Families in Transition
The Changing Relationship

The relationship is changing and this really is a good thing!

- Balancing freedom and independence with self-regulation and responsibility
- College students are navigating the difficult waters that separate adolescence from adulthood.
  - They take more responsibility for their daily lives and develop life skills that are as vital as any academic coursework
- It’s important for you to remain a reliable source of support.
## Academic Transitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory, and usually free</td>
<td>Voluntary and expensive!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student’s time is structured by others</td>
<td>The student manages his/her time</td>
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<tr>
<td>The student can count on family and teachers to remind them of responsibilities and setting priorities</td>
<td>The student sets priorities and will regularly face difficult decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structured 6-7 hour/day class schedule</td>
<td>Varied class schedule, with much more out of class work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student is not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate</td>
<td>Graduation requirements are complex, and the student is expected to know those that apply</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-2 hours of homework per class per week, last minute test prep</td>
<td>2-3 hours of homework for every hour of class</td>
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<tr>
<td>The student will be told what they need to learn</td>
<td>It’s up to the student to discern themes</td>
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**Guiding Principle:** Expectations are clear, and student will be reminded often.

**Guiding Principle:** Students take responsibility for what they do and don’t do, and own the consequences; good and bad
Managing Academic Transitions

- Establish consensus for basic academic goals
- Learn the policies & resources available to students
  - Refer to your Parent’s Handbook
- Ask questions of your student
- Be interested, but not intrusive
- React carefully and respectfully
- Provide feedback when asked
Family Transitions

- Transitioning from compliance and family focus to independence and autonomy.
- The entire family is going through change, and is likely experiencing excitement and sadness.
- Developmentally appropriate individuation.
- Students still rely on parents and family for support, especially when facing challenges.
- Know that mutual reciprocity is on the horizon!
Managing Family Transitions

- Communicate with specific boundaries
  - Be clear about number and frequency of texts, e-mails, and phone calls
- A trusting relationship establishes open communication
  - Controlling parents often become ignored parents
- Allow for decisions to be made without your input
- Occasional and spontaneous news from home can really maintain strong family ties.
- Care packages during finals week are *never* a bad idea!
Personal Transitions

The worries of most first year students:

- Will I be able to cut it academically?
- My room mate will be awful!
- I don’t know anyone. Am I going to make friends?
- I’m really going to miss family, friends, and partners at home.
- It’s so expensive!
- How will I balance everything?
- I’ve never been on my own before.
- The “Freshman 15”
- I’m scared to talk to my professors.
- I have no idea what I want to do with my life!
Managing Personal Transitions

- Learn how to “actively listen”, without offering un-solicited advice
  - Sounds like.... - From your point of view.....
  - So it’s... - Am I right in thinking......
  - It feels as though.. - What I think I’m hearing.....

- Become familiar with campus resources
- Homesickness is strongest in the first four to six weeks, then tends to wane as students become more engaged and connected on campus

“We love you and we have confidence you’ll make the best decision for yourself. We’re always here if you need us.”