



**MCM**

MCMURRY UNIVERSITY

WHERE *REAL* HAPPENS

**2020**

**McMURRY UNIVERSITY  
FAMILY HANDBOOK**

***WELCOME!!***

***Allen B. Withers, Ph.D.***

***Dean of Students & Campus Life***



On behalf of McMurry University, welcome to our campus and to the special community we call the McMurry Family. As your son or daughter, grandchild, etc. joins the students on campus at McMurry, you are probably experiencing mixed emotions. I am sure you are proud that your student is beginning college as this is a milestone in his or her development and journey of lifelong learning. At the same time, you may be a bit nervous about how he or she will do academically, how he or she will make friends or get along with his or her roommate (if living on campus), and if he or she will be safe. These are all natural emotions for a parent or family member to have.

You are a significant part of your student's McMurry Experience. We want to partner with you in providing support for your student and assistance to help your student achieve success at McMurry. This Family Handbook has been designed with you in mind—to assist and guide you as you provide support and direction for your student throughout his or her college career. In addition, I want you to know the Student Affairs Office is here for you—to serve as a resource for you and your student. The Student Affairs Office can be your contact when your student is experiencing any difficulties or when you need help determining who to contact concerning an issue. We are here to listen to your concerns and help in any way we can. We may not be able to resolve every problem, but we will attempt to explain the situation or refer you to the office that can answer your question.

I certainly hope that your student has an outstanding experience at McMurry University! Please do not hesitate to call on me or a member of the Student Affairs staff as you and your son or daughter becomes a part of the McMurry Experience.

Sincerely,

Allen B. Withers, Ph.D.  
Dean of Students & Campus  
Life, (325) 793-4680  
[withers.allen@mcm.edu](mailto:withers.allen@mcm.edu)

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**ALMA MATER**

Hail to our dear McMurry!  
Long wave Maroon and White!  
Pride of our western prairies,  
Spirit of Honor, Truth, and Right!

We cherish your traditions;  
Ever true we'll be.  
Your Hall of Fame is in our hearts!  
All Hail to Thee!

**FIGHT SONG**

On McMurry, On McMurry, break right through that line;  
Ever forward, ever onward, touchdown sure this time,  
On McMurry, On McMurry, fight on for your fame,  
Fight fellows, fight, fight, fight! We'll win this game.



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# MCMURRY UNIVERSITY

## FAMILY ASSISTANCE GUIDE

This assistance guide will help families be more informed about the numerous resources and services available on campus. The guide is designed to help you know what to do when your student calls home with the question “What do I do?”. Families are encouraged to use this guide to direct their student to a solution rather than solving the problem for him/her. Most information and phone numbers can also be obtained by calling the campus directory at 793-3800. **All numbers are area code 325.**

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<b>CONCERN</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>PHONE</b>
Advising for Classes	Academic Advising	793-3813
Admission	Admission	793-4700
Appeals, Traffic	McMurry Student Government	793-4825
Athletics	Office of University Athletics	793-4633
Books, supplies	Bookstore	793-4832
Campus Information	Switch Board	793-3800
Career options / Job openings	Career Development	793-4880
Computer access / Tutoring options	Academic Enrichment Center	793-4620
Computer Services	Help Desk	793-4900
Counseling & Guidance	Counseling Center	793-4880
Fitness / Working Out	Wellness Center	793-4848
Financial Issues / Questions	Financial Aid	793-4713
Healthcare / Doctor information	Health Center	793-4857
Living on campus	Residence Life & Housing	793-6550
Orientation (New Students)	Assistant Dean of Students	793-4801
Registration / Transcripts	Registrar’s Office	793-3888
Security / Safety	Campus Security	793-4666
Service	Servant Leadership	793-4995
Social Opportunities / Activities	Student Engagement	793-4801
Student Accounts	Student Financial Services	793-3816
Student Affairs (General)	Student Affairs	793-4680

# MCMURRY UNIVERSITY

## MCMURRY UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2020-2021 CALENDAR

### Fall Semester 2020:

Residence Halls Open for New Students:  
War Hawk Welcome Week:  
Classes Begin:  
Last Day to Register or Add a Full Term Course:  
Fall Convocation:  
Last Day to Drop a Full Term Course with a "W":

### McMurry Homecoming (no classes on Friday):

Mid-Term Grades Due in Registrar's Office:  
Registration for Spring Semester begins:  
Last Day to Drop a Full Term Course:  
Last Day to Withdraw from the University:  
Thanksgiving Recess:  
Classes Resume:  
Final Examinations:  
Residence Halls Close

### Spring Semester 2021:

Residence Halls Open for New and Returning Students:  
Classes Begin:  
Last Day to Register or Add a Full Term Course:  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday:  
Last Day to Drop a Full Term Course with a "W":

### Spring Break:

Mid-Term Grades Due in Registrar's Office:  
Classes Resume:  
Good Friday Holiday:  
Easter Monday Holiday:  
Registration for May, Summer & Fall begins:  
Last Day to Drop a Full Term Course:  
Last Day to Withdraw from the University:  
Final Exams:  
Baccalaureate:  
Residence Halls Close for Non-Graduating Students:  
Commencement:  
Grades to Registrar:

### August 24 through December 11

August 19  
August 19 - 23  
August 24, 8:00 a.m.  
August 28  
September 24, 11:00 a.m.  
October 9  
**October 15-17**  
October 19  
November 4  
November 20  
November 20  
November 25 - 27  
November 30  
December 7-11  
December 11, 7:00 p.m.

### January 11 through May 7

January 9  
January 11  
January 15  
January 18  
February 5  
**March 8 - 12**  
March 15  
March 15, 8:00 a.m.  
April 2  
April 5  
April 7  
April 16  
April 16  
May 3-7  
May 7  
May 7, 7:00 p.m.  
May 8  
May 10, 12:00 p.m.

UNIVERSITY SERVICES

**Academic Enrichment Center  
Library Learning Commons,  
(325) 793-4620**

The Academic Enrichment Center (AEC), located in the library, is an integral part of the academic services of McMurry University. The AEC serves the University by providing academic support and instructional resources for students, staff and faculty in a comprehensive learning environment. Resources include a scanner, color printer, fax machine, and access to academic software programs. Services provided include professional tutoring, peer tutoring, computer tutorials, and internet access. Academic counseling and study skills development are also provided. The primary function of the AEC is to provide vital academic support services to all McMurry students through programs designed to help under prepared students prepare, prepared students advance, and advanced students excel. Through the tools and services it provides, the AEC helps enable students from all economic and educational backgrounds to pursue academic excellence.

The Director of Academic Enrichment and Developmental Education is assisted by three professional tutors and two professional staff. Peer tutors are also available to assist students in various subject areas approximately 60 hours each week. During the fall and spring semesters, the AEC is normally open during the following hours:

- Monday – Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., and  
6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
- Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday: 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

**Campus Security  
President North  
(325) 793-4666**

McMurry University Security can be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. McMurry provides uniformed officers for campus patrols, and traffic and parking enforcement.



The McMurry University Security also works to provide a safe place for students, staff, and faculty to study, work, and teach.

**Career Development  
President South, (325) 793-4881**

McMurry University Career Development guides and encourages students to develop skills necessary for lifelong career management in the changing world of work. Career planning and job search services are available for all students, freshmen through seniors. Services provided include: career counseling, career testing, resume/cover letter critique, job search assistance, job listing service, internship coordination, on-campus recruiting, workshops/seminars, career fairs, and graduate school fair.

**Counseling Services  
President South, (325) 793-4880**

Counseling Services are devoted to helping students who need assistance in coping with problems associated with everyday life. The philosophy of the Counseling Center is to promote independence while challenging and educating students to accept individual responsibility for the development of confidence, stability, self respect, health, interpersonal relationships, and coping skills. All counseling is free to McMurry students and held in the strictest confidence as provided by Texas State Law and the ethics board of the American Psychological Association.

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**Dean of Students & Campus Life, Allen B. Withers, Ph.D.**  
**President South, Student Affairs Office,**  
**(325) 793-4680**

The Dean of Students & Campus Life is responsible for working with all aspects of the University to coordinate student development in a dynamic and supportive environment. Areas of responsibility include overseeing Residence Life & Housing, Student Engagement, Campus Security, Wellness/Recreational Sports, Health Services, Counseling & Disability Services, Career Development, Student Organizations, Orientation, and Student Conduct.

**Garrison United Methodist Campus Center**  
**Campus Center, (325) 793-4853**

The Campus Center is the center of campus activities. Students can find information on how to get involved on campus, get a snack, pick up their mail, and hang out with friends in The Perch and The Nest. The Student Engagement office, Religious & Spiritual Life, Residence Life & Housing, University Events office, McMurry Student Government, Bookstore, Chapel, Sports Grille, Post Office, Print Shop, Mabee Room, and other meeting rooms are located in the Campus Center.

**Accessibility and Accommodations Services,**  
**Counseling Services, President South,**  
**(325) 793-4880**

Accessibility and Accommodations Services provides support to enable students with permanent or temporary disabilities to participate in the full range of university experiences. Qualified students will not be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of any University services, programs, or activities or be subjected to discrimination based on their disability. To be eligible for services, the student with a disability must provide appropriate documentation that describes the specific disability prior to the beginning of the semester. Please contact the Accessibility and Accommodations Services Coordinator for more information.

**Health Services**  
**President South, (325) 793-4857**

The Health Services Office is open Monday - Thursday 8:00am - 4:30pm. Health services are provided by a registered nurse for assessments of illness and injuries with referrals to a physician if necessary. Information on health questions and resources are available. Most services are free of charge. A nominal fee is required for flu vaccinations due at the time of service. All students are required to supply a Medical History Form, proof of immunizations and health insurance. Student health insurance information is available through the Student Affairs Office and Health Services Office.

**The Bacterial Meningitis vaccine is required for students under the age of 22 years.** In accordance with the Legislature of the State of Texas, SB 62, all first-time students under the age of 22 years, including transfer students, dual credit students attending classes on McMurry's campus, and any student who previously attended McMurry University and is seeking to be readmitted, must present an immunization record to the institution demonstrating they have been vaccinated against bacterial meningitis or received a booster during the previous five-year period before the student can enroll in a Texas college or university effective October 1, 2013. In addition, students must have received the vaccination at least **10 days prior to the first day of classes.**



**War Hawk Welcome Week**

**Religious & Spiritual  
Life, Campus  
Center 107  
(325) 793-4776**



McMurry In Motion: Haiti

McMurry University is interested in developing the whole student and thus offers opportunities for developing and celebrating one's personal spirituality as well as the interconnectedness we share in faith. The chaplain of the University works with a student leadership team to provide such opportunities.

Opportunities for prayer, bible study, fellowship, and worship are available. Weekly Chapel service is held every Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. in the Mabee Room. The Chapel is open daily for prayer and meditation. The University Chaplain is also available to provide counseling and spiritual guidance to students, faculty, and staff members. The Campus Ministry office is located next to the chapel in the Garrison United Methodist Campus Center.

**Residence Life  
Campus Center  
103  
(325) 793-6550**



Students gain insight into differing lifestyles, cultures and beliefs that will enhance their adult lives through residing on campus. This experience of life on campus is the foundation of the core values of McMurry University. All students are responsible for adhering to the

guidelines established by the University and their

community concerning housing. Students are required to live on campus and purchase a residential meal plan unless they have either completed 60 McMurry hours or four long semesters at McMurry, are 21, married, or live within 30 miles of campus with a parent or legal guardian.

**Servant Leadership  
Old Main, (325) 793-4995**

McMurry's Servant Leadership Program strives to help students become both servants and leaders. The programs promote the idea that servant leaders will lead others by being servants first, seeking the best for those they lead. It has become a unified curricular and co-curricular program, combining ethics, leadership, and service to the community. The program is designed so that students have the opportunity throughout college to participate in numerous offerings that enhance their leadership potential.



**Student Engagement  
Campus Center 104  
(325) 793-4801**

The Student Engagement Office is focused on student involvement, leadership and service. The office staff works with students to provide entertainment for the entire campus community. The Campus Activities Board

(CAB) is a student run organization that helps plan, organize, promote, and implement various events and activities. Past events include hypnotists, coffeehouse artists, movies, lectures and comedians. CAB also sponsors Spring McMadness during the spring semester, a day of games, booths, and food.

**Campus Recreation  
Hunt P.E. Center,  
(325) 793-4849**



Campus Recreation provides programming, facilities, and equipment for the leisure and recreational needs of McMurry

University students, faculty, staff and alumni. One of our most popular programs is Intramurals, which offers flag football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, racquetball and many other sports. The Activity Center houses a full-size basketball/volleyball court, two racquetball courts, dressing rooms, and a 25-yard

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indoor pool. The pool has 6 lanes and a high dive.

### **Student Employment, President Hall South, Career Development Office, (325) 793-4880**

Student employment is available to students and is administered through the Work Study Program. Work study requires federal College Work Study funding from the Financial Aid Office. Please contact your financial aid advisor to learn of your eligibility and your verification requirements at (325) 793-4713. Verification must be 100% complete by August 1st to work at McMurry in the fall semester. The standard award is 10 hours per week for each 16-week fall and spring semester.

An overview of the work study student employment program is at the following web address:  
<https://services.mcm.edu/career/employment/index.html>.  
Please note specific ID requirements listed there. Questions can be directed to the Work Study Program Coordinator at (325) 793-4880.

### **Mindset for Success Program & Office, Ryan Fine Arts Building, (325) 793-4606 or (325) 793-4607**

The goal of McMurry's Mindset for Success (MSO) Program and Office is to increase student success at McMurry University by improving the academic success of students needing assistance. This program provides the support needed to be successful in a student's academic life such as helping with success strategies and tools (organizational skills, study skills, time management and other resources). This office can assist a student in making contact with just the right resource on campus to help with whatever the need may be. The office is located in the Ryan Fine Arts Building.

### **Cakes & Care Packages!**

McMurry University offers three opportunities for parents and family members to send special gift packages to their student or have items delivered on campus.

**Special Occasion Greetings:** The McMurry Women's Club is a service organization made up of women associated with McMurry University. We would love to help your students celebrate his/her birthday or any

## MCMURRY UNIVERSITY

other special occasion while at McMurry! The funds we raise are used primarily for scholarships. Cakes, cupcakes and cookies are available. To place an order or request an order form, contact Terry Young, Special Projects Coordinator at (325) 793-4690 or by email at [mcmwomensclub@mcm.edu](mailto:mcmwomensclub@mcm.edu).

**Treat Orders from Pioneer Dining Services:** Special treats for your student can be prepared on-campus by McMurry's Dining Services provider. Go on-line here to make an order: <https://mcm.pconline.net/index.php/service/treat-orders>.

**Care Packages:** The McMurry Office of Residence Life & Housing offers care packages for students through a partnership with *On Campus Marketing*. Various items are available at different price levels. Either look for a mailing about the program in the fall semester at your home address to contact the Office of Residence Life & Housing directly at (325) 793-6550 for further information or visit the web address: [www.ocm.com/mmy/carepackages](http://www.ocm.com/mmy/carepackages).

**HOW TO CONTACT YOUR STUDENT  
IN AN EMERGENCY**



McMurry University has adopted a notification system, McMAlert, that

enables the university to send urgent news to students/parents/staff via their cell phones. When you sign up for the service, the university can text you with timely information about emergencies, weather warnings, or class cancellations. Depending on your personal cell phone plan, there may be a nominal fee from your carrier to receive text messages, but there is no charge from the university to use the service.

When time is of the essence, McM Alert allows the university to provide immediate notification to the McMurry family, whether they are on or off campus.

Students, faculty and staff are automatically registered. The McMurry Emergency Response Team (MERT) provides the option for parents to register as well. To do so, please go to <https://mcm.omnilert.net/subscriber.php> to sign-up for McMurry Alert.

**FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND  
PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

McMurry University acts in full compliance with the regulations articulated in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (The Buckley Amendment). Therefore, McMurry prohibits the distribution of educational records for students 18 or older without written consent from the student. Records include grades, test scores, term papers, letters of recommendation, academic transcripts, health and financial aid records, and so on. Essentially all records about your son or daughter maintained by McMurry University are viewed as private and are protected from unauthorized disclosure to third parties - including parents. The student's grades will be addressed to the student and mailed to their home address. However, there is nothing in the law that would prevent the student from sharing grades with you.

McMurry University can tell you what the general academic policies and practices are and suggest some questions you may want to ask your student. The best solution is for you to encourage your student to ask someone on campus for help when it is needed and

To get an urgent message to a student in class, only in the event of a life-threatening emergency, contact the Student Affairs Office at (325)793-4680. They will be able to look up your student's schedule and find him/her in class.

Students are encouraged to contact the Student Affairs Office should an unfortunate emergency occur (death, accident, etc.). The Student Affairs Office will gladly contact the entire faculty and notify other offices of your needed absence. Of course, the student remains responsible for completing any coursework missed. This only applies to emergencies. Students who are ill must personally contact their faculty and make appropriate arrangements.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

During emergency or severe weather situations, information regarding the status of the university will be communicated across a number of media including McMurry University's website, local news outlets, and campus-wide emails. McMurry University has established a Contingency Communications webpage: [http://www.mcm.edu/newsite/web/univ\\_relations/emergency.htm](http://www.mcm.edu/newsite/web/univ_relations/emergency.htm). This webpage will be used to communicate information in the event of a campus-related emergency. In the event of an emergency or a crisis, important information will be posted on this webpage. Please refer to this page for announcements and instructions to students, employees, parents and the media.

If you wish to report an emergency, please call one of the following phone numbers:

**Mark Odom, Director of Security and Safety:**

(325) 793-4666 (officer on duty)  
(325) 793-4780 (office); (325) 665-6269 (cell)

**Allen Withers, Dean of Students & Campus Life:**

(325) 793-4680 (office); (304) 203-1210 (cell)

**Physical Plant:**

(325) 793-4747 (office); (325) 660-3973 (cell);  
(325) 793-4666 (after hours)

**Area Emergency Services: 911**

## **MCMURRY UNIVERSITY**

encourage your student to be open and honest  
when it comes to information about his/her work.

**UNIVERSITY TERMINOLOGY**

**A brief guide to commonly used (and often misunderstood) University Acronyms, Phrases, and Miscellaneous Jargon**

TRANSLATION

**Academic Advisor** – A faculty or staff member of the academic department to which a student is admitted. The advisors are available to assist students with academic counseling and scheduling of classes.

**AEC** – (Academic Enrichment Center) Located in the Campus Center, the AEC is the largest computer lab on campus. It also provides free tutoring in a variety of subjects.

**Ala Cumba** – “On To Victory!” The yell that wishes the our teams good luck for victory and shows school spirit.

**Big Event** – Sponsored each fall by MSG, Big Event is a day when students, faculty, and staff volunteer their time to various organizations throughout the Abilene community.

**The Caf** - (Cafeteria) This is the Village Market, the dining hall, where the students eat, meet to socialize, and hang out.

**CAB** – (Campus Activities Board) CAB works to provide many activities and entertainment that is usually free to students. This organization is open to all students.

**Credit Hour** – Value placed on a course used in computation of GPA and generally accepted amount of classroom/lab contact time.

**GPA** – (Grade Point Average) GPA is calculated by dividing the student’s grade points divided by the total number of credit hours taken during a semester. For each credit hour the student receives grade points as follows: A=4, A-=3.67, B+=3.33, B=3, B-=2.67, C+=2.33, C=2, C-=1.67, D+=1.33, D=1, D-=0.67. No grade points are assigned for grades F, I (Incomplete), or W (Withdrew). The student’s overall academic achievement is measured by dividing the sum of all quality points earned for a semester or for the student’s entire McMurry career by the sum of all credit hours attempted. The result is the GPA.

**The Grille** - (The Sports Grille) The campus grill where students can grab a snack or a bite to eat, visit with their friends, study, or just chill between classes. Located in the Campus Center.

**MSF – (McMurry Student Foundation)** MSF is an organization that is actively involved with alumni, current students and prospective students of McMurry University. The McMurry Student Foundation is made up of 25 students that work hand in hand with Institutional Advancement, the Alumni Office, the President’s Office, and Admission to help host Homecoming, Alumni events, the Annual Ring Ceremony, and Preview Days. All proceeds from fundraisers organized by the McMurry Student Foundation are donated to the Betty Gilbert Scholarship fund. Applications to join the McMurry Student Foundation are available at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters every year.

**MSG** – (McMurry Student Government) Elected students who act as a voice of the students to administration, faculty, or other organizations.

**RA** – (Resident Assistant) An upper-class student who lives on a floor of the residence hall. RAs are responsible for maintenance requests, enforcing residence hall rules, and are available to answer questions and assist residents.



**Res Hall - (Residence Hall)** One of the four places on campus where students can live. While living on the McMurry campus, students will find that their neighbors are no longer strangers—they become like family! The relationships students build will last a lifetime, and building those relationships will be one of the most fun and memorable times of their lives

**Campus Ministry** - is one the largest and most diverse student-led organizations at McMurry University, providing students with numerous opportunities to get involved and led by the University Chaplain and Director of Religious & Spiritual Life and Assistant Chaplain. Membership in this organization is open to all currently enrolled students. Campus Ministry hosts Chapel on Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. in the Mabee Room, Garrison Campus Center and L.I.F.E. Lunch (Living in Faith Everyday) every Thursday @ 12:15 PM in the Village Market Meeting Room.

**Slime Olympics** – Teams compete in relays where you are sure to get dirty! Held during War Hawk Welcome Week.

**Social Clubs** – Local men’s and women’s organizations whose purpose is to provide social activities for members. Recruitment for these organizations, also called Rush, is typically held in the Spring semester.

Women’s clubs include: Alpha Psi Alpha, Delta Beta Epsilon, Gamma Sigma, Pi Delta Phi, Theta Chi Lambda, and T.I.P.

Men’s clubs include: Eta Epsilon Iota (HEI), Kiva, Ko Sari, Makona, and Chi Omicron (XO).

**Spring Thing** – MSG provides “Spring Thing” during the Spring semester of each year. Most events are free and include many enjoyable activities. Events are open to all students of the University.

**Student Handbook** – It includes a listing of useful offices, phone numbers, the MSG constitution, the Student Code of Conduct, and other important information.

**T.I.P. Sing Song** – Sponsored by the oldest women’s social club on campus, Sing Song is an opportunity for campus organizations to display their talent in singing, costumes, and choreography in a group presentation.

**Tipi Village** – Held during Homecoming, Tipi Village is where social clubs put up their tipis representing different tribes of Native Americans. In 2001, tipi village celebrated it’s 50<sup>th</sup> year.



Tipi Tours

**Wah Wahtaysee** – The park located on the corner of South 14<sup>th</sup>

and Sayles Blvd. Events such as Slime Olympics and Tipi Village are held in the park.

**War Hawk Herald** – The online student newspaper that reports current campus events and issues.

**War Hawk Welcome Week** – The four-day program before school starts. It is designed to assist new students with the transition into college by helping them to make friends, and learn about organizations and services on campus.



Welcome Week Ropes Course

**The Zone** - McMurry’s crazy student fans! The students sit together at athletic events in The Zone and cheer on the team!

## PARENTING A COLLEGE FRESHMAN

### *From a Student’s Perspective*

Your student, along with two million others, is about to enter a time that is exciting; a period of joy, pain, discovery, and disappointment. These students are beginning an amazing four to five year journey. When they complete this journey they will be a different person than when they began.

And, like it or not, you’re entering this period with your son or daughter. You’ll experience the same happiness and defeats as they – second-hand, but just as vividly or achingly.

If you don’t believe me, ask my mom. She watched and waited and worried through four years of ups and downs and in-between. She patiently accepted my progressions and my regressions. She tried, and sometimes failed, to understand my way of thinking, doing, and being.

And, maybe because of her, maybe in spite of her, I left college after four years a much different person than I’d begun – a much happier person.

So, my advice is: watch and wait and worry and accept and understand. Your children will be happier for your efforts. So will you.

Of course, no one can ensure that you’ll completely survive your child’s first year at college, but there are some guidelines that might help you make it with

minimum loss of sanity and a maximum strengthening of your new relationship. The suggestions on the following pages are: a) purposely subjective; b) written by a just-graduated student who, therefore, thinks she knows everything about college, and therefore, doesn’t, and c) is based mostly on careful observations of mistakes and/or breakthroughs made by her parents and the parents of her friends.

At most, they’ll prepare you to deal effectively with some predictable first-year conflicts. At least, they’ll make you think about your reactions to them – and that can’t hurt.



**Rule #1-Don't Ask Them If They're Homesick**

The power of association can be a dangerous thing. (A friend once told me “the idea of being homesick didn't even occur to me, what with all the new things that were going on, until my mom called one of the first weekends and asked ‘are you homesick?’ Then it hit me.”)

The first few days/weeks of school are activity-packed and friend-jammed, and the challenge of meeting new people and adjusting to new situations takes a majority of a new student's time and concentration. So, unless they're reminded of it (by a well-meaning parent), they'll probably be able to escape the loneliness and frustration of homesickness.

And, even if they don't tell you during those first few weeks, they do miss you.

**Rule #2-Write (Even if They Don't Write Back)**

Although freshmen are typically eager to experience all the away-from-home independence they can in those first few weeks, most are still anxious for family ties and the security those ties bring. This surge of independence may be misinterpreted by sensitive parents as rejection, but I'd bet that most freshmen (although 99% won't ever admit it) would give anything for some news of home and family, however mundane it may seem to you.

There's nothing more depressing than a week of empty mailboxes. (Warning—don't expect a reply to every letter you write. The you-write-one, they-write-one sequence isn't always followed by college students, so get set for some unanswered correspondence.)

**Rule #3-Ask Questions (But Not Too Many)**

College freshmen are ‘cool’ (or so they think) and have a tendency to resent interference with their newfound lifestyle, but most still desire the security of knowing that someone is still interested in them.

Parental curiosity can be obnoxious and alienating or relief-giving and supportive—depending on the attitudes of the persons involved. ‘I-have-a-right-to-know’ tinged questions, with ulterior motives or the nag should be avoided. However, honest inquiries and

other ‘between friends’ communication and discussion will do much to further the parent-freshman relationship.

**Rule #4-Expect Change (But Not Too Much)**

Your student will change (either drastically within the first months or slowly over four years—or somewhere in between). It's natural, inevitable, and it can be inspiring and beautiful. Often, it's a pain in the neck. College and the experiences associated with it can effect changes in social, vocational and personal behavior choices. An up-to-now wall flower may become a fraternity sweetheart, a pre-med student may discover biology's not her thing after all, or a high school radical may become a college egghead.

You can't stop change, you may not ever understand it, but it is within you power (and to you and your student's advantage) to accept it.

Remember that your student will be basically the same person that you sent away to school, aside from such interest changes and personality revisions. Don't expect too much, too soon. Maturation is not an instantaneous or overnight process and you might well discover your student returning home with some of the habits and hang-ups, however unsophisticated, that you thought he/she had ‘grown out of.’ Be patient.

**Rule #5-Don't Worry (Too Much) About Manic-Depressive Phone Calls or Letters**

Parenting can be a thankless job, especially during the college years. It's a lot of give and only a little take.

Often when troubles become too much for a freshman to handle (a flunked test, ended relationship, and shrunken T-shirt all in one day) the only place to turn, write, or dial is home. Often, unfortunately, this is the only time the urge to communicate is felt so strongly, so you never get to hear about the ‘A’ paper, the new boyfriend or the domestic triumph.

In those “crisis” times your student can unload trouble or tears and, after the catharsis, return to routine, relieved and lightened, while you inherit the burden or worry.

Be patient with those nothing-is-going-right-I-hate-this-place phone calls or letters. You're providing a real service as an advice dispenser, sympathetic ear, or punching bag. Granted, it's a service that makes you feel lousy, but it works wonders for a frustrated student. As I said, parenting can be a thankless job.

**Rule #6-Visit (But Not Too Often)**

Visits by parents (especially when accompanied by shopping sprees and/or dinners out) are another part of the first-year events that freshmen are reluctant to admit liking, but would appreciate greatly. And pretended disdain of those visits is just another part of the first-year syndrome.

These visits give the student a chance to introduce some of the important people in both of their now-important worlds (home and school) to each other. Additionally, it's a way for parents to become familiar with (and, it is hoped, more understanding of) their student's new activities, commitments, and friends.

Spur-of-the-moment 'surprises' are usually not appreciated. (Pre-emption of a planned weekend of studying or other activities can have disastrous results.) It's usually best to wait for a Mom or Dad's Day weekend to see your student and the school; that way you may even get to see a clean room.

**Rule #7-Do Not Tell Your Student That "These Are the Best Years of Their Lives"**

Freshman year (and the other three or four as well) can be full of indecision, insecurities, disappointments, and, most of all, mistakes. They're also full of discovery, inspiration, good times, and people but, except in retrospect, it's not the good that stands out.

It took a while (and the help of some good friends) for me to realize that I was normal and that my afternoon movie/paperback novel perceptions of what college was all about were inaccurate. It took a while for me to accept that being unhappy, afraid, confused, disliking people and making mistakes (in other words, accepting me) were all part of the show, all part of this new reality, all part of growing up. It took a while longer for my parents to accept it.

Any parent who believes that all college students get good grades, know what they want to major in, have every weekend activity-packed, thousands of close friends, and lead carefree, worry-free lives is wrong. So are the parents who think that college-educated means mistake-proof.

Parents that perpetuate and insist upon the 'best years' stereotype are working against their child's already difficult self-development. Those that accept and understand the highs and lows of their student's reality are providing the support and encouragement where it's needed most.

**Rule #8- Trust Them**

Finding oneself is a difficult enough process without feeling like that the people whose opinions you respect most are second-guessing your own second-guessing.

One of the most important things my mom ever wrote me in my four years at college was this: "I love you and want for you all the things that make you the happiest; and I guess you, not I, are the one who knows best what those things are." She wrote that during my senior year. If you're smart you'll believe it, mean it, and say it now.

*By Jan Michelsen*



**GIFT IDEAS FOR COLLEGE FRESHMEN**

- Gift cards for gas
- \$5.00 gift certificates to food chains – McDonalds, Chili's, Wendy's, Burger King, Chick-fil-A
- Stamps for postcards and letters
- Streamers, balloons, goodie bag, packages for holidays
- T-shirts/socks (clothes are something no college student likes to wash, so having extras is a plus)
- Package of assorted birthday or greeting cards
- Toiletries such as soap, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, laundry detergent, etc.



**FINANCES**

Finances are very important to discuss with your student before leaving for college. Students with financial

concerns are 'at risk' of being unsuccessful students. Clarify as many issues related to money as you can before the issue actually arises. Some lessons in balancing a checkbook, budgeting over long periods of time, and some understanding about the pitfalls of credit cards are usually needed. In addition, discussions about allowable expenses and how often in a semester the 'I am broke, please send money' request will result in a rescue are helpful. Students can manage their own money if expectations are clear and they understand the basics.

**JUST LIKE CLOCKWORK:  
THE RHYTHM OF COLLEGE LIFE...**

Certain times of the year tend to be universally challenging to students. Parents who understand the ups and downs of the first college year are better able to help their students negotiate the challenges of transition to college. Below are some typical adjustment issues faced throughout the first year.

**AUGUST/SEPTEMBER**

- Excitement
- Testing new found freedom
- Anxiety about roommates, professors, classmates

**OCTOBER**

- Students question 'Do I fit in here?'
- First test grades are returned
- Midterm exams

**NOVEMBER**

- Roommate challenges become clear
- Many exams and papers due before Thanksgiving
- Excitement and/or anxiety about going home for Thanksgiving

**DECEMBER**

- Anxiety over preparation for finals
- Sadness about leaving new friendships and/or love relationships for break
- Roommate challenges continue

**JANUARY**

- 'Fresh Start' mentality sets in with new term
- Homesickness
- Satisfaction and/or disappointment with fall term grades

**FEBRUARY**

- Feelings of claustrophobia and depression set in with winter
- Challenges with love relationships back home

**MARCH**

- Excitement and/or disappointment regarding spring break plans
- Concern over summer employment
- Concern over winter weight gain

**APRIL**

- Excitement with the arrival of spring
- End of semester pressure

**MAY**

- Final exam anxiety
- Apprehension about returning home for summer
- Sadness over leaving new friendships and/or love relationships over the summer
- Realization of how college influences life decisions

*Adapted from Helping Your First-Year College Student Succeed: A Guide for Parents*

**SUGGESTED READINGS FOR FAMILIES**

- Parents, Family, & The New College Student Experience. Books 1 & 2 by Dr. Kent D. Beeler. (1991). ISBN 0-8403-6525-X
- Empty Nest... Full Heart: The Journey From Home to College. by Dr. Andrea VanSteenhouse. (1998). ISBN 0-9619806-1-3
- Letting Go: A Parent's Guide to Today's College Experience. 6th Edition. By Karen Levin Coburn & Madge Lawrence Treeger. (1997). ISBN 006095244X
- When Kids Go to College: A Parent's Guide to Changing Relationships. by Barbara Newman & Phillip Newman. (1992). ISBN 0-8142-0561-5
- If Life is a Game, These Are the Rules. by Cherie Carter-Scott. (1998). ISBN 0-76790-2-386
- Almost Grown: Launching Your Child From High School to College. by Patricia Pasick. (1998). ISBN 0393317102
- Don't Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money. by Helen Johnson & Christine Schelhas-Miller. (2000). ISBN 0312263740
- In Addition to Tuition: The Parents' Survival Guide to the Freshman Year of College. by Marian Bordon, Elsie Kearns, & Mary Ann Burlinson. (1995). ISBN 0816030995
- You're On Your Own (But I'm Here If You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Years. By: Marjorie Savage.
- The Launching Years: Strategies for Parenting from Senior to College Life. By Laura Kastner & Jennifer Fugett Wyatt.
- Let the Journey Begin: A Parent's Monthly Guide to the College Experience. By: Jacqueline MacKay & Wanda Ingram.

**Additional Resources for Families of College Students**

**College Parents of America**  
www.collegeparents.org  
2000 N. 14th Street, Suite 800  
Arlington, Virginia 22201-2540  
(888) 761-6702  
info@collegeparents.org

**Dean of Students & Campus Life, Dr. Allen B. Withers**  
Campus Box 716,  
Abilene, Texas 79697  
(325) 793-4680  
withers.allen@mcm.edu  
[www.mcm.edu](http://www.mcm.edu)

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**SHOULD MY STUDENT WORK?**

Ideally students who are enrolled full-time should not work a full-time job. Being a student and maintaining a good GPA is a full-time job. However, there are many student employment possibilities available on campus for students who qualify. For more information on student employment call Sandy Lane in Career Services at 325-793-4880.



**HOW MANY CREDIT HOURS DOES AN AVERAGE STUDENT TAKE?**

The average number of hours the typical freshman takes is 12-16 during his or her first semester. The number of hours a student should take depends on the individual's circumstances. To be classified as full-time, a student must take a minimum of 12 credit hours.

**HOW MUCH SPENDING MONEY DOES MY STUDENT NEED?**

You know your student's spending habits better than anyone, but here are some suggestions.

1. Create a budget. Determine what your student's financial needs will be by detailing how they are going to be spending their money.
2. Communicate.
3. Give your student the option of access to emergency funds for unexpected expenses.

**SHOULD MY STUDENT OPEN A LOCAL CHECKING ACCOUNT?**

Most local businesses will accept out of town checks or debit cards with a valid ID. If your student wishes to open a local checking account there are several banks located near campus. An ATM is located in the Campus Center.

If students have a work study job, they will be able to cash the check at the McMurry Student Financial Services if it is under \$100. Any McMurry checks over \$100 can be cashed at First Financial Bank. First Financial Bank has locations in HEB on S. 14th, at the corner of S .14th and Willis and at other places in Abilene.

**WHAT SHOULD MY STUDENT DO IF IT IS NECESSARY TO MISS A CLASS?**

It is the student's responsibility to contact the professor. Because McMurry is such a small campus, your student's absence will be noticed. The Office of Student Affairs (325-793-4680) can be notified in the case of illness or emergency which requires several days of missed class. In these cases, professors will be contacted and informed about the reasons for your student's absences.



## **WHAT IF MY STUDENT HAS ROOMMATE PROBLEMS?**

Students do sometimes have difficulties with roommates. Whether a long-time friend or a new acquaintance, living together takes some time for adjustment. Students who are having problems can seek help from the Resident Assistant who lives on their floor, their Residence Hall Director, or from the Counseling Center.

## **WHAT IF MY STUDENT DOESN'T HAVE A CAR?**

A student living on campus has access to food, laundry, and anything he/she would require on campus. For off campus excursions, students can usually find rides from their roommates, classmates, and friends. Also, Citilink, Abilene's Bus system, has multiple bus stops near campus. Your student should be able to find the transportation he/she needs.

## **DOES MY STUDENT NEED A COMPUTER?**

In 2007, McMurry started the M.O.V.E.(Mobile Online Visionary Education) initiative. As part of this initiative each entering full-time student will receive a laptop during War Hawk Welcome Week. The purpose of the Mobile Online Visionary Education initiative is to create an environment where all students have computer access to resources at any time. For more information about this program please visit <https://information-services.mcm.edu/MOVE/>. In addition to a student's issued laptop, there are also computers available for use in The Learning Commons portion of the Jay-Rollins Library along with the Academic Enrichment Center and Mac Lab in the Ryan Fine Arts Center when classes are not in session. The M.O.V.E. program also works to provide basic support for personal devices as much as possible.



## **WHAT IF MY STUDENT IS HAVING TROUBLE WITH A CLASS?**

If your student is having trouble with a class, the first resource should be the professor. Professors have posted office hours and should be available to help your student with his/her class work. Also, student tutors are available in the AEC free of charge to any McMurry student. Tutors are available for anything from algebra and chemistry to reading and editing an English paper.

## **WHAT IF MY STUDENT DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO IN LIFE?**



Choosing a major is an introspective decision that should not be reached quickly or taken lightly. Do not be alarmed if your student takes a semester or two to choose a course of study. Also, changes in majors are common events in the lives of many students. Career Development is a resource on campus to help students understand themselves, set career goals, and choose an appropriate major.







