

# COLLEGE CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR RAIDER

UNIVERSITY OF  
**MOUNT  
UNION**

Welcome to the University of Mount Union! While the beginning of college life is exciting, we know it can also be stressful. This guide is here to support you, and your student, as they begin their adventure at UMU.



# STARTING A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION WITH YOUR STUDENT

Your student relies on your advice and support, even if it doesn't seem like it. During this transition, offer reasonable, supportive guidance while respecting their independence. Honest, non-judgmental conversations and active listening are key to healthy communication. Starting these discussions now will foster meaningful dialogue throughout their college journey. First, take some time to check-in with yourself and your own expectations of Mount Union.

## ASK YOURSELF

- What initial expectations do you have as your student begins their college experience (both social and academic)?
- What preconceived notions do you have about college- either based on your own experience, that of other friends or family members, or media - and how does that impact your expectations?
- How will you give your student the space to create their own college experience but still be present and supportive?

## ROSE, BUD, THORN

An easy way to start a conversation with your student about how they feel regarding their upcoming college experience is by using the Rose, Bud, Thorn activity. Rose, Bud, Thorn can be particularly beneficial as it provides a structured way to reflect on your student's transition to college and the changes it brings for both your student and yourself. Here's an example:

**Rose** - Something your student is excited about/ a highlight of UMU  
Example: "I love the people here and the campus is beautiful."

**Bud** - An area where your student can grow in  
Example: "I know that college is going to be a little bit harder than high school, I'll need to find study habits that work well for me."

**Thorn** - Something that may be bringing your student stress  
Example: "I am really nervous to be away from home."

After you and your student have talked through this activity, take a moment to reflect on their responses and ask how you can best support them as prepare to transition to college life.

## ACADEMIC LIFE

Adjusting to a new academic setting can be challenging, regardless of how well a student may have done in high school. During this time of change, the key to success is reaching out for help when needed.

### ASK YOUR STUDENT

- What strategies will you use to stay organized?
- If you don't do well on a test, what will you do? Who on campus can best support you in that moment?
- If you feel like you aren't staying on top of your workload and need some extra help with your courses, where can you go for help?
- Are you making time for breaks while you study? How are you avoiding burnout?
- If you are struggling with a paper or presentation, where can you get help?
- How much time do you need to dedicate to studying for each class and what is your plan for when, where, and how you are going to make that happen?

## FERPA- WHAT IS IT?

FERPA (The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) protects your student's rights to have exclusive access to their educational records. Family members are encouraged to communicate with their students regarding the student's academic progress, program of study, grades or any other information about their educational record or experience. Family members wishing to obtain a student's record should obtain that information directly from the student. In the event that the student does not have ready-access to information, upon request, UMU can supply that information to the student who, in turn, can share it with whomever they wish.

# CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

Becoming involved on campus is crucial in providing a smooth transition into the college world. Campus involvement provides students with opportunities to find their niche, develop their social skills, learn effective time management strategies, and most importantly, explore their interests.

## ASK YOUR STUDENT

- What do you do for fun on campus?
- Are you finding things to do on campus or getting involved in any clubs?
- Have you had trouble meeting new people? Who are your friends?
- If applicable: How are you getting along with your roommate? Have you gotten to know your RA?

# PHYSICAL HEALTH

College students are excited to be in a new place with new people. Between making new friends, exploring their interests around campus, attending classes, and studying, students sometimes forget about the possibility of unexpected illnesses. While most college students are generally healthy, it is still important to be prepared for these situations.

## ASK YOUR STUDENT

- Are you getting enough sleep, eating well, and keeping yourself healthy?
- What's your plan if you get sick?
- Do you know where the Health Center is located and how to get there?
- Do you know how you would get medicine if you needed it (over the counter or prescription)?

# PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Having a conversation with your student regarding their substance use in college is an essential conversation that can promote responsible choices. Conversations that revolve this topic may be tricky and hard to navigate, but these meaningful discussions about the realities of alcohol and drug use are great opportunities to discuss how your student can keep themselves educated and aware.

## ASK YOUR STUDENT

- If your friends are drinking or using drugs and you don't want to, how will you handle that?
- Who can you reach out to for help if you or someone you know is struggling with substance use issues?

All new students entering the University of Mount Union are required to complete an online course which is designed to address the risks that college students face with regard to alcohol, other drugs, and sexual misconduct. It is an evidence-based training program that both promotes healthy decision-making and serves to introduce them to our policies and practices.

Your student will receive an email in early August with a link to access these courses well before the start of classes - please encourage them to get this done before school begins when they will be busy with so many other things!

## TITLE IX

The University of Mount Union ensures that members of our community are not subjected to sexual misconduct, relationship violence, or any discriminatory harassment on the basis of sex and gender. UMU has policies, procedures, and resources to prevent and address these issues, in accordance with Title IX (a federal civil rights law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in federally funded education programs and activities).

# MENTAL HEALTH

Mount Union Counseling aims to assist students in working on their social and emotional health. Counseling is a partnership between client and counselor, meant to help students find solutions and possibilities in life. Counseling Services can assist with issues such as transitioning to college, stress, relationships, conflict management, anxiety, and depression. State-licensed counselors help Mount Union students move toward life goals while teaching the coping skills needed for the future through free and confidential services. Our counselors are here to listen, support, and guide students through any difficulties, ensuring they have the resources they need to thrive during their time at Mount Union.

## ASK YOUR STUDENT

- How do you know when you're stressed? Do you have any triggers?
- How will you cope with stressful situations while on campus?
- How will you know when it's time to reach out to Counseling?
- How can I best support you while you're away from home?
- Would you like me to check in with you? How often?

# CAMPUS RESOURCES

We are thrilled to welcome you and your student to Mount Union! Your decision to join this community marks the beginning of an enriching and transformative educational journey. As your student embarks on this new adventure, here are some resources that they may benefit them throughout their time at UMU:



## CAMPUS RESOURCES

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|---|--|
| • <b><u>Academic Support</u></b> 330-823-8685           | • <b><u>IT Helpdesk</u></b> 330-829-8726                           |
| • <b><u>Accessibility Services</u></b> 330-823-7372     | • <b><u>New Student &amp; Leadership Programs</u></b> 330-829-6815 |
| • <b><u>Athletics</u></b> 330-823-8224                  | • <b><u>Purple Plu\$ Card</u></b> 330-829-6518                     |
| • <b><u>Campus Security</u></b> 330-428-1344            | • <b><u>Registrar</u></b> 330-823-6018                             |
| • <b><u>Career Development</u></b> 330-829-8211         | • <b><u>Residence Life</u></b> 330-823-7288                        |
| • <b><u>Center for Student Success</u></b> 330-823-8685 | • <b><u>Student Accounts</u></b> 330-823-6554                      |
| • <b><u>Counseling Services</u></b> 330-823-2886        | • <b><u>Student Financial Aid</u></b> 330-823-2674                 |
| • <b><u>Dean of Students' Office</u></b> 330-823-2243   | • <b><u>Student Engagement</u></b> (330) 823-3196                  |
| • <b><u>Health Center</u></b> 330-596-7995              |  |
| • <b><u>Information Desk</u></b> 330-821-5320           |  |

# ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Your decision to join the Mount Union community marks the beginning of an enriching and transformative educational journey. As your student embarks on this new adventure, there are a multitude of academic resources that your student may benefit from throughout their time at UMU:

## ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- Faculty
- Go-To Raiders
- First Year Seminar Instructors/Advisors
- Office of Academic Support
- Tutoring & Academic Peer Coaching
- Student Accessibility Services
- Digital, Written & Oral Communication Studio (DWOC)

# CONTINUING THE CONVERSATIONS

We know that the time leading up to college and throughout the first semester, especially the first six weeks or so, can be challenging as both you and your student are dealing with a major life transition - and that can be stressful! But, if you keep the conversations going by remaining supportive and maintaining open lines of communication, it will be beneficial. What that looks like will be different for everyone depending on what methods or style of communication work best for you and your student- as well as the expectations you establish now. While one student may appreciate a family member checking in on them weekly or even daily, others may find this to be too much. So, the one final question we suggest you ask is what expectations do you have of each other when it comes to keeping in touch and maintaining regular contact with one another.

And, don't forget, the faculty and staff at the University of Mount Union are here for you as well - don't ever hesitate to reach out to any of the many resources listed above if you have a question or are in need of some information.

Welcome to the Raider family!