The OMSS Parent and Family Outreach and Empowerment Newsletter

Much like the calendar year, the winter quarter (January 5-March 20) signifies a time of new beginnings within the academic year, as well. Students are coming back from their break. University faculty and staff are preparing to launch fresh, new opportunities for your student to engage in the life of the university.

With that said, there are a few processes and decisions you and your student may talk through this quarter:

- Winter quarter is the start of hiring season for numerous on-campus positions
- Winter quarter marks the beginning of the FAFSA process for financial aid assistance
- Winter quarter is a time of reflection and self-assessment, as students are thinking about their experiences in the fall quarter both academically and socially. This reflection might prompt them to make changes, as needed, to study schedules, peer support networks, and more.

In light of all these things, our newsletter will focus on a) retention, b) the benefits of student involvement, and c) the financial aid process, as we all prepare to reflect on the past quarter and get ready for the quarter ahead. As always, feel free to reach out to me as your primary contact to the Office of Multicultural Student Success and Parent/Family Outreach and Empowerment programs throughout the quarter.

Warm Regards,

Jade Perry
FAMILY FINANCES

Financial Planning for Student Success

By Anthony Andrade – DePaul Central

DePaul Central provides one-stop services to help students manage registration, academic planning, financial aid and payment processes at DePaul. DePaul Central can help you and your student learn about financial aid opportunities, complete the necessary steps to process your student's financial aid, assist with questions about specific charges on your student's bill and provide assistance in making payments. We know how important it is for you to keep your student on the path to completing a degree at DePaul and that's why we are here to help.

Here are a few key resources and topics to discuss with them at this time of the year:

Complete the FAFSA*

If your student plans to enroll in the next academic year, we recommend that you complete your 2015-2016 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 1 or earlier.

We anticipate very high demand for financial aid in the upcoming academic year; delaying filing the FAFSA early may result in the loss of eligibility for federal, state, or institutional funding.

Filing the FAFSA online is easy. Simply go to the Department of Education’s™ FAFSA website.

If you have not filed your 2014 tax return, please do not wait to complete your FAFSA. File your FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1, 2015, using estimated 2014 income information. After you complete your 2014 tax returns, go back to update your online FAFSA application using the IRS data match function.

Contact a Financial Aid expert in DePaul Central if you or your student needs assistance in completing the FAFSA for 2015-2016.

Plan to fill out your FAFSA at the start of the New Year and visit fafsa.ed.gov.

View FATV

These are short videos to help you and your student better understand financial aid processes such as applying for financial aid, eligibility and loan programs. To view these videos, go to depaul.financialaidtv.com.

Maintain Financial Aid Eligibility

Remember, in order to continue receiving financial aid funds each term, your student must meet specific eligibility requirements. Please review these carefully online with your student at depaul.edu/admission-and-aid/financial-aid/maintaining-eligibility.

Registration Planning Resources

Information about DePaul’s degree programs, requirements, policies and procedures that impact students can be found in the University Catalog at depaul.edu/university-catalog. In Campus Connect, students can manage their academics online. Planning tools include: Degree Progress Report (DPR) which outlines requirements to complete a specific declared major, a what-if option for major exploration, a personal course planner to help map desired courses for upcoming terms and academic advisor information.

Understand the Billing and Payment System

DePaul’s ePAY/eBILL system offers the convenience of making payments online and viewing your account electronically at any time. Students can seamlessly login
through the Campus Connect>Student Center, view up-to-date account activity, set up authorized payers, and manage profiles and preferences.

**Enroll in a Payment Plan**

We offer convenient payment plans, such as The DePaul University Payment Plan (DePPUP) to pay annual tuition, room and board expenses in monthly installments. Another option is the In-term Payment plan (ITP) which allows you to pay term-specific tuition, room and board expenses in monthly payments within the current term. For more information about these payment plan options, please visit the Finances section on depaulcentral.depaul.edu.

**Stay Connected (Campus Connect > Student Center)**

Encourage your student to use the Student Center online in Campus Connect. Your student can view their To-Dos (important business tasks to complete), class schedule, financial aid award, tuition bill, make a payment, and update personal information. Seek help from staff in DePaul Central when you have questions and concerns.

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**STUDENT INVOLVEMENT**

**3 Ways Getting Involved Benefits Your Student**

From the time your student entered into the DePaul community, we have encouraged them to “get involved.” The Division of Student Affairs hosts fairs, events and programs to show them the organizations that they can engage with while in college. The options are plentiful: interest groups, identity-based organizations, performing organizations, on-campus employment positions and more. But what should they do with all of this information? What do we mean when we tell students to “get involved,” and how can they benefit from involvement?

1. **Involvement is especially important to connect your student to the university, in the first year.**

   Through the vast majority of research done regarding the benefits of involvement, Tinto (2006) sums up: “We learned that involvement matters and that it matters most during the critical first year of college” (p. 4). Why? The first year is a time of transition for students, parents and families. Students are learning to balance the relationships they have with important figures in their lives, homes and university. The university, like many other places, is a system. Students in their first year are learning to navigate that system. To successfully navigate any system, you need guides along the way. Your student can find these guides through their efforts to get involved: join student organizations, volunteer for Service Days at DePaul, and participate in OMSS programs such as STARS peer mentoring, Study Jams, and/or the Men of Color Initiative. Through these various opportunities, your student gains guides, advocates and friends along the way.

2. **Engagement is connected to learning and cognitive development (Astin, 1999)**

   Scholars assert that engagement/involvement with the campus community also is linked to cognitive development. Learning and academic progress (Astin, 1999). How can this be? As your student engages with the life of the university, they have access to knowledge from various communities. They are given the chance to visit professors during office hours, to talk through course content and progression through the course. They are asked to attend Study Jams, a collaborative learning and study environment with math and writing tutors, provided by OMSS. We encourage involvement because we see it as an investment in your student’s cognitive development.

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3. **Student Involvement continues**

   **Student involvement provides valuable expertise/experience for on-campus, off-campus and post-college opportunities.**

   A wealth of opportunities (i.e., employment, volunteer opportunities and/or graduate school) can be accessed through the network your student builds at DePaul. Students can gain an awareness of on-campus positions through browsing the Campus Employment page, but can also learn about on-campus, off-campus and post-college opportunities through their network of support. Faculty, staff and students create a network of information. As your student engages with faculty, staff and peers, their circle of information widens as well. What does this mean? This allows them to be “in the know” regarding the professional development opportunities available to them. Networking through student involvement can happen formally or informally. For example, the university also provides formal opportunities to do network with alumni in career fields of interest to your student through programs such as Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK). Talk with your student about their involvement goals, as they begin to plan and prioritize their time for winter quarter.

   **Sources:**

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**The OMSS Update - Retention Matters**

Staff members in OMSS are working hard to assist your students with three critical outcomes:

- **Retention**
- **Persistence**
- **Success**

There is a lot of literature surrounding the definition of retention, and the factors that allow students to be successfully “retained” at an institution (Tinto, 2006). Definitions vary and are nuanced. However, a broad definition of retention speaks to the fact that we want our students to come back to the university, academic year to academic year.

We know that there are many institutional factors that allow students to be successfully retained at the institution. This includes a network of support, connections with faculty members and staff within the institution, understanding of financial aid packages, cognitive development outcomes, and more (Tinto, 1993; Tinto, 2006; Astin 1993). These factors are what the OMSS office tires to address as students take their journey here at DePaul. How do we do this? Take a moment to review some of the program offerings we have on our website. As you review the programs, you will find that they are all connected to factors that foster student retention. Encourage your student to take advantage of these programs.