



Office of Retention Services

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INSIDE TRACK

July 2009

WELCOME (BACK) TO ARKANSAS TECH

Each month, you will receive the monthly newsletter (Inside Track) from the Office of Parent Relations. We hope this newsletter answers questions you might have, along with sharing timely suggestions to help you during the upcoming month. In the past, this newsletter primarily focused on the parents of incoming freshmen. This year, we are going to expand our horizons and include timely articles not only for parents of incoming freshmen, but also for parents of sophomores and even upper level students when warranted.

Therefore, if you are a "returner" and come across an article that gives you déjà vu, just reminisce how it was a year ago when you were going through this for the first time. If you know a parent of an incoming freshmen, please share your experiences with them and help them navigate through that volatile first semester. They will appreciate it -wouldn't you?

Finally, if there is anything that I can do for you, please do not hesitate to ask. That is why I am here.

AUGUST 15TH! INCOMING FRESHMEN

Living On Campus

On August 15, **freshmen** from around the state and nation will be moving on the campus of Arkansas Tech University. This will be an exciting time and we are ready. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Residential Life at 479-968-0376, or you can visit their website www.atu.edu/reslife/. There you will find a PowerPoint presentation that might be helpful for you on the big day. If your student lives on the first, third, or fifth floor—the earliest you can move in is **10:00 am**. If your student lives on the second or fourth floor—it is **8:30 am**. This will allow a smooth flow of traffic and help everyone handle such a huge transition. For **returning students**, they will be allowed to move in on Monday, August 17th after **9:00 am**.

Keeping your family connected!



PARKING & STUDENT ID'S

Students may pick up their hangtags anytime on or after August 3rd at Public Safety. Hangtags are color-coded to designate where students can park. The student must have their ID with them which they can pick up on or after August 3rd from Student Accounts.

At the time they pick up their hangtags, they will also receive a campus map. This map will show locations where the student will be allowed to park. Make sure to know the regulations because there is no "grace period." Starting Monday, August 17th, if a student parks in a location designated a different color—they will be ticketed. **Never** park in a handicap space unless you have a handicap tag; the fine is mandated by the state of Arkansas and is 100.00 dollars.

LIVING OFF CAMPUS

Living off campus, sometimes students feel left out, or do not know where to go to find out information about activities and organizations on campus. Encourage your off-campus student to find out what is happening by taking these three steps:

1. Visit the Student Services Office on the Second floor of Doc Bryan. While there, they can pick up a list of monthly activities and student organizations that might interest them. They can also check out the website at www.atu.edu/stuserv.
2. Meet with their mentor. Each student is assigned a mentor from the Bridge to Excellence (B2E) program. This mentor will help them with any questions they might have. Mentors are an excellent source for information about activities and organizations on campus.
3. Ask classmates and/or instructor. The classroom itself can be one of the best places to find out about upcoming activities or campus organizations to join.

COMMUTER (OFF-CAMPUS) STUDENTS

If your student will be driving to class, here are a few tips that will help him or her start the year off right.

First and foremost, you **MUST** park in their designated zone. For off-campus students, it is designated with a YELLOW hangtag and YELLOW signs.

Helpful hint—Your student should arrive on campus at least **30 minutes early** for the first week to ten days. During this time many students are unfamiliar with the parking rules and regulations and therefore your student might find it difficult to find a parking space. A great recommendation is to find a parking place that is in a central location of your classes so you can keep books and other items in the car for quick access when needed.

TIPS FOR MOVE-IN DAY

From PaperClip Productions, here are a few tips that might help you during the big day:

1. **Give yourself time.** You want to make sure to have enough time to help your student unpack and arrange a little. Leave the final decorating and organization to your student and their roommate. You may want to take time to get to know your student's roommate and family too. Planning to grab a bite to eat after both students are settled could serve as a good transition for everyone.
2. **Be patient!** Lots of people will be trying to do the same thing all at once. A friendly help, door held, or patient pause will go a long way.
3. **Plan for the weather.** It is usually very hot that day, so make sure to have plenty of water, and dress accordingly.
4. **Pay attention to the directions provided.** It creates undue stress and confusion when families ignore a well-thought out process designed to make move-in the smoothest process possible.
5. **Keep in mind the emotions everyone may be feeling.** Freshmen are probably feeling excitement, anxiety, and even a little bit of fear. Family members may be dealing with a whole host of adjustment issues of their own.
6. **Have everything done the night before.** Start early and be ready to go in the morning. Make a written list of everything to bring and check it off as you pack it in the car.

SOPHOMORE YEAR ISSUES:

For Parents of students who are returning for the second year, here are some ways provide support.

Often referred to as the “sophomore slump,” the second year of college can be filled with many questions and few immediate answers. Sometimes the questions are related to academic studies, or peer and family relationships. Sometimes, feelings related to values and beliefs can raise internal questions. And, of course, the ever so popular, “What am I going to do with my life?” question comes more frequently throughout the second year. These questions, coupled with the physical return to a campus that isn’t quite as new or adventurous as it was in the first year, can create a stressful and overwhelming time for second-year students.

Key Issues In The Sophomore Year

Academics

- _ Fear that initial success was just “lucky” and can’t be repeated
- _ Pressure to choose, and succeed, in a major and/or minor
- _ Uncertainty about future profession
- _ Take courses with upper-class students
- _ Need to build relationships with professors
- _ Surprised by the increased challenge in studies

Relationships

- _ Include more people
- _ Decrease in the need to go home
- _ Decrease in friendships back home
- _ Include different types of people
- _ Experience new communities
- _ Involvement in new “types” of groups/organizations

Finances

- _ Use of finances for immediate gratification
- _ Lack of a long-term financial picture
- _ Guilt about financial investment being put into someone with no future plans
- _ Lack of finances could lead to dropping out

Self-Awareness

- _ Low energy and drive
- _ Feel invisible on campus
- _ Lack of motivation—doing the same ole’ thing
- _ Bittersweet—provides personal freedom AND creates internal anxiety
- _ More personal emphasis on weaknesses, rather than strengths
- _ The “newness” is gone
- _ The “real world” still seems far away
- _ Begin the search for purpose and meaning

What Can My Student Do to Get Out of the Slump?

- _ Visit the Career Services Office to take career assessments, talk to an advisor, and explore possible major and career options.
- _ Visit the Student Activities Office to explore involvement opportunities.
- _ Visit the Counseling Center to discuss feelings and stressors, and gain ways to resolve them.
- _ Visit a professor or academic advisor to determine if there is a need for tutoring or academic support; assess current course-load, and research “fun” classes to continue the exploration of potential areas of interest.
- _ Talk to an upper-class mentor to learn that the “slump” is natural and you can get over it. The “sophomore slump” is real and can be successfully addressed. These resources can help your student discern where he is now, where he wants to be and what he needs to do to get out of the “slump.” He will become more self-aware, personally developed and prepared to move on in his higher education. *Prepared for Arkansas Tech University by PaperClip Communications. Reproduced or retransmitted under license with PaperClip Communications.*

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Seasonal Student Issues

Just like sophomores (from previous page), first-time students are also facing difficult issues. There is a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues, here are a few things your freshmen student may be experiencing this month.

- ◇ *Feeling sad about leaving established friends and family at home.*
- ◇ *Concern about issues of belonging and finding a comfortable place on campus.*
- ◇ *Excitement coupled with anxiety about making a fresh start.*
- ◇ *Worry about academics being “hard” and beyond their abilities.*
- ◇ *Thinking about what type of first impression they’ll make.*
- ◇ *Concern about roommates and housing (if living on campus).*
- ◇ *Wondering what to pack and what to leave at home since space will be limited.*
- ◇ *Possibly transitioning into a long-distance relationship or deciding to end a current one.*

More Move-in tips...

Some important things you might bring on August 15th.

- ◇ *If you have a hand dolly—bring it. This can help with heavy boxes.*
- ◇ *Pack only the essentials. You don’t have to take everything home in December, but you will in May.*
- ◇ *Bring tools. A small tool kit with screwdrivers and pliers could be VERY handy.*
- ◇ *Don’t forget treasures. Photos of friends and loved ones, as well as soft bedding and pillows make for a more comforting environment.*
- ◇ *Items like an Ethernet cable, extension cord, shower caddy, and shower shoes are other items one might bring.*

These are things **SHOULD NOT** be brought on Move-in Day.

- ◇ *Winter clothes. Your student will have plenty of time to bring those at a later time, if they need them at all.*
- ◇ *Hot plates and toaster ovens. These are “open coil” and aren’t allowed.*
- ◇ *Candles and incense. No flames. No fires.*
- ◇ *Extra furniture. Beds, mattresses, chests of drawers and desks book case, and mirrors are provided.*
- ◇ *Nails and Screws. These are not allowed so instead bring poster putty and adhesives.*
- ◇ *Pets. No pets allowed.*

CHANGE IS "IN THE MAIL"

Starting this fall, there will be a new address for students who receive mail through the University Post Office. The United States Post Office has notified Arkansas Tech that it will require the university to change how mail is addressed for students with a post office box.

The new format to address mail is as follows:

Student's Name

(Box Number) Tech Lane

Russellville, AR 72801

Postmistress Lee Ann Riley from the University Post Office said they will work to make the change as smooth as possible.

If you have PACKAGES being delivered from UPS or Federal Express, you may have them sent to:

Attn: Student's Name

Arkansas Tech University

Housing Operations Office

502 West "M" Street

Russellville, AR 72801

ANY ADVICE?

Parents of returning students, do you have any advice for the incoming parents? What worked last year? What didn't? What should they expect, or not expect? Do you have any stories that might put their mind at ease? It would be great to hear from the "veterans" of the first year! What did your student do that made you laugh, or not? This will be useful information from first-hand experiences. If you want to contribute, please go to <http://www.questionpro.com/akira/TakeSurvey?id=1302680>. It is just one question.

The most important thing I would tell incoming parents would be _____?

The survey is anonymous, but if you would like to add your name, that is fine. I am sure parents would like to hear testimonials about the first year. This could help them understand that everything is going to be ok!

UNDECIDED? NO PROBLEM!

Is your student unsure about his/her major and career? Consider suggesting career development. Career Development Specialist Brian Henderson provides a series of personality assessment tools that will be used to help your student find his/her ideal major or career based upon interests, motivational traits, personality, values, abilities, aptitudes, personal work style, and work environment preferences. Have your student contact our Career Development office at (479) 968-0278 or email bhenderson3@atu.edu for more information.

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Updating Contact Information

If you are already a member of the TECH PARENT ASSOCIATION, but need to update your information, please go to...

www.atu.edu/parents
and look for the update link.

Thank You.

TECH
Parent Association