Helping Students and Families make Good Decisions

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Why do we have Orientation for Parents?

What do each of you and all of us at JMU have in common?

• We all want these students to succeed
• We all need information to help us achieve this goal
• None of us can achieve this goal alone
Which of these things will you no longer have to do?

A. Sign your child’s field trip permission form?
B. Call the school if your child will be absent
C. Meet with teachers after report cards
D. Serve on the After-Prom Committee
E. All of the above!
Do we Understand the Average 18 Year Old?

- The Supreme Court has always had female and African-American justices
- Gas stations don’t fix flats, but they do serve cappuccino
- They have never “rolled down” a car window
- They’ve always known that “In the criminal justice system the people are represented by two separate yet equally important groups”
- MTV has never featured music videos
- There have always been flat screen televisions
- They have never understood the meaning of R.S.V.P.
- Kansas, Boston and Chicago are places, not rock groups
- Thongs no longer come in pairs that slide between the toes
Making Good Decisions about Student Health and Development
The First Year: A Time of Stress, Change & Transition

• Who am I?
• With whom will I be?
• What am I going to do?

Expect some changes in your student!
College Parenting 101

Convey your confidence in your student’s ability to succeed

Let your student prepare to leave home over the summer
College Parenting 101

Avoid the "empty nest syndrome"
College Parenting 101

Keep the lines of communication open

Let your student make decisions, solve problems, and be accountable for the consequences
Early Warning Signs of a Problem

- Calling or going home too frequently
- Skipping classes
- Difficulty keeping up with coursework and assignments
- Exhibiting overconfidence despite contrary evidence
- Parental notification of student alcohol or drug use
The Impact of Technology on College Student Life
The Most Important Thing You can Say to Your Student

What is it that you think you should do about this problem?
Safety Risks that Might Cause Me Concern?

“Saliency Effect”

Most Common Risks

• Motor Vehicle Accidents
• Alcohol Poisoning
• Suicide
• Heart & Cerebrovascular Disease
• Illegal & Prescription Drug Abuse
• Sexual Assault (1 in 4)
Alcohol Use & Abuse:  
Every University’s 800 Pound Gorilla in the Room
A Commitment to Excellence

Making healthy, ethical, legal and respectful decisions about the use of alcohol

JMU is changing … you and your student are part of that

Avoid enabling behaviors that are illegal and that could get your student in trouble at JMU

We are concerned… and are taking decisive steps to change student expectations and behaviors:

• New educational programs
• Stricter enforcement of laws and policies
• New support systems and enhanced counseling
• Training for peer educators, advisors and faculty
Students Take “Calculated” Risks
Free Confidential Services

- Individual counseling
- Group counseling
- Psychiatric
- Consultation (helping you help others)
- Outreach
- 24/7 crisis intervention
- Treatment Programs

http://www.jmu.edu/counselingctr/Resources/families.html
A few words on “helicopter parents”

- Producing responsible, independent problem solvers
- Challenge, encourage and support… without hovering!
  - Initiate conversations
  - Avoid scare tactics
  - Clear expectations
  - Perceptions vs. reality
  - Be a good role model
  - Repeat the message
How can Students make Good Decisions about Academic Advising and Career Planning?
What is General Education all About?

Liberal arts in a productive and meaningful life...
• To be taken seriously and pursued vigorously
• *Not something to “get out of the way”*
Cluster One: Skills for the 21st Century (9 credit hours)

Critical Thinking (1 course)
Human Communication (1 course)
Writing (1 course)
Information Seeking Skills Test

All students must complete Cluster One during their first year at JMU.
Cluster Two: Arts and Humanities (9 credit hours)

Human Questions and Contexts (1 course)
Visual and Performing Arts (1 course)
Literature (1 course)
Cluster Three: The Natural World
(10 credit hours)

Math courses are based on math placement test score… Really!
Coursework from different disciplines, plus a lab experience

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Geology
Cluster Four: Social and Cultural Processes
7 credit hours

The American Experience
(1 course, 4 credits)

The Global Experience
(1 course)
Cluster Five: Individuals in the Human Community (6 credit hours)

Wellness
(1 course)
Sociocultural Dimension
(1 course)
What is Freshman Advising?

• Developing the ability to plan and make decisions
• Valuing the liberal arts
• Learning about themselves, the university and its programs
• Navigating the transition from high school to JMU
• Succeeding academically
What are Students Responsible For?

• Communicating with the advisor
• Seeking help
• Knowing academic requirements, policies and procedures
• Making decisions and…
• Being accountable for the consequences
What is a Freshman Advisor?

- Full-time professional or faculty member
- Selected for ability to relate to freshmen
- Thoroughly trained on curricular matters, policies and procedures
- They encourage, challenge, support, inform, listen
- They do not make the decisions
What Should Parents be Doing?

• Encouraging students to set realistic and achievable goals
• Encouraging the student to communicate with his or her advisor
• Trusting the advisor and student to make appropriate decisions
• Not being their student’s advisor
• *Do not ask the advisor to share information about student performance*
But Should we Worry about Them Getting a Job after Graduation?

• Yes and No!
• New hires out of college have been steadily increasing for three years
• JMU graduates are finding full employment or attending graduate and professional school
• What you can do to help
What’s the Best Way to Select a Major?

• Students should choose majors based on their interests, values, skills, personality and aspirations
• Students should pursue what they care about
• Direct lines between majors and careers are rare
• Most students will change their major; many will change more than once!
What percentage of current Fortune 500 CEO’s do not have an undergraduate business degree?

A. 5%
B. 18
C. 40%
D. 53%
Are There Advantages to Being Declared v. Undeclared?

15-20% of freshmen enter JMU Undeclared

• Being Undeclared is good
• Full-time, professional advisor
• IS202 – Life and Career Planning

80-85% of freshmen enter JMU with a major

• 50% of declared freshmen will change their major
• Assigned to a faculty freshman advisor in their college
What are these Progression Standards we Hear About?

Admission to JMU does not guarantee admission to some academic programs.

All majors have expectations of students who wish to enter, continue with and complete academic programs.
Are there any Good Examples?

Talent based arts majors that require an audition or portfolio review:
- Music – students must *first* complete a satisfactory audition and music aptitude test

Majors with absolute size limits:
- Nursing - program size is limited and admission is competitive
- Students are admitted based on grades in designated pre-requisite courses in sciences, psychology and mathematics

Majors with internal standards such as course pre-requisites and GPA requirements
- COB students must complete all ten core business courses and achieve a minimum 2.7 GPA for those courses to be guaranteed admission to the College of Business
What will Students be Doing Today?

- Meeting with Orientation Peer Advisers
- Working with their Freshman Advisor
  - Discussing academic expectations
  - Reviewing academic policies
  - Learning about General Education
  - Adjusting schedule, only if necessary

Advising and enrollment is for **students only**!
Do You Have Questions for Lee and Shirley?