Navigating Uncharted Waters
Parents, Please…

Repeat after me . . .

“We Did!”

“The Best!”

“We Could!”
Pirate Parent Perspectives

What we hear from parents-

- One word that exemplifies how you feel
- One word that exemplifies your student’s feelings
VIPP’s share time
Letting Go vs. Letting Grow

(borrowed from University of Arkansas)

- You've invested so much in your children
- Parental self-care is important
- Are you an umbrella parent?

UMBRELLA FAMILY

Stand next to your student, not in front. Hold the umbrella, freeing your students hands to do their own work.
The "Umbrella"

- Positive ways to get involved
  - Parent & Family Portal
  - Pirate Parents Live
  - Parents.ecu.edu
Student Perspective – Recent Years

- Learning and living in a virtual world for 3-12 months
- Social anxiety, communication issues, motivation challenges.
- Ambiguous loss - missed opportunities (sports, in-class learning, etc.)
- Fear of the unknown
Student Perspective - Summer

- Closure of the end of high school
- Feeling of accomplishment—but some challenges

Changes over the summer:
- On top of the world one day, closed off the next.
- Pattern may continue through move in and the first few weeks.
- What can you do in the next couple of weeks to help?
A student who might not be ready…

Looks like:
- Difficulty making decisions
- Going to college for the wrong reasons
- Poor coping skills
- Trouble managing self-care, personal chores and interpersonal relationships (setting alarms, laundry, communicating)

- Struggles with responsibility (paying bills, going to class, homework)
A student who is prepared for college

Looks like:

◦ Moving towards adulthood
◦ Independence
◦ Take responsibility
◦ Self-reliant
◦ Ability to manage conflict
◦ Global view
◦ Engaged in coursework
◦ Recognize WHY they are here
◦ Ability to advocate for oneself and ask for help
Adjustment to Campus Life

- Nothing feels like home
- Everything is different
- Student is adjusting to college academics and is worried about being successful.

How do you respond?
Adjustment to Campus Life
Adjustment to Campus Life

- Self Advocacy
- Learning to cope with challenges
- Normalizing certain situations—letting students work through issues.
- What’s within your control?
Concern For a Roommate

- Notices concerning behavior
- Tried to engage friend in activities
- Wondering how to help and resources available

How do you respond?
Concern For A Friend

- Hello?
- Hey, Aunt Susie.
- Oh, hey honey. It's good to hear your voice. We really miss you, but is everything okay?
- Not really. It's Nick again. I just don't know what to do.
- Oh no, I'm so sorry sweetie. Well, tell me what's going on now and I'll see if I can help.
- Okay, I really don't even know where to begin honestly. I mean, he's not one of my closest friends, but I feel like something's wrong. He hardly ever leaves his room and I think he's been missing his classes.
- One of my other friends said he hadn't seen Nick in English class for weeks.
- Now, that doesn't sound too good. Have you tried to talk to him?
- I mean, kind of, but I really don't know how. I text him and I ask him to do stuff, but he either doesn't reply or says no. And I picked up a flyer for the counseling center and took it to him. I told him where it was and it was free, I even said it was cool, and I asked him if he wanted to check it out with me, but I guess he wasn't interested.
- Well, I want you to know I'm very proud of you for doing that. Maybe he's just private or needs more encouragement to do things with the rest of the group.
- Well Aunt Susie, there's another thing. I think he's been drinking a lot more than he used to. I'm really worried that he might be depressed or something and needs help. What do I do?
Connection to Resources

- Using resources and knowing personal limitations
- ECU Cares
- CCSD—My Student Body Modules
- Campus Living
- Lots of peer and professional-led support/education groups
We Got This!

- In the end, most phone calls will sound like this…
We Got This!

- Hello?
- Hey mom.
- Hey honey.
- How's my girl doing today?
- Great.
- Sorry I missed your call earlier.
- I was at dinner with people from my floor.
- Nice.
- You're doing okay, then?
- Yeah, everything has been great.
- We're going to an event over in the student center in a bit, and this weekend we might head up to North Rec and take the kayaks out.
- And making time to study too, right?
- (laughs) Of course.
- My math course is a little tough, but I think I'll be okay if I put the work in. There's a lot of places to get help too if I need it.
- How are things at home?
- Good.
- Your sister's keeping us busy.
- She has a game tomorrow, and she was invited to the dance after the football game on Saturday, so we're going shopping.
- Grandma and Grandpa send their love and said to call them when you can.
- I'll call them this weekend.
- I miss y'all.
- We miss you too a lot, but I'm so glad to hear things are going well. It sounds like you're having a great time.
- I am.
- I really am glad I decided to come here.
- Oh, my friend Missy is here.
- We're going to head to the student center now.
- I'll talk to you soon. Love you.
- Love you more.
We Got This!

- Thinking about impact on family members
- Everyone goes through adjustment
ECU...True or False?

- ECU has an excused absence policy **FALSE**
- An online portal exists to see student’s grades, absences, and class attendance **FALSE**
- Campus living can quickly locate your student at anytime **FALSE**
- A 4.0 in high school means ‘easy A’s’ in college **FALSE**
- Everyone is having more fun than me
  - The social media factor
  - FOMO
Communication Changes

- Changes will occur as your child adjusts to campus life and makes new connections—and it should! This is normal and healthy.

- Different manner, style and frequency in which they contact you.

- Determine appropriate times to talk—quality versus quantity.

- Care package ideas.
If all else fails…

Dear (Insert The Name of Your Student!),
We are so proud of you! We know how hard it is to adjust to college life. Since we haven’t heard from you in a while, we can only assume that you’re making new friends, studying hard, getting involved on campus and beginning to really enjoy college. Well, we couldn’t be happier for you and your hard work deserves a reward - so here’s $50 for you to spend this weekend! Have a great time… because you deserve it!
Talk to you soon!

We love you!
Mom and Dad
(Brother or Sister, Dog, Cat, Grandma, Grandpa, Neighbor)
Send a Letter from Home
Contact Information

Office of Parent and Family Programs
210 Whichard Building
252-328-6847
parents.ecu.edu

ECU Disability Support Services
138 Slay Hall
252-737-1016
accessibility.ecu.edu

ECU Center for Counseling and Student Development
137 Umstead Hall
252-328-6661
counselingcenter.ecu.edu

ECU Dean of Students Office
125 Umstead Hall
252-328-9297
deanofstudents.ecu.edu
ecucares.ecu.edu
Looking to the future

- It’s a marathon, not a sprint
  - Seeing the long-range plan, even when the short view seems challenging
- Be proud of all your student has achieved so far...
- They will give you so much more to be proud of in the future!

https://vimeo.com/272815323
A ship in harbor is safe, but that's not what ships are for.

We will be here if you have any questions!