



## FGCU Parents &amp; Family Newsletter

December 2007

*Dear FGCU Parents and Families,*

It is hard to believe that the end of this semester and the year 2007 are almost here! What an exciting year we've had this year; welcoming the class of 2011, celebrating FGCU's 10th year of academic excellence, and starting a new era with a new president, Dr. Wilson G. Bradshaw. With the renewed hopes and the commitment to the high achievements in the future, we look forward to another great year here at FGCU and the year 2008!

Happy Holidays and a Happy and Healthy New Year!



Sincerely,

*Paula Machlin*

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Coordinator Parent Relations and Outreach

**Important Dates**

<i>Last Day of Fall 2007 Classes</i>	<i>12/3</i>
<i>Finals</i>	<i>12/6-12/12</i>
<i>Commencement</i>	<i>12/15</i>
<i>University Closed</i>	<i>12/25-1/1/08</i>
<i>First Day of Sp. 2008 Classes</i>	<i>1/7/08</i>

**Seasonal Student Issues**

**There's a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month**

- ◆ Much panic, fear and cramming as finals and paper deadlines approach
- ◆ High temper as stress mounts
- ◆ The realization that some friends may not be returning next semester
- ◆ Increased pressure to participate in sexual activity because of the approach of vacation and extended separation
- ◆ Financial strain due to holiday gifts and travel costs
- ◆ Religious conflicts as he/she gets ready to return home after a semester of gaining new perspectives
- ◆ Excitement/anxiety about returning home
- ◆ Increased use of alcohol and drugs

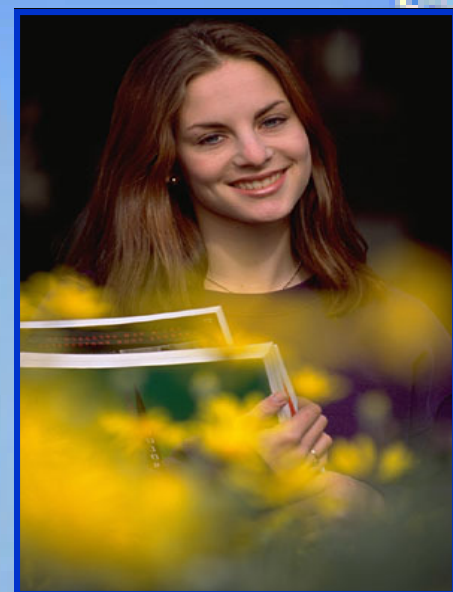
### *What Your Student Needs During Finals Week*

- *encouragement*
- *knowing that you believe in her*
- *your understanding about why he's not in touch that week*
- *something to look forward to*
- *concentrated chunks of time to study and prepare*
- *good sleep and nutrition*
- *not having other things to worry about*
- *support, whether it's a "you can do it!" voicemail, a fun e-card or just good wishes from afar*

**As your student acclimates to campus, there's a powerful force at work. He wants to belong to something, whether it's a group, a community or a cause. This can lead many students to make great choices about how to spend their time and who to hang out with. Yet, it can also lead some students astray.**

**Belonging might pan out in a variety of ways, including...**

- ◆ *A student finding a group of hallmates to have dinner with most nights*
- ◆ *A student pledging a fraternity or sorority*
- ◆ *A student attending a hall council or student government meeting to see what the issues are*
- ◆ *A student inviting others over to play video games in his room*
- ◆ *A student participating in risky drinking behavior or because she is invited out by other students*
- ◆ *A student joining a campus organization that he is interested in*
- ◆ *A student attending a program sponsored by her RA*
- ◆ *A student accepting an invitation to watch "Grey's Anatomy" with new friends*
- ◆ *A student doing someone else's academic work for them because it's a way to be accepted*
- ◆ *A student finding a workout partner*
- ◆ *A student participating in vandalism or other negative behaviors because that's what the people he's spending time with tend to do*
- ◆ *A student doing community service with others*



**Talk with your student about where he's finding his sense of belonging. Many times, you may be able to tell, just by virtue of the people and events he discusses. Positive belonging is a glorious thing, something that we all need to experience. And negative belonging can be rectified through communication and care.**

## What's the *Class of 2011* All About?

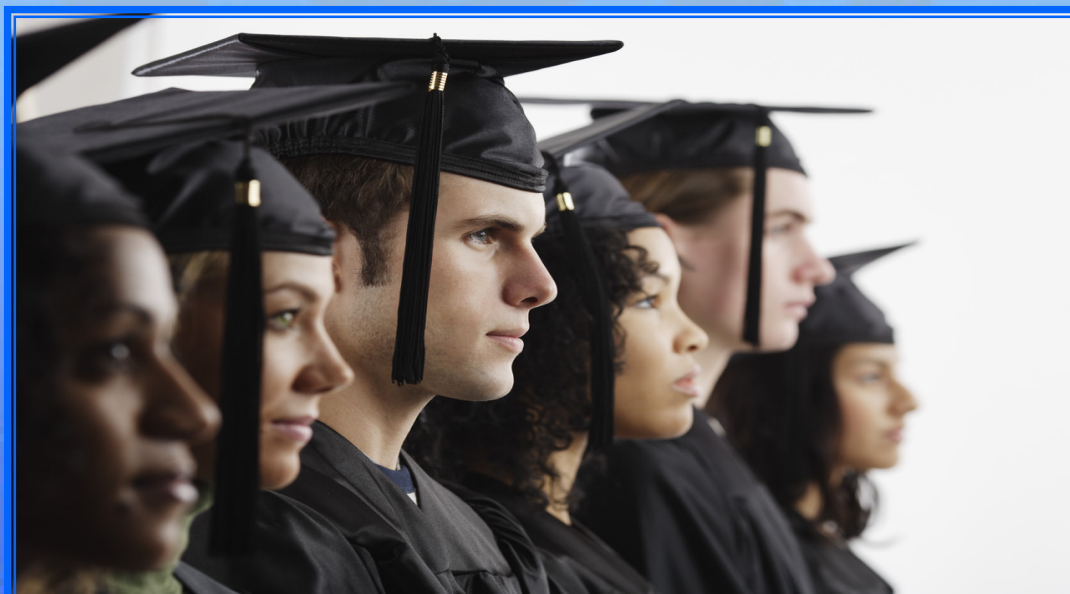
**Want to know more about your student and her peer group?**

**Check out the Beloit College Mindset List. The list is published annually in August by faculty members at Beloit College (WI). Its 70 items provide a look at the “cultural touchstones” that have shaped the lives of the incoming freshman class. Perusing the list can help you get into the “mindset” of today’s traditional-aged students. Here’s a teaser...**

**For them:**

- ◆ *They will encounter roughly equal numbers of female and male professors in the classroom.*
- ◆ *Tiananmen Square is a 2008 Olympics venue, not the scene of a massacre.*
- ◆ *The World Wide Web has been an online tool since they were born.*
- ◆ *They learned about JFK from Oliver Stone and Malcolm X from Spike Lee.*
- ◆ *“Off the hook” has never had anything to do with a telephone.*

Go to [www.beloit.edu/~pubaff/mindset/](http://www.beloit.edu/~pubaff/mindset/) for the complete Class of 2011 Mindset List.



## ***Holiday Gifts for College Students***

***It's the season for giving and for many of you, this can provide a good amount of stress. Worries about what to get for who can be all-consuming during this time of year. What should you give your college student? We asked a few current students to tell us what they would like from their parents. Here's what they had to suggest as a "gift list" for today's student:***

- ◆ A nice piece of artwork or a poster to help make a residence hall room feel more homey
- ◆ Money to help offset costs for academic-related endeavors (and social ones too!)
- ◆ Sentimental gifts that help them learn more about you and your "pre-children" life
- ◆ Room accessories they need like book shelves, drying racks, desktop lights, etc.
- ◆ A massage/manicure or something similar to relax and unwind after a busy semester
- ◆ A nice planner or journal to record all of the changes that happen in college
- ◆ A cookbook of family recipes, with space to add new favorite recipes, especially for those students who have access to kitchens
- ◆ An empty photo album, with a note that says you'll send a couple of pictures from home each month to help stay in touch
- ◆ An iPod and accessories, especially the iPod Touch, which numerous students are hoping for this holiday season
- ◆ Any practical gift related to the student's major or area of focused study (i.e. if they'll be taking a tough math course in the spring, a fancy new calculator might be helpful)
- ◆ A homemade gift as a reminder of home away from home, like a collage or a quilt
- ◆ PJs and other comfy clothes to wear when lounging around
- ◆ Gift cards to restaurants/coffee shops/grocery stores in the area near campus

***Just remember, it's the thought that counts! In today's materialistic world, a return to sentimental gifts may be exactly what your student needs. Don't be afraid to extend yourself in this manner...the longer students are away from home, the more they actually appreciate keeping a piece of you and your family close to heart.***

## *Preparing to Have Your Student Home for the Holidays*

Part of you may be thrilled to have your student around for the holidays. Yet, it's okay if there's another part of you that is apprehensive. Reuniting with your student during the holiday break is your first chance to spend extensive time together since the summer. And it can be an adjustment!

To help you all manage the transition positively, keep a few things in mind:

***Don't Overplan Your Student.*** You may want to go shopping, visit relatives, bake, golf and go to the movies with your student. Nothing wrong with that! Just be sure to leave some wiggle time for him to spend with friends and to recoup from the semester, too.

***Make Commitments Known Ahead of Time.*** Let your student in on what's been planned so far so that he knows what to expect. That way he'll feel a part of the family while still feeling like his time is his own, too.

***Find Out Schedules.*** Some students stay up until 3 a.m. and sleep until noon. Consider asking your student about her sleeping schedule so you're not expecting her at 9 a.m. every morning!

***Talk About "House Rules."*** Will your student still have a curfew? Can he have friends stay overnight? Talk now so you can come up with the rules together and avoid arguments.

***Be Prepared for Change.*** Some of your student's views may have altered because of things she learned in a class or actions she experienced through a campus organization. It's all part of the college experience as she comes into her own. Change can be good—and, oh, the interesting conversations you're bound to have! Be open to it.

*Happy Holidays.....*

