

## When does my student need to be on campus?

With Move-In Day slated for August 27th and the first day of classes on September 2nd, many parents are wondering when their student really needs to be in Bozeman to begin fall semester. We asked staff and veteran parents their opinion. The responses varied, but all agreed that it really depends on the individual situation.

### General points:

-New students who have not yet attended an orientation must arrive on the 27th and attend the final session; this includes transfer students.

-Students and families may arrive anytime between August 27 and September 1. It is not a choice of one or the other!

-Returning students who are already familiar with the campus, and especially who are planning to live off-campus, can relax and enjoy a long, family Labor Day weekend. Naturally, these students will need to plan accordingly to be sure that their living arrangements are ready to go – the utilities are turned on, garbage service is activated, etc.



**Parent Tip:** If your student is living off-campus, encourage him/her to meet the neighbors in person as soon as possible. This can be a critical step if problems arise down the road; and is a good idea for anyone who moves into a new area. If you have a barbecue or get-together of some kind, invite them over. We all understand people better if we know a little about them.

-Families may arrive for Move-In Day to allow the student to begin getting settled, and still leave campus together for an extended holiday weekend.

-Travel distance, vacation plans and work schedules should all be considered; having an extra day really allows for more flexibility for families and there isn't any "right" time to arrive!

-The [Bookstore](#) will be open through the weekend and have limited hours on Labor Day.

-Student Activities, Residence Life, Intramurals and many additional offices and departments are planning safe, fun activities for the first few weeks of the semester. Regardless of when you arrive, encourage your student to participate! This is a tentative schedule of activities for the opening week – all are subject to change! Visit Student Activities at [www.montana.edu/wwwstuac](http://www.montana.edu/wwwstuac) for the most up-to-date information.

-Even though it may be very difficult to think of your student as anything other than the little kid that you dropped off at kindergarten all those years ago, do your best to take your student's lead in terms of how long you hang around. If you are staying in town, invite them to join you at the hotel, but don't require them to do so. As one parent said, "do not insist they stay with you--they might want the safety of knowing you are just across town but still want to give their new room a try. Furthermore, they will have a chance to stay up and unload, arrange, find out what they are missing-- so you can take them shopping to buy more stuff, one last time before departing for home."

-The PFA will host a reception for parents on Thursday evening, August 28<sup>th</sup>. The details are still being worked out, but this will be a great time for you to commiserate or celebrate with other parents, as the case may be! As long as your students are reaching out and making new friends, you might as well, too. Please check [www.montana.edu/pfa](http://www.montana.edu/pfa) for details in the coming weeks. In addition, we will feature this event in the next email.

### Reasons to come on Move-In Day:

-“my son moved in on the weekend because he was working during the week. The only problem was, he barely had time to buy books, build a loft, and unpack. It was several weeks before he had everything unpacked. Still not sure if he ever did!”

-“Personally, I think for most kids, coming from out-of-town on Move-In Day is the best...it gives them plenty of time to unpack and get settled in. If they have plenty of get-acquainted activities to keep them busy, then I think they're OK. A plus for parents, Move-in Day is so much easier when they have help from all of us on campus who participate. They love it and can't believe their good luck!”

-Your student gets a chance to meet his/her roommate, RA and floor-mates and begin developing relationships before the craziness of classes and other activities. It is strongly recommended by several of the veteran parents that you also meet your student's RA!

-You get to participate in Catapalooza which includes vendors such as banks and insurance companies, as well as the Chamber of Commerce and many campus clubs and activities.

-If you are new to campus you have plenty of time to get used to being on campus, find where your classes are, meet your advisor and get acquainted with amenities such as the Fitness Complex and Strand Union Building. You have time to

choose your favorite dining hall, learn to use the laundry room and find resources such as the computer labs.

-“We arrived early enough for him to start attending orientation the next day. His transition to MSU began very slowly but thankfully it picked up momentum with time. My experience in letting go was similar. I imagine that might be the case for many freshmen who really leave home for the first time, and their parents. After we absorbed the reality of actually being at MSU, I found myself encouraging him to join in and participate in orienting and socializing activities with his peers. He progressed from resistance to reluctance to acceptance to willingness. This process took time - a couple of days.

So, I encourage families to arrive on the 27th, which will enable them to "relocate" emotionally as well as physically. It will give parents time to look around, experience the wonderful environment of MSU, and convey a "Yes, MSU is a great place for you to learn and bloom" message to their student offspring. It will also give students time to survey the scene, get some bearings and connection, and experience their parents encouragement. Everyone benefits when parents take the time to share in the transition and convey approval to their children.”- parent from Georgia

**Reasons to come later:**

-Allows for a little more time to finish that summer job, say goodbye to friends and take a special family vacation.

-Doesn't require parents to miss work.

-Less "free" time for a student to become homesick or get into mischief before school winds up. Some students fair better if they hit the ground running!

-If you come over the weekend, there is far less traffic through the residence halls - waiting for elevators, etc. The atmosphere is calmer and there is more time to lounge around campus.

**Reminder! These are opinions of people who either work on campus and have experienced the range of emotions of students coming to campus for the first time, or parents who went through this in the past few years. You know your student the best and together you will make the decision that is best for you!**