

UL LAFAYETTE

PARENT & FAMILY NEWSLETTER



Second Semester: Fresh Start

Returning to school for a second semester is a very different experience from going to college for the first time. Students bring their newly-acquired wisdom and their mistakes along. There may be less anxiety since they know what to expect, or anxiety may be high...since they know what to expect! During the second semester, your student has the opportunity to build on the successes of last semester, while also reevaluating and readjusting based on lessons learned.

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What can I expect as my student starts a new semester?



BE PREPARED FOR MIXED FEELINGS

There is less build-up and excitement than there was in the fall, so returning to school may seem like a bit of a letdown. Some of the novelty has worn off. Your student understands the realities of college life, so the road ahead may look longer and harder than it did in the fall. This is a more thoughtful return to college.



YOUR STUDENT MAY BE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR ABILITY TO SUCCEED

If the first semester was less than hoped for, your student might be concerned about how to make this next semester better. They may or may not be able to express these worries.



YOUR STUDENT MAY HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT WASN'T THERE IN THE FALL

They'll have confidence in their ability to make friends, navigate the college community, get to class, talk to professors, and do what needs to be done.



YOUR STUDENT MAY BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THIS NEW BEGINNING

Just as we are all encouraged by the possibilities of a new year in January, your student may be energized at the prospect of a fresh start.

Start a Conversation

As a parent or guardian, it can be difficult to know how to help. If you're too involved, it feels as though you're not respecting your student's growth and allowing them to experiment with newfound independence. However, stepping back entirely may make you feel as though you're not doing your part to guide your student. The second semester is a perfect opportunity for conversations. Plant a few seeds, offer food for thought, and gently remind your student of your trust and support:

- Reinforce the opportunities that a fresh start brings: new classes, new professors, perhaps new friends, and new activities. Encourage your student to take advantage of a new perspective.
- Remind your student of how much they know now that they didn't in the fall — both about college life and about themselves. Help them find areas of strength and build upon confidence gained.
- Ask about your student's goals for this semester. What do they hope the next four months will bring? What will be required to accomplish those goals? Putting goals into words makes them more tangible. Thinking about what will be required to reach those goals will provide your student with a plan of action.



What can my student do to prepare for a great second semester?

- 1 Attend to any unfinished business from the fall semester.** Is your student carrying over any incomplete grades? Is their spring schedule complete? Are there outstanding financial issues?
- 2 Create a budget for the spring semester.** Your student now has a better idea of their day-to-day living expenses. A budget provides a sense of control; they'll spend less time worrying about finances.
- 3 Decide if they will work.** Having completed a budget, your student can assess whether or not they need to work. If they intend to get (or continue) a part-time job, you can help them consider how many hours of work per week will be manageable given their other responsibilities as a college student.
- 4 Commit to time management.** Time management is one of the most important life skills for student success. Encourage your student to take some time now to set up a system (using a print calendar, planner, or an app) and start plugging in dates to be ready to go.
- 5 List specific changes for the new semester.** Whether or not the fall semester was a good one, some changes can enhance the new term. Will your student try out some new activities — or drop one or two? Will they spend more time studying, or sleeping? What's the plan to make that happen?

No matter what your student's classification is, the new semester is a chance for a fresh start, and you can guide them in setting realistic expectations and goals. They'll be one step closer to maturity and independence. You will be more comfortable taking a step back and watching them grow.

Financial Aid Reminders

It's FAFSA time! It's important to note that the FAFSA is an annual application that **must be refiled every year that your student is in college**. Although the deadline is May 1st, most families try to have all the necessary forms filed by March 1st. The Office of Federal Student Aid released the new FAFSA form this year. [Click here for updates on the new FAFSA.](#)

Financial aid programs have academic indexes or benchmarks that students must achieve and maintain in order to remain qualified. These requirements are referred to as [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\)](#) and students who fail to achieve the minimum standards for grade point average (GPA) and completion of classes could lose their eligibility for all types of federal and state aid. Listed below are the SAP requirements*:

1. **Minimum overall GPA of at least 2.0.**
2. **Completion of at least 67% of all registered hours.**
3. **Completion of degree in a timely manner (undergraduates cannot receive aid beyond 180 hours).**

*For additional and most current details, [visit the website.](#)

[Click here to review continued eligibility requirements for the TOPS program.](#)

The Financial Aid Office will review students' academic progress each semester to verify eligibility. With questions or concerns, have your student contact the UL Lafayette Office of Financial Aid at finaid@louisiana.edu or 337-482-6506.

SPRING 2024 ACADEMIC CALENDAR (Subject to change)

January 15
MLK Holiday

January 17
Last Day to Add/Drop Classes

February 12-14
Mardi Gras Holiday

March 11-22
Advising Session for Summer/Fall

March 21
Last Day to Drop Class with "W"

March 25 - April 1
Spring Break

April 24-28
Dead Days

April 26
Last Day of Classes

April 29 - May 3
Final Exams

May 3
Semester Ends

DID YOU KNOW?

You and your student can schedule a virtual appointment to speak with a financial aid counselor online! If you have questions for the Financial Aid Office regarding TOPS, loans, or other aid, one of the most efficient ways to get in touch with a counselor is by scheduling an online appointment.

To schedule your appointment, have your student follow these 3 easy steps:

1. Visit financialaid.louisiana.edu.
2. In the main, center block of the page, click "schedule your appointment" and log in with your University email and password.
3. Select your service, date, and time. Fill in your name, email, and ULID, and click "Book."

The January Student

During the month of January, students often return from the holidays in one of two ways: feeling ready to take on the spring semester or still stuck in holiday mode and not ready to return. It is important to encourage your student to start their semester off strong! Remind them to be prepared for the semester by doing the following:



Paying attention to syllabi - As your student enters their second semester, they may think that the first day or week of class is just "syllabus time," however, many professors will jump right into their lectures. Encourage your student to read the syllabi for their courses and to add the important dates into their planners now to help them get ahead.



Keeping up with coursework - Encourage your student to keep up with their coursework. Many students find that falling behind early in the term is a major cause of stress and failures later on in the term. Encourage effective time management strategies so that academics and social activities are balanced; as well as time for self-care.



Seeking assistance - Students returning from the fall semester may be satisfied with their first semester grades; if they are, encourage them to keep up the good work! If your student is dissatisfied with their grades, encourage them to use UL Lafayette's on-campus resources, such as [The Learning Center](#), to help them succeed academically.

Parent-to-Parent Advice

Here's what former freshman parents and guardians have to say:

"Be patient. It will all work out. UL Lafayette has an open-door policy for students and they will have a wealth of support. Take a deep breath because your student is in good hands."

"Your student will figure it out. Offer help or advice when they seem to be struggling."

"Let them go and let them grow. This prepares them for the life ahead of them. And read the newsletter, it also prepares parents for the life ahead."

"Stay in touch with your student but let them learn on their own. They may not make the best choices sometimes, but they learn from their mistakes which helps them to grow."