



Parent and Family

OUTREACH AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM



Spring Forward

Greetings! Spring is upon us. First-year DePaul students are working through the last quarter of their first year here. It is a great accomplishment and achievement when they complete this first year. It also is the perfect time to start thinking about next steps. This question is interesting. What's next? This may not be the first time your student hears it and it certainly won't be the last time. The focus of this quarter's newsletter is to start encouraging both students and their parents/families to work together to answer this question. It could be a conversation about living arrangement over the summer and into the next academic year. It could be a discussion about finding job opportunities on and off campus. Whatever the choice of topic, we want you to be prepared to not only ask about what is next, but to be open to the plethora of answers to that question.

This newsletter is the last in the series for this academic year. I have enjoyed being able to offer some insight to the work that the Office of Multicultural Student Success does for and on behalf of our students. I hope that you have had a chance to see how we partner with offices across campus and that the newsletter has given you some insight into the student experience here at DePaul University, and how you are integral to your student's success. I am very excited to see what the quarter holds and look forward to continuing to serve as a resource to you and your student. As always, I am your connection to the Office of Multicultural Student Success and all of our Parent/Family Outreach and Empowerment programs. Have a happy spring and keep in touch.

Sincerely,

Andrea Arzuaga



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How to Have an Adult Relationship with your College Student During Summer Break

By: Gwennyth Bailey Knorr, MA, MEd

New Students and Student Retention, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, DePaul University and Parent

It was the summer of 2009 and our daughter was returning home from her first year away at college. She chose to attend a university that was in a foreign country and we had not seen very much of her during that school year, so we were thrilled at having our “little girl” back home with us for the summer break.

On the day of her arrival, my husband and I eagerly drove to the airport to collect her, and then bring her home where we had her favorite dinner waiting for her on the table, and her room all cleaned and ready for her to “move back in.” My husband and I were looking forward to having her all to ourselves for her first evening back. So, you may imagine that we felt somewhat let down when she came in, dropped her bags at the door, told us she “wasn’t hungry,” and then announced that she was heading out to meet her friends that night and could she also “have the car keys, please?”

The truth of it all is that while our students are away at college, they have to rely on their own decision-making abilities every single day in order to survive and thrive in their new environment. They are solely in charge of what they eat, when and where they go to sleep, who they spend their time with, and how they spend their time. In spite of the fact that they may still be financially dependent upon their families while they attend college, they are managing to take care of everything else that is going on in their lives, the same way that we as their parents do with our own lives. When they return home for the extended summer break only to have their parents both expecting them to be, and then treating them as the “same, immature high school graduate” that was sent off to college a year earlier, tensions inevitably arise.

To keep the peace in our family, we invited our daughter to sit down with us to discuss both her and our expectations for the summer. On the table were the following items: “Curfew,” her participation in the life of our family, and work. Here is what we came up with.

“Curfew”: Our daughter was mystified by the fact that we worried about her late-at-night comings and goings now that she was at home. As she reasonably pointed out to us, “You don’t know what time I get back to my room at school so what is different now?” We shared with her that while we were aware of this, it was still unnerving for us

(make that a cause for insomnia) to have to worry about where she was and when she was coming home, now that she was under our roof again. So the three of us agreed to compromise. My husband and I would accept the fact that a “curfew” was no longer appropriate for her as an adult, and in turn, she would accommodate our instinctive parental worries by keeping us informed through either texts or phone calls, of her general whereabouts as well as her estimated time of arrival.

Family Life: We shared with her that while we understood that her time is hers to plan, that we didn’t want to have the summer slip by, leaving us with the feeling that we hadn’t seen her at all. We agreed that we would eat dinner together as a family once per week, and that she, in turn, would contribute to some of the household chores. This gave her the freedom to determine her schedule, and kept us from feeling as if we were running a “hotel,” instead of a home.

Work: Happily, our daughter showed up with a summer job already secured. We all agreed that having her lying around the house all day doing nothing would not be in her best interests, or ours.

This last item is especially important for college students returning home for the summer. In *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, George D. Kuh, director of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, stresses the importance of the work experience as important preparation for college students who hope to become employed after graduation:

“Substantial research suggests that working during college is related to acquiring such employer-preferred skills as teamwork and time management.... Employment also has the potential to deepen and enrich learning.... and helps students see firsthand the practical value of their classroom learning by applying it in real-life settings—which, additionally, often helps to clarify their career aspirations.”

When your college student returns home for the summer, schedule a planning session where each of you can present your expectations and your hopes for your student’s home conduct, and your family interaction. And then, enjoy this precious time together.

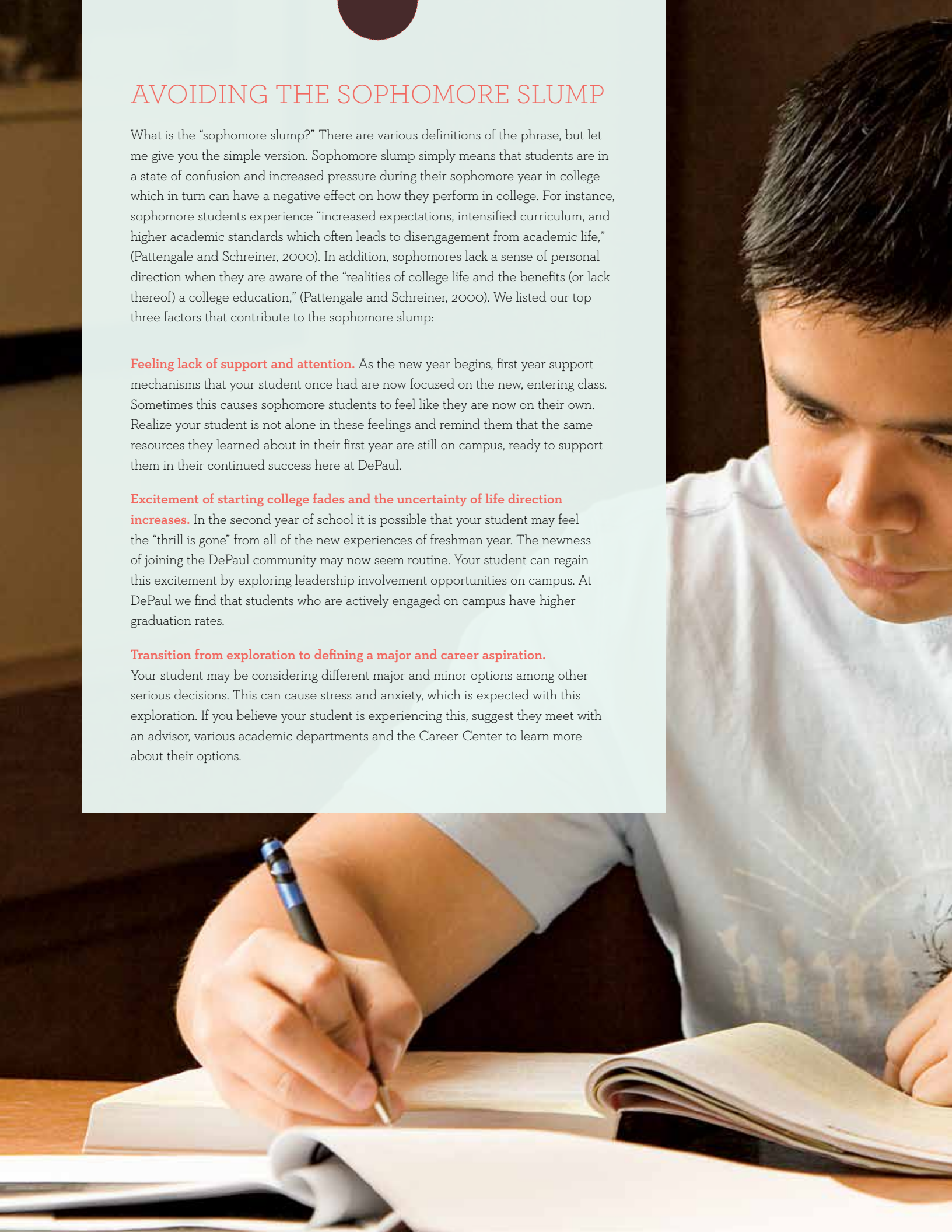
AVOIDING THE SOPHOMORE SLUMP

What is the “sophomore slump?” There are various definitions of the phrase, but let me give you the simple version. Sophomore slump simply means that students are in a state of confusion and increased pressure during their sophomore year in college which in turn can have a negative effect on how they perform in college. For instance, sophomore students experience “increased expectations, intensified curriculum, and higher academic standards which often leads to disengagement from academic life,” (Pattengale and Schreiner, 2000). In addition, sophomores lack a sense of personal direction when they are aware of the “realities of college life and the benefits (or lack thereof) a college education,” (Pattengale and Schreiner, 2000). We listed our top three factors that contribute to the sophomore slump:

Feeling lack of support and attention. As the new year begins, first-year support mechanisms that your student once had are now focused on the new, entering class. Sometimes this causes sophomore students to feel like they are now on their own. Realize your student is not alone in these feelings and remind them that the same resources they learned about in their first year are still on campus, ready to support them in their continued success here at DePaul.

Excitement of starting college fades and the uncertainty of life direction increases. In the second year of school it is possible that your student may feel the “thrill is gone” from all of the new experiences of freshman year. The newness of joining the DePaul community may now seem routine. Your student can regain this excitement by exploring leadership involvement opportunities on campus. At DePaul we find that students who are actively engaged on campus have higher graduation rates.

Transition from exploration to defining a major and career aspiration. Your student may be considering different major and minor options among other serious decisions. This can cause stress and anxiety, which is expected with this exploration. If you believe your student is experiencing this, suggest they meet with an advisor, various academic departments and the Career Center to learn more about their options.



What's Next with OMSS?

As you have read, this is the final newsletter for our parent and family audience, but not the end of the services and resources that OMSS provides. We hope that receiving these newsletters helped you become more aware about your students' experience as a college student and the university resources available to help your student, and increased your involvement in your students' education. Please know you can contact me or our office for any questions you need answered.

Before we end, we want to tell you about some key OMSS programs your students should be aware of going into their sophomore year. Information about these programs can be found at studentaffairs.depaul.edu/omss/index.html.

P.A.T.H.S. OMSS offers the Providing Access Through Holistic Support (P.A.T.H.S.) program to help your student overcome the sophomore slump and increase their career capital. P.A.T.H.S. is a free career exploration program that assists first-generation students, low-income students and students of color to make the critical choice of pursuing a graduate degree or pursuing a career right after they graduate through structured, value-adding campus experiences. P.A.T.H.S. collaborates with nine university departments, including the Career Center, to help your student explore what they want to do after they graduate from DePaul.

Women Empowered. From networking to attending cultural events, the Women Empowered (WE) program offers undergraduate women of color guidance and support in achieving academic, personal, and professional success. Through a combination of Chicago-area excursions and on-campus workshops, a select group meets regularly to build camaraderie among women from diverse backgrounds, explore issues of race and gender, and promote a commitment to service. To empower and support the broader community of women here at DePaul, many of the on-campus workshops offered through WE are open to all women of color.

Men of Color Initiative. The MOC Program focuses on providing males of color with opportunities for life-skills attainment, intergenerational mentoring, graduate and career preparation and civic and community engagement. With the use of on-campus workshops, alumni networking events, Chicago excursions, interactive programs and its "Real Men Serve" campaign, the MOC Initiative experience works to ensure its participants will succeed at their post-graduation endeavors.