

FALL 2008
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Student Involvement & Leadership Development
parents'
ASSOCIATION



Dear NIU Parents,

Greetings from Northern Illinois University! As a parent, your support and encouragement are essential to your student's success. We know that by engaging family members as active partners we can more efficiently obtain several common goals, including your student's academic success, personal growth, and progress toward graduation.

How can we work together? Encourage, persuade, or insist(!) that your student become actively engaged on campus, both academically and socially. Students who find their niche at NIU are more successful in the classroom, experience personal growth, and graduate more often than students who are not actively involved.

I'd like to share with you two specific factors that will have a big impact on your student's success. First, it is imperative that students get to know their faculty members! NIU students benefit greatly by collaborating with the talented group of professors within this community. Their willingness to connect with faculty members will add significant value to their educational experience.

Second, it is just as important that your student engage outside the classroom in the vast array of programs and leadership opportunities at NIU. These complementary activities allow your student to bring to life in-class instruction, notably increasing their understanding and retention of the concepts. Students who engage in scholarship, leadership, and service add a lasting and meaningful dimension to their college experiences. They will find greater success, both academically and socially, during their college years and later as community leaders and distinguished NIU alumni!

I encourage you to partner with us through the NIU Parents' Association as we work together to ensure that your student has a world-class NIU experience from Orientation to Graduation. Have a great semester!

Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs

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Dear NIU Parents,

As NIU welcomes the class of 2012 to campus, the Parents' Association would like to welcome the parents and families of these students—as well as welcome back our returning families. My name is Becky Harlow, your liaison to the

Parents' Association, and I am thrilled at the opportunity to work with you. As your link to campus, I will do all that I can to keep you “in touch” with life at Northern Illinois University.

The Association has many exciting activities and events planned for our parents and families this year. Hopefully you were able to join us for Family Weekend on September 19-21. Family Weekend is a great opportunity for your student to “show and tell” you all about their life as a Huskie. I trust that you took advantage of the time you had together and took in a meal in their residence hall, attended the football game, as well as met your student's friends and neighbors!

Spring semester will bring activities for Moms' Weekend (March 27-29) and Dads' Weekend (February 27-March 1). Information on these events is available on the Parents' Association web site. I encourage you to visit us on the Web at <http://www.niu.edu/studentinvolvement/parentsassoc/index.shtml> in order to keep up-to-date on all Parents' Association news and events.

To those of you who have already joined the NIU Parents' Association, I'd like to say thank you and welcome! For anyone who has not yet begun to enjoy the benefits of membership, I invite you to do so now by completing and submitting the application at the end of this newsletter.

Of course, if I can be of any assistance to you, please contact me at parents@niu.edu. I look forward to working with you this year!

Becky Harlow
Assistant Director
Student Involvement and Leadership Development
(815) 752-2222

Parents' Association: Who Are We?

Our Mission of the NIU Parents' Association is to provide a link between the university and the families of NIU students. The Parents' Association provides:

- An opportunity for families to play an active, supportive role in the education of their student.
- A forum for fellowship and networking opportunities with other parents via workshops or other activities.
- An opportunity to be informed of events and activities at NIU that might be of interest to families.
- Events to bring families back to the university (i.e., Move-In Day, Family Weekend, Homecoming, Meetings, Special Events and more).
- An arena to pose questions, express concerns, and learn more about campus issues.
- A chance to further the educational goals of Northern Illinois University by improving communication between families and the university community.

We are able to answer questions, refer you to appropriate offices, listen to your concerns, and help you get the most out of your Northern Illinois University experience.

Please feel free to contact us:

Address:

Student Involvement & Leadership Development
Parents' Association
Campus Life Building 150
DeKalb, IL 60115

Phone: 815-752-2222

FAX: 815-753-2905

E-Mail: parents@niu.edu

Web: <http://www.niu.edu/studentinvolvement/parentsassoc/index.shtml>

Adviser: Becky Harlow

Phone: (815) 753-6703

E-Mail: rharlow@niu.edu

Academic Advising Center

Each year a significant number of students enter Northern Illinois University without choosing a major. The **Academic Advising Center (AAC)** works with “undecided-any college” students from the time they arrive on campus during orientation until they’ve made an informed major choice. Our mission is to advise students as they develop meaningful academic plans compatible with their educational and life goals. In addition to serving “undecided” students, the AAC also assists students seeking alternative majors and students reassessing their current academic situation. Specifically the AAC:

- Works with students to identify areas of interest, academic strengths, past experiences, extracurricular activities, and life goals.
- Assists students in the selection of appropriate general education courses and beginning major courses that will allow students to explore possible interests, preferences, and passions while keeping students’ academic options open.
- Introduces students to specific major requirements and co-curricular options to help them make an informed major choice.
- Refers students to appropriate academic departments, college advising offices, and other support services so that students can learn more about what’s available to them at Northern.

In conjunction with Housing & Dining Services, the Academic Advising Center also manages the **Exploring Majors House (EMH)**, a living-learning community for students who are exploring majors and other academic opportunities. The EMH is located in Grant Towers. Learning experiences in the EMH expose students to potential majors at NIU; help students explore their interests, abilities, strengths, and values; introduce students to faculty from across campus; and enable students to form strong connections with each other. Learning Experiences have included trips to the Board of Trade and Federal Reserve in Chicago, the Brookfield Zoo, Shakespeare Theatre at Navy Pier, and the Shedd Aquarium. Students have also participated in a “Dinner with a Professor” series, learning about the major exploration process, and a number of cultural and civic activities throughout the year.

Information about the Academic Advising Center and the Exploring Majors House can be viewed at <http://www.advisingcenter.niu.edu/advising/>

Release of Information to Parents of Students

Access to Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) as amended is a federal law intended to protect the privacy of student educational records accumulated from early childhood through college. FERPA provided parents with certain rights with respect to their children’s education records. However, once a student reaches the age of 18 or enters college, the rights previously held by the parents transfer exclusively to the student. Ordinarily, parents of Northern Illinois University students obtain information about their children’s records directly from their children. FERPA does state that the University may release information to the parents of a student but is not required to do so. The Office of Registration and Records may disclose information to parents by:

1. Parents may obtain the student’s written consent. This would be in the form of a simple letter authorizing Registration and Records to disclose copies of scholastic and other records to his or her parent. OR
2. Parents may submit a copy of the first page of their most recent income tax return indicating that the student is a dependent as defined in Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

The payment of a student’s tuition by the parent does not, by itself, give the parent the right of access to a student’s record. Questions concerning these procedures may be directed to the Office of Registration and Records at (815) 753-0681.

Additional information made available by College Parents of America on FERPA and parents may be found at <http://www.collegeparents.org/cpa/resource-current-campus-ferpa.html>.

Counseling & Student Development Center

Support is Just a Call (or Short Walk) Away! by Dr. Tim Paquette, Assistant Director

On behalf of the staff at the Counseling and Student Development Center (CSDC), I am grateful for the opportunity to provide an overview of the services we provide to NIU students. It is our hope that students have had generally positive experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. At the same time, we know that the emotional and academic pressure of college life (and life in general) can create situations where students find themselves struggling with various concerns. The mission of the CSDC is to support the academic, emotional, social, and cultural development of all students. We work to meet this mission by offering a variety of services such as individual counseling, group counseling, consultation with family members or faculty/staff, and programs that focus on healthy personal and emotional well-being. We help students address personal challenges and acquire the attitudes, abilities, and knowledge that will allow them to take full advantage of their college experience.

Our staff of trained professionals is always available for consultation. If you have personal concerns or are concerned about someone you care about, please call our office at **815-753-1206**. Students are encouraged to simply walk-in to our office to meet with a counselor. Our office is located in the **Campus Life Building, Room 200** and is centrally located on campus on the corner of Normal and Lucinda roads, across from the Holmes Student Center. This means that you never have to walk far to attend a walk-in appointment.

Our walk-in hours are Monday through Friday from 11:00-3:30. Students do not need to schedule an appointment before they come to our office, but they are asked to complete 15-20 minutes of paperwork before they meet with a walk-in counselor. At the end of a walk-in appointment, the student and counselor will decide on a course of action that best meets the student's needs.

It is also important to highlight that the CSDC is home to the Coaching for Academic Success program. This program helps students develop effective study skills in the areas of time management, note taking, reading, and test preparation. Students can meet one-on-one with our Coaching staff to address study skills concerns and meet their academic goals. As we often tell students who attend Coaching appointments, it is never too late to develop strong study skills that can have a positive impact!

Whether students are facing more long-term concerns or a situation that has happened more recently, remember that help is always just a phone call or short walk away. If you find that your concerns are impacting your emotional well-being or your ability to successfully achieve your goals, contact the CSDC today!

You can learn more about us and the services we provide at our homepage: www.niu.edu/csdc.

When Your Student Comes Home

Home for the Holidays: Tips for Helping Students and Family Survive (and Enjoy!) the Winter Break

Winter Break is here and your student will be returning home for him or her first extended visit. You may encounter some changes in your student as well as your family dynamic. Navigating the bumpy road can be tricky, but there is hope. Denise Witmer from About.com has some tips for "surviving" that first extended visit. Visit http://parentingteens.about.com/od/collegeinfo/a/college_student.htm for more information.



Student Organizational Services

Getting Involved!

Dear Parents,

As we begin the process of coming towards the end of the fall semester, how many of your students have found an organization, activity, or club by which to involve themselves in yet? As many of you have probably heard by now, students who are involved on campus in some way develop a connection to the university that greatly assists their ability to be successful here at NIU. But let's be honest, the actual process of finding the right organization for your student can sometimes be challenging. That is where Student Organizational Services (S.O.S.) comes in. If your student is having trouble finding a group, send them over to meet with an S.O.S. professional in the Campus Life Building. We have a database of over two hundred organizations as well as up-to-date contact information for their executive boards. Our purpose is to work with your student to put them in direct contact with student organizations as well as helping them find which group would best fit their interests.

Perhaps your student has already seen the list of organizations at NIU and didn't see anything that fit their interests. This isn't a problem at all. With just a few other friends with the same interest, your student can easily be guided in the process of developing his or her very own Student Association funded student organization. So parents, don't take no for an answer! If your student comes home for Winter Break and still hasn't gotten involved on campus, don't hesitate to send them to meet me.

-Rob Budach
Student Organizational Services

Parents' Association Endowed Scholarship

The scholarship is open to all degree seeking current junior and senior students who have at least a 3.0 grade point average (GPA). Other requirements include involvement in extra-curricular activities and community service. Students interested in applying for the scholarship must also write a personal statement and supply letters of recommendation with their application. Applications will be available in December. The Parents' Association will announce the winner of the Parents' Association Endowed Scholarship on April 26, 2009 during the Kevin Knight Leadership Awards Ceremony. The winner will receive their scholarship at the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year.



2008 Parents' Association
Endowed Scholarship recipients:
Lindsay Cutting and Aya Shoukry
(not pictured: Aya Shoukry)

Hello from Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services!

While we will assist anyone that contacts our office, our focus is on commuter (any student living off campus) and non-traditional students (any undergraduate who is 24 years old or older, someone who has a dependent, or military veterans) at Northern Illinois University. We understand that the life of a commuter, and/or non-traditional student can be very different from that of the typical college student. We also realize that students have many responsibilities outside of the classroom. Many of them work, have families and other obligations they have to balance. Each student has unique challenges and we are here to help make their college career a little smoother.

Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services are here to provide your student with programs, services, referrals and a home away from home during their time at Northern Illinois University. Located in the lower level of the Holmes Student Center, room 23j (next to a large computer lab) we offer comfortable sofas, study tables, and great resources. If your student needs a place to take a break or eat between classes, encourage them to come to our lounge to store their food in our full-sized refrigerator and use our microwaves. If they need a place to stash their books throughout the day, they can sign up for a locker in the basement of the Holmes Student Center.

We know that your student needs to plan ahead to balance their schedule. Please encourage them to stop in and visit our office and lounge space, call us (815.753.9999), drop us a line at CommNonTrad@niu.edu, or better yet, join our Facebook group (Commuter & Non-Traditional Student Services: What's the 411?). Any way they choose to contact us we would be happy to assist them.

We hope to meet your student soon!

Students' Legal Services

Dear Parents,

As a student at Northern Illinois University, your son or daughter is eligible for free legal services provided by Students Legal Assistance. We have two full-time, licensed attorneys on staff and a strong supporting crew of civil service personnel, law clerks from the N.I.U. College of Law, and undergraduate work-study students---all dedicated to providing the best legal assistance we can to our student clients.

The areas of our practice are diverse, including landlord/tenant matters, traffic and ordinance violations, consumer and employment issues, insurance, domestic relations, discrimination, and auto accidents. Assistance includes advise and consultation, advocacy, and, in appropriate cases, court representation.

We also engage in an extensive legal education program, the purpose of which is to provide information on a wide variety of legal topics of relevance to college students. Our website, www.niu.edu/legal, contains detailed discussions of such topics, as well as an attorney referral list, a legal links section, and legal forms.

One area of current emphasis is counseling on avoiding and recovering from consumer and credit card debt.

Increasingly, employers obtain such records about prospective employees as a routine part of their hiring practices. It is easy for any of us to fall into debt, more so for college students who typically have a fixed or limited income flow during the academic year. The strategy of credit card companies to offer credit cards to college students despite a lack of income or proven credit history compounds the problem. The tenor of our advice is not that students not obtain a credit card, but that they become knowledgeable about the numerous pitfalls of credit card use before they apply, limit the number of cards they obtain, restrict their use to specific kinds of transactions, and, above all, pay off balances promptly. We recommend that students never put friends or acquaintances on their credit cards, or allow others to access their cards. We also assist incoming students in familiarizing themselves on how to construct and follow a monthly budget.

Important Phone Numbers from This Issue's Contributors

Academic Advising Center: 815-753-2573
 Counseling and Student Development Center: 815-753-1206
 Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services: 815-753-9999
 Student Involvement and Leadership Development: 815-753-1421
 Student Legal Services: 815-753-1701



Parents' Notes

Do you have suggestions or advice for fellow parents? Want to relay tips that you might have for parents who are new to the university? Is there a short story about a first-year college experience that you would like to share with our readers? Perhaps you have some words of wisdom or support that help you get through the day and might help someone else. Here is your opportunity to share your knowledge and stories with other parents. Email your stories, advice, tips, and comments to parents@niu.edu and watch for your information to appear in the "Parents' Notes" section in this newsletter.

Upcoming Events...

Winter Break – December 15-January 9
 Dads' Weekend- February 27-March 1
 Moms' Weekend- March 27-29

For registration information and event details visit our website at <http://www.niu.edu/studentinvolvement/parentsassoc/index.shtml>

NIU Parents' Association Membership Form

Welcome to Northern Illinois University! We are glad you and your son/daughter have decided to make NIU your academic home. We hope that this can be an exciting time for you as well. Through the Parents' Association, we seek to provide meaningful opportunities for you to share in your son's/daughter's college experience. This organization is not like most high school parent-teacher associations where parents serve the school. NIU Parents' Association is here to provide you with programs and services that will help keep you informed and connected to Northern Illinois University. Once you join, you are always a member!

Through Membership you will receive:

- Information and on-going communication about university events.
- 10% discount at the NIU University Bookstore on spirit wear and souvenirs.
- Discount ticket prices for Family Weekend, Moms' Weekend and Dads' Weekend events.
- Discount on Huskie Bash tickets.
- A 10% discount off of room rates at the on-campus hotel in the Holmes Student Center
- Your membership card and/or verification of membership number must be presented at time of check-in.
- Campus socials to help you network with NIU families in your own community (DeKalb, Naperville, Rockford, Hoffman Estates)

These discounts and benefits are subject to change over time.

There is a **one-time** cost of **\$50.00**

Send this form and payment to:

Parents' Association
 Student Involvement & Leadership Development
 Campus Life Building, Suite 150
 Northern Illinois University
 DeKalb, IL 60115

Northern Illinois University is an equal opportunity/
 affirmative action institution.

Student Involvement & Leadership Development
Division of Student Affairs

Campus Life Building 150
DeKalb, IL 60115



Contact Information

Parent's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Full Address: _____ E-mail: _____

Student's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Student Address: _____ E-Mail: _____

Year in School: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Transfer Student

Parents' Association Membership Fee \$50.00

Payment Information

Cash Check Credit Card # _____
 Visa MasterCard Discover

Print Name (as it appears on credit card) _____

Signature _____ Expiration Date _____

<p>Office Use Only Membership Number: _____ Date Processed: _____ Staff: _____ Campus Life Building, Suite 150, 815-752-2222, parents@niu.edu</p>
