At the end of orientation, many parents feel overwhelmed by all the information they have been given. Your Parent/Family Association wants to help. Following are some words of wisdom from parents who have been there and from a former resident advisor (RA) about move-in, college and transitioning to this new chapter of life for both students and families.

**Move-In**

Move-in is always a busy time in the residence halls. Here are a few tips to help you help your student move-in.

- You do not need to go with your students to check in. The fewer people in line the quicker it will move. Start unpacking the car instead.
- Carts are available in all of the halls for move-in. Keep in mind that some halls ask that you check them out and that the carts are very hard to find during prime move-in times.
- Volunteers are available to help with move-in the first weekend the halls are open.
- Plan ahead. The first few days of move-in are the busiest with the majority of students arriving on those days. Early morning and late afternoon generally are the least busy for move-in.
- Familiarize yourself with the opening times. The halls will follow those. If you arrive too early you will have to wait.
- Remind your student that they will have one closet and one set of drawers. They do not need to bring everything from home. It may be a good idea to plan on having your student switch out clothing on breaks or visits home.
- Think about the things that you need to bring from home and the things that you can buy in Bozeman. There are plenty of places in Bozeman to buy storage containers, bed spreads, and bathroom products. The fewer belongings you have the quicker the move and the more enjoyable the trip to Bozeman will be without all of that stuff in the car.
- You really don’t need a car. Biking, walking, and the free local Streamline bus are great ways to get around and you don’t have to dig them out of the snow.

**Transitioning**

Keeping in contact is really important to parents and families, but it sometimes becomes difficult as students move to college. Here are some suggestions to help the transition.

- Talk to your student about how you want to communicate. Think about setting a regular time talk, that way they know when you will call and can plan accordingly.
- Think about other forms of communication. Email is great for students and receiving packages in that mail is even better.

**College**

Here are some things that you may want to talk to your student about.

- MSU has many major options. Your student may find that they do not like the major they are in. Encourage them to explore other majors.
- Many students at MSU could get minors but they don’t think about it until it is too late. Have your student think about whether they may be interested in a minor. It is possible to complete a minor in 4 years if you start early.
- Issues will arise. Encourage your students to talk to their RA’s if they have any problems. You may want to do something yourself but in many cases the RA’s cannot take action until the student talks to them personally.

**Stay informed!** Read the Family Newsletter (an academic year, monthly e-newsletter for parents) and Bobcat Bulletin (a weekly e-newsletter focused on promoting all things MSU in the community). Subscribe to these publications at: www.montana.edu/pfa
WHAT IS IT?

The PFA is a group consisting of all parents and families of current students. The organization is governed by a Board made up entirely of parent volunteers. The Board determines the allocation of funds and the goals and priorities for the group. A list of current board members, meeting minutes and agendas, as well as the constitution and by-laws is online at www.montana.edu/pfa.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PFA?

The mission of the Association is:

- To serve as a clearinghouse for information, resources and services for parents and family members of MSU students;
- To provide network opportunities for parents and families of MSU students;
- To provide opportunities for parents and families to become involved with MSU;
- To serve as liaison between parents and family members and the university;
- To support and encourage student recruitment and retention.

PHONATHON

This phonathon is the primary fundraiser for the PFA. All donations are used to support the above listed purposes, as well as to support the success of our students. The Board distributes the monies based on current priorities and goals. Over the past several years, student scholarships and support of student organizations have been the primary targets.

WHAT DOES THE PFA DO FOR YOU?

The PFA, together with Student Affairs created the Parent and Family Web destination, www.montana.edu/parents as a way to assist parents in finding the information they need, when it’s needed. The site brings together resources from all over campus into one easy place. The PFA publishes the monthly Family Newsletter with input and collaboration from departments across campus. This is a comprehensive document containing important deadlines, campus activities, feature stories, program information and more. It combines resources already available around campus into one document, delivered directly to you, so that you have access to information in a timely manner. To subscribe, visit www.montana.edu/pfa or call 406.994-2502.

In addition, the PFA hosts the annual Parent/Family Weekend. This is a terrific time to reconnect with your student, meet people around campus and explore the campus and community. Please plan to attend the next event which will be held October 22-24. Information regarding hotel discounts is online now at: www.montana.edu/pfa. A full calendar of activities and online registration will be available no later than September 1, 2010.

The PFA hub on campus is located in the Office of Communications and Public Affairs. Staff is available anytime you have a question, concern, idea or just need someone to hear you and help you find a solution or resource. Please contact Jodie DeLay, PFA Campus Coordinator, with any questions, comments, ideas or concerns – or to volunteer to serve on the Board. Parents like you are responsible for recent improved communications and are vital to continuing to develop and enhance the connection between MSU and families of our students. Please consider getting involved.

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