

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