



## DECEMBER 2019 BULLDOG FAMILY & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

### UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY BREAK

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**Holiday Housing:** The University residence hall will close on Saturday, December 14, 2019 at noon and reopen at 8 a.m. on Friday, January 10, 2020. The regular meal plans end with lunch on Saturday, December 14, 2019 and resume with breakfast on Friday, January 10, 2020.

Even though housing shuts down for the holiday break, there are some students who stay in Big Rapids during the break.

As you plan future arrival and departure dates, please reference our university calendar.

All offices will be closed from December 24, 2019 - January 2, 2020.

### SEMESTER BREAK

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The end of the Fall Semester approaches, and students begin to anticipate Winter Break ... "only a couple weeks left." Again, they may feel both excitement and anxiety at the prospect. It maybe an adjustment having students back home and they may experience some sadness about leaving new friendships and/or love relationships for an extended period. They may have gotten involved in too many co-curricular clubs or groups and are facing a time management challenge as they also try to finish the semester with a strong academic performance . If your student is making a trip home, having a conversation about expectations and schedules before and after they return can help ease the transition for all members of the family.

## Conversation Starters

- What could I send you from home to help you get to the end of the semester?
- What has energized or excited you about your first semester? What made you feel drained?
- What might you do differently next semester?
- How do you plan to spend your time over Winter Break? Would you like to plan a get-together with some of your high school friends?

## FROM ONE PARENT TO ANOTHER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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**Shari Chamberlain a Transfer Admission Counselor understands being a parent of a Ferris student first hand. Recently we asked her a few questions.**

**What was one thing you learned about Ferris from your student that you did not know before?**

While I knew Ferris State offered a wonderful Biotechnology program and was home to the Shimadzu Core Laboratory, I didn't realize how specialized the equipment really was until I toured the lab this summer. During her internship, my daughter Kayla was testing the genetics of *E. coli* she collected from lake water and growing human skin cells in Ferris' labs. This amazes me!

**What advice would you give to parents of Ferris Students?**

Encourage your student to attend University events. Many of the events are free. This fall, Kayla and friends viewed the planets Jupiter and Saturn through a large telescope in the Rawlinson Observatory. She saw Homecoming comedian, Marlon Wayans on her birthday and has attended several Ferris football and hockey games.

Also, visit your student if you can. I was able to join Kayla for two events - Ferris Homecoming and Family & Friends Weekend. We attended the Ferris Homecoming football game and Family & Friends Weekend. At Family & Friends Weekend we saw the Brian Ledbetter mentalist & magician show where he read the minds of people in the audience and made objects appear and disappear before our eyes. He was

great! Exposure to new and different things is what going away to college is all about.

**What has been your favorite experience with your student at Ferris?**

My favorite memory about these past four years has been watching Kayla grow into a more mature young adult as a result of her college experiences. She has learned that this saying is very true - "*Life is all about how you handle plan B.*" Being flexible and having back-up plans are key items for happiness and success when you are pursuing your personal goals.

Kayla was very disappointed in her freshman year as she didn't become best friends with her first college roommate. She had the expectations that they would become close - just like sisters. Instead of hanging-out with her roommate, Kayla attended activities and events available in Brophy-McNerney Hall. Groups of students in the halls went to football games, ice skating, watched movies, and played Euchre, pool, and ping-pong together. In the end, Kayla made many more new friends than she would have spent time with only her roommate. Her relationships with some of these friends has become very special to her - just like having a second family.

Kayla was also a University athlete. During her junior year, her Biotechnology lab schedules started conflicting with practices and games. Kayla had to give up her sport a semester earlier than she planned, missing the junior-year season. I am very proud of Kayla for choosing her career goals over her favorite sport. I know this was a tough decision. As a result, Kayla remained a Biotechnology major and was hired to work part-time in the Biotechnology laboratories. Not only is she making extra money, she is also increasing her Biotechnology work experience. Both of these situations were blessings in disguise!



Shari Chamberlain & Kayla Chamberlain

## FIRST GENERATION PARENT TIPS

### Stay connected with your student — your support and guidance are important to your student's success!

Families and support persons of first-generation college students often wonder what is going on in their college students' lives. Without a similar experience of your own, the Ferris campus environment might seem unfamiliar, and this may make it challenging to find a way to connect with your student. Here are a few tips to help you stay connected and show your support for your student's academic goals.

- **Remind your student that they belong at Ferris!** If you demonstrate confidence in your student, they will have more confidence in themselves. Go out of your way to remind them that they are good enough and that they deserve to be in college as much as anyone else.
- **Remember that pursuing higher education does not mean that students will lose the values they were raised with, but you can expect a few changes.** The experiences students have both inside and outside of the classroom can influence their social, vocational, and personal choices. Your care and concern as they wrestle with their choices and “figure things out” is important. Ask questions.
- **Acknowledge the successes and the challenges.** Your student would not be at Ferris State University if they did not know how to meet a challenge head on. College students are under a lot of pressure, and many consistently report feeling stressed and anxious. Anything you can do to reduce or eliminate pressures from home can help your student stay on track and focused.
- **Be patient.** College is a learning process for both you and your student. If you learn about campus resources, you will become more familiar with what

your student is experiencing and can remind your student that there are resources on campus that can provide assistance when they turn to you with questions.

- **Encourage your student to build relationships and find mentors.** In addition to their “home team” of family and friends, your student needs people on campus who will listen to them, help them problem-solve, and keep them on track. They can start by talking with people they feel comfortable with — an RA from their residence hall or a staff person at their on-campus job, for instance — and then build their “Ferris team” from there.
- **Remember that balance is important.** Studying all of the time can sometimes be counterproductive. Your student will increase their sense of belonging at Ferris by becoming involved with clubs and activities that balance the academic pressure and bring them joy. Recognize that your student may not be able to call you or come home as often as you would like.
- **They will have many different responsibilities, and learning to balance them will be a new experience, especially during the first year.** Set a regular time for conversation with your student so that you both have the same expectations around how often you communicate. Plan to visit your student, if possible. Bulldog Family & Friends Weekend is a great time to come to campus



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