

A Guide to the Academic Year

August

Resident Issues:

- Adjusting to college life
- Feeling lonely and/or homesick
- Having a lack of social life
- Having a lot of questions, but not quite sure where to get them answered
- Anxiety about new beginnings, policy restrictions, living with a (new) roommate, etc.
- Roommate conflicts
- Managing money
- Experimenting with alcohol and/or drugs
- International students may feel confused about social customs, the language; may also feel like they do not have an advocate in the states



What can you do?

- Set a schedule for yourself
- Attend programs in your community and on campus
- Go to an area council meeting and get involved
- Talk to your RA
- Start a diary
- Fill out your roommate agreement and discuss the questions with your roommate
- Set a budget for yourself
- Remember...alcohol is illegal if you are under 21 and drugs are illegal all the time!
- Get out and meet people in your community

September

Resident Issues:

- Students run the risk of feeling disconnected from their peers if they don't feel "connected" to school and/or other organizations
- A desire to fit in
- Exploration and acknowledgement of personal values
- Long distance relationship strain
- Feelings of loneliness and homesickness increase
- Roommate conflicts
- Continued experimentation with drugs/alcohol
- Wondering how they'll handle their academic load

What can you do?

- Find a club or organization related to one of your interests
- Go to the dining hall with some other residents

- Keep in touch with your friends and family from back home
- Share your feelings about loneliness or homesickness with your RA
- Talk with your roommate about the conflict and try to come to an agreement
- Keep yourself organized and know your academic due dates

October

Resident Issues:

- First Time In College (FTIC) students may begin to realize that college is not as idyllic as they believed
- Diversity issues become apparent
- Conflicts between friends
- Falling behind in class work, not getting expected grades, and a fear of meeting with professors one-on-one
- Anticipation and anxiety over midterm exams
- Fear of failing
- Masks begin to come off; the “honeymoon” phase is over with roommates
- Job panic for mid-year graduates



What can you do?

- Realize that maybe college isn't quite what you thought it would be—and that's okay!
- Prioritize your time, including time with friends and classwork
- Study!
- Take care of yourself—get enough sleep, eat, take time out for yourself
- Understand that you may be doing things to annoy your roommate just as much as they are annoying you

November

Resident Issues:

- Roommate problems and group tension
- Academic pressure has mounted because of procrastination, difficulty of work, lack of ability, or burnout
- Problems from increased alcohol consumption
- Increasing thoughts of isolation, loneliness, and hopelessness could spike thoughts of suicide
- Job search stress over finding a winter break job
- Lack of initiative to find new friends or new activities because social groups already seem to be established



What can you do?

- Sit down and reevaluate your roommate agreement form with your roommate
- Be honest with yourself about where you spend your time—make classes a bigger priority if necessary

- Talk to a counselor—set up an appointment at the counseling center today!
- Keep attending programs through area council and RHA

December

Resident Issues:

- Financial strain due to holiday gifts and travel costs
- Excitement about returning home for some; dread for others
- Much panic, fear, and cramming as finals approach, papers are due, tempers are high, and the realization for some that they may not return next semester
- Religious conflicts
- Increased use of alcohol and/or drugs
- Pressures increase to participate in sexual activity because of the approach of vacation and extended separation

What can you do?

- Make personalized gifts for family and friends
- Carpool home with someone
- Just like with midterms: sleep, eat, take time for yourself
- Talk to your teachers if you have any religious conflicts with the exam schedule
- Remember that drugs and alcohol are not answers to your problems—they'll just make everything worse in the end
- If you do engage in sexual activity, be safe and protect yourself

January

Resident Issues:

- Renewed interest in classes
- New leaders begin to emerge within the community
- Feelings of happiness/restlessness from break
- Resolve to do better academically
- New students feel out of place, like they are intruding on established friendships
- Unwanted weight gain
- Possible roommate changes
- Cold (cooler) weather blues
- Not many social activities scheduled



What can you do?

- It's the start of a new semester; start it off with a clean slate!
- Start a planner and keep your schedule organized
- Be honest with yourself and change up your study habits if necessary

- Meet the new people in your community
- Reconnect with your RA
- Look out for more clubs or organizations
- Resolve to eat healthier and be more active
- If you have a new roommate, fill out the roommate agreement form
- Stay warm!
- Find ways to keep busy on campus (check out the calendar)

February

Resident Issues:

- Routine month – for many, school starts to feel like home
- Missing family and friends from home as well as friends who did not return to school
- Problems getting into study mode
- Cliques becoming stronger
- Cabin fever and burnout
- Valentine depression if not in a relationship
- Vocational choice/internship search causes anxiety
- Spring break planning begins
- Social calendar is not very active



What can you do?

- Give yourself incentives for doing school work (for example, for every hour you study, you get to watch 30 minutes of TV)
- Send your friends and family Valentine's
- Keep your options open for Spring Break
- Pick up a new hobby
- Explore campus and get to know it better
- Join an intramural team—you'll meet new people and it gives you a break from school work

March

Resident Issues:

- Hidden conflicts with roommates and friends begin to arise
- Drugs and alcohol use may increase
- Low energy levels and restlessness
- Changing or deciding on a major
- Mid-semester slump and sickness
- Midterm anxiety
- Next year plans: academics, housing, financial aid
- Seniors thinking about graduation – senioritis sets in
- Excitement or depression over Spring Break plans



What can you do?

- Talk with your roommate; don't keep issues bottled up
- Get enough sleep—it gives you energy for everything else you do!
- Make an appointment with your academic advisor and explore your Major options
- Read your email so you know upcoming dates for room sign up, class registration, or financial aid
- Keep the end in sight, but remember that you still have a month to go!

April

Resident Issues:

- Spring fever (and problems) as students become restless
- Anticipation and anxiety of the end of the year
- Frustrations and confusion develops because of registration
- Papers and exams piling up – loss of motivation; lots of cramming
- Summer job panic
- Feeling like they are no longer accountable for their actions
- Sexual assault incidents increase
- Concerns about moving home or somewhere else for the summer
- Packing, checking out, and saying good-bye



What can you do?

- Stay on top of your school work
- Study before finals week
- Remember you still have to follow the rules!
- Be safe and remain vigilant on campus
- Report any suspicious behavior to UPD
- Spend time with your friends before leaving for the summer

This information adapted from a publication by PaperClip Communications (2009).