

PARENT and FAMILY

GUIDE

TO

COLLEGE

Holyoke Community College

Dean of Student Services Office
FR 224 (413) 552-2390

A message to parents and families...

When a family member enters college, a journey begins for the whole family! Parent and family encouragement is a critical factor in student success. Many things may come to mind about the role of college in family life. One may think about getting a good job, become a more skilled and knowledgeable person, earning more money, preparing to transfer to another school, making new friends, or getting involved with a club or sports! No matter how one answers the question:

College is about change and growth!

Younger or older, students will learn some new roles while in college. They will be challenged to learn how to become a college student while, no doubt, readjusting some of their former roles. In the early months of college, families will notice some difference in their student.

How will my student change?

- College students find themselves more responsible for their own learning.
- College students find they must think more critically and use more complex thinking skills.
- Students come in contact with many individuals with backgrounds different from their own.
- The social supports and friendships they have depended upon in the past may change.
- As they are exposed to new knowledge, skills and attitudes, some of their long held beliefs may be challenged!

Tips for Parents and Families

Establish a communication plan to discuss college with your student today! Remember that all information about college, including courses, grades and financial obligations, goes directly to the student.

Encourage your student to “get involved” on campus. Research shows that students involved on campus are more likely to be successful in college.

Become aware of the services offered at the college, and encourage your student to take advantage of the wide variety services to foster success.

Critical Differences Between High School and College

High School

College

Responsibility

Teachers take responsibility for organizing the student's learning and monitoring progress; student is reminded of assignments and examination dates.	Student is responsible for following the course syllabus-- organizing study time, completing assignments, taking examinations.
Teachers usually tell student what to learn from assigned readings and course materials.	It is up to the student to read and understand assigned materials.
Teachers remind student of incomplete work.	Student must be aware of own progress in the course.
Attendance is legally mandated. School, community and family accept consequences on non-attendance.	Attendance is student's responsibility. Student accepts consequences of non-attendance according to attendance policy in course syllabus. Attendance may not be based on "excused" or "unexcused" absences but upon maximum number of absences (cuts) allowed.
Teachers approach student if help or tutoring is needed.	Student is expected to be aware of sources of help and obtain as needed.

Communication

Correspondence is addressed to parents or guardians who may inform student of content.	Correspondence, including academic information and deadlines, bills, financial aid information, grades, and disciplinary issues is addressed to student. Student may inform parents of content.
Academic and personal information can be discussed with parents or guardians.	College communication directed to the student unless a release is signed.

Classes

Most classes meet daily. Hours are set.	Classes rarely meet daily--may be as few as once per week, day or evening.
Teacher-student contact close and frequent.	Contact less frequent; student must seek out instructor during office hours for extra attention.
Class schedule is arranged for student.	Student arranges own schedule.
Much work done during class.	Most work done outside of class.
Books are provided	Student must obtain and pay for own books.
Teachers provide student with course material missed due to absence.	Student is expected to obtain work missed from other students or make request of teacher.
Exams are frequent and cover small amounts of material.	Exams usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material.

Frequently Asked Questions by Parents and Families

- **Why does my student have to take a placement test when he/she is a high school graduate?** The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education requires all public colleges to test students in reading, writing and mathematics to ensure they are successful in their classes. The state-designated test is Accuplacer, published by the College Board.
- **How can I find out how my student is doing in college?** The best way to obtain information is to talk to your student! The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records. Academic information cannot be shared with others—including parents—unless the student gives written permission. This includes grades, schedules, classes, attendance, college services, and financial information.
- **My student seems to be having a problem in college—how can I help?** HCC has many resources and services to help students succeed. Become familiar with our resources and encourage students to reach out for help. See the HCC Student Handbook.
- **Will my student be safe on the campus?** Remind students to take the same precautions for safety on the campus as in the community. The Campus Police Department is staffed by full time, commissioned police officers available every day, 24 hours a day. Students having concerns about safety should contact the campus police in Building E or make a complaint to the Dean of Student Services. If a health or safety emergency occurs call the campus emergency number (2211) using campus emergency phones located in the hallways and parking lots.
- **How can my student finance a college education?** HCC provides many forms of financial aid—grants, loans, scholarships, work-study jobs, and payment plans. You can help your student manage college costs by 1) helping to set up a budget for the year; 2) educating about financial matters; 3) discouraging them from applying for multiple credit cards and getting into debt; 4) setting spending limits if using your credit card; 5) remembering that the best way to maintain their financial aid is to **finish what they start! Students failing to make academic progress may lose financial aid eligibility!**

More Frequently Asked Questions

- **What if my student has a complaint?** Any student can make a complaint against another student or against the college by using the Student Disciplinary Policy and/or Student Grievance Procedure. See the Student Policy Guide online or contact the Dean of Students' Office for information. Students may also talk to their instructors, special programs or services staff, or college administrators. The college makes every effort to mediate student complaints prior to formal proceedings.
- **How will my student be able to make friends and have fun at the campus?** Studies show that students who are involved in campus life through clubs, organizations, student government, athletics and beyond are more likely to stay in school. Encourage your student to attend HCC's weekly Activity Period (every Wednesday at 11:00) and become aware of the activities and events available on campus by reading posters and signs, or by using *MyHCC*, the college portal, to keep up with things!
- **What if my student becomes ill on campus?** Students may go to Student Health Services with any health or wellness issue. In an emergency, campus police are first responders and will ensure the student is evaluated and taken for emergency treatment at a nearby hospital if necessary. In an emergency, call 2211.
- **How can I contact my student while on campus?** Arrange a system with your student in advance so that you can make contact on campus. No information about your student's schedule or whereabouts can be given to you if you call because of privacy laws (FERPA). In case of a true emergency, the student can be found in a class if attending and asked to contact you. The college does not have a loudspeaker or intercom system, so if an emergency arises when the student is not in a class, it is unlikely that a staff member can locate a student.
- **Is college health insurance available?** According to state law, all students taking 9 credits or more must have health insurance at a charge of \$881 for 2007-08. The fee is charged on the student's tuition bill and may be waived upon declaring that other coverage is in effect. Information on coverage is available in the Bursar's Office, Fr 201, and in Student Health Services, Fr 101.
- **I have more questions!** Contact the Dean of Student Services Office at 423-552-2390.

A note about services for students with disabilities....

Parents and families often wonder whether their students with disabilities will be successful in college. We would like you to know that hundreds of students with disabilities have graduated from Holyoke Community College. The Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services provides accommodations for students with documented disabilities to foster academic success.

The Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services provides assistance and strategies for students with documented disabilities. **To obtain the most effective help, families should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services as soon as possible.**

Typical strategies include but are not limited to:

- **Individual academic planning, advising and course scheduling**
- **Referrals to many college services such as tutoring, career guidance, and transfer information**
- **Classroom accommodations through note takers, furniture adaptation, and electronic access to course materials**
- **State of the art assistive computing services**
- **Alternative testing such as extended time on exams**
- **TTY's, FM devices, and interpreters**
- **Connections with community service agencies**



***Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services
Don 231 413-552-2417***

Programs and Services to Help Students Succeed



Service	Purpose	Location
Advising Center	Educational planning and course enrollment services	FR 271 552-2722
Athletics	Intramural athletics and recreational sports	Bartley Center 552-2160
Career Services	Career counseling, choosing a major, job placement	KC 322 552-2322
CAPS	Tutoring, writing center, math center, learning coaches, study skills, workshops	DON 240 552-2584
Counseling Services	Personal, education and career counseling	FR 224 552-2232
ESL Support Program	Bilingual advising for students studying English	DON 203 552-2553
Financial Aid Office	Oversees variety of grant, loan and work study financial assistance	FR 201 552-2150
Health Services	First aid, medical referrals, information on college insurance and immunization	FR 101 552-2401
Multicultural Academic Services	Academic advising, support and activities for student success	FR 262 552-2539
MyHCC	Personal, online portal account	FR 221 552-2000
New Directions	One semester program for adult women returning to college	FR 232 552-2346
Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services	Educational accommodations for students with disabilities; documentation required	DON 131 552-2417
Pathways Program	Academic advising and planning for promising students wishing to transfer to a selective liberal arts college	FR 264 552-2857
STRIVE	Federally funded program to assist low income, first generation college and disabled students	DON 235 552-2505
Student Activities	Oversees student events, clubs and organizations including student government	G 306 552-2060
Transfer Office	Information and assistance for transferring to another college after leaving HCC	Fr 221 552-2303
Welcome Center	Enrollment information center	FR 221 552-2000