PARENT & FAMILY CONNECTION

LATE FALL 2020
Greetings Parents and Families!

Welcome to the Parent and Family Connection Newsletter. Our objective is to provide you with current and relevant information pertaining to your student at Framingham State University. We will release issues throughout the year to keep you in the loop about all that’s happening at FSU! Whether it be initiatives, important resources or events, you’ll find them here. Through reading this newsletter you’ll find yourself more involved and informed with important information you can pass onto your student. We consider you our partners in ensuring your student has a positive, successful experience here at FSU and thank you for all that you do to help your student throughout the year!

Thank you,

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As the country continues to face this worsening pandemic, FSU continues to work hard to keep everyone safe. As always, the safety of students and university employees is the number one priority. FSU wants to be transparent about everything related to COVID and have been continually updating the COVID webpage. This link will provide everything you need to know about COVID and the university's responses, policies, and testing. The COVID policies FSU has put in place such as mandatory masks, social distance seating, and online ordering options are just a few of the ways we are working to keep everyone safe.

We are still seeing small numbers of positive cases in the weekly testing numbers. FSU has a contact tracing program in place and a plan for when we do receive positive cases and it has been effective. Although we are doing well keeping positive cases low, it is important that we continue to limit gatherings, remain socially distant, wear masks, wash hands, and follow any and all guidelines from FSU and the state. Here is the link to the Massachusetts guidelines. We wish everyone a healthy, safe, and socially distant holiday season.
Being an Anti-Racist

Being "not racist" or race neutral is not enough. We must be anti-racist if we are going to make a change and work towards fighting the injustices that still exist in this country. FSU students have access to amazing resources for anti-racism information and efforts that were highlighted in the previous newsletter which included a TedTalk by Ibram X. Kendi as well as many articles, graphics, and videos. While FSU provides a lot of resources, many other colleges and universities have free resources on their websites available to all not just students who attend the school. Some resources to check out are the University of Washington's Race and Equity Initiative on their website as well as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's anti-racism resource guide on their website.

FSU's resources surrounding anti-racism are always being updated and new events are being added by the Center for Inclusive Excellence (CIE) and other departments frequently. There is another organization that I want to direct your attention to as they are a resource for everyone and provide some amazing opportunities. Project HOME. On their website Project HOME states they they are a community who strive to "empower adults, children, and families to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty, to alleviate the underlying causes of poverty, and to enable all of us to attain our fullest potential as individuals and as members of the broader society. We strive to create a safe and respectful environment where we support each other in our struggles for self-esteem, recovery, and the confidence to move toward self-actualization." They have a section that is devoted to anti-racism and supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. In this section they provide many links and resources that you can use to learn more as well as movies and podcasts to check out. Their website also has resources not only for anti-racism but for advocacy and public policy, health care serves, housing, teen and youth programs, and much much more. Here is the link to their homepage.
Exercising Self-Care

Attending school in person or virtually during this pandemic has been a new challenge that no one could’ve prepared for. Although this is not the semester we had hoped for, FSU students have done a great job adapting to this new environment and staying safe. When going through big changes and transitions there understandably can be added stressors and FSU has resources that students can go to should they feel they need to. We have reached out to FSU’s Counseling Center to ask them for advice they have for students during this time and to provide some options they offer to students.

We first asked them what advice they have for students at home or on-campus who may be having difficulty adapting to a virtual learning environment. They first listed the many resources FSU has for students that may help them during this time including CASA, Career Services and Employer Relations, and of course the Counseling Center. They direct all students to their website where a lot of the information shared in this Q&A can be found but here is a summary of the best tips they want to make students aware of:

“One of the key points stressed in both of these sections is to take care of yourself. Some ideas are to set up a schedule for yourself from the time you get up in the morning to the time you turn in for the night with various activities that contribute to our everyday self-care. Consistency with a sleep schedule of 7-9 hours is important for overall mental health and wellness so that your mind and body get the rest and reset periods necessary for effective daily functioning. In addition, keeping the same time for waking up and going to sleep and limiting exposure to screens at least an hour before sleep can help your brain power down and allow for a period of rest.

We also see that observing a daily time limit on social media consumption is beneficial for students. It can be easy to get pulled into reading about other people’s lives or events we cannot control but a time limit can help us keep informed about others and events without too much overwhelm or time loss. Also, building into your schedule, set times to eat a balanced diet, getting 25-35 minutes of physical activity daily, and with social distance, connecting to people who help support and build you up whether they are friends, family or a mentor. When our basic human needs are met, including eating nourishing food, getting healthy sleep, and staying connected to others through video, phone, letters, or texts, it helps us have the internal resources to move forward during difficult times like these.”

The second question we asked them was what options are available through the Counseling Center for students both at home and on campus who may be struggling this semester. “Our office is open to students for telehealth services through the phone or Zoom for Healthcare for ongoing counseling and same day consults. Our website and outreach services also provide support for students who may be struggling during this semester. Our office staff can be reached by calling us at our main phone number, 508-626-4640 or emailing our general mailbox at counselingcenter@framingham.edu. We also have a social media presence and can be followed on Instagram at fsu_counselingcenter and Twitter at counseling_FSU.”
At FSU there are many students who are the first in their families to attend and/or complete college. This is an amazing accomplishment and one students should be proud of. There are so many great resources for students and their families who are going through the college process. The Center for First Generation and Student Success is an organization that works with and provides help to first generation students and families. Their mission statement is as follows, "The Center is the premier source of evidence-based practices, professional development, and knowledge creation for the higher education community to advance the success of first-generation students." Their homepage can be found here.

There is also a blog post from Scholarship America for first generation parents. The article titled "5 Things First-Generation Parents Should Know About College" highlights some common questions as well as provides links to other places to further researching and learning as well. That can be found here.

Additionally, the Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA) at Framingham State has an affinity group called GenerationOne. As stated on the CASA website, "GenerationOne is an affinity group that connects Framingham State students, faculty and staff who are the first in their families to attend college. Our goal is to offer support – academic and social -- as you take this important step towards achieving your future goals!" You can find much more information about events and involvement here!
Important Dates

Last Day to Withdraw from a semester course with a 'W' - Wednesday, November 25th

Last Day to Take a Course Pass/Fail - Wednesday, November 25th

Thanksgiving Recess - Wednesday, November 25th beginning at 4:30pm

Semester Classes End - Monday, December 14th

Finals Exam Period - December 16th-18th and 21st-22nd

End of Fall Semester - Wednesday, December 23rd

Start of Spring Semester- Monday, January 25, 2021

If you have any further questions you can check our FAQ page here or contact any of our staff.

Best,

The New Student and Family Programs Department