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Student Issues

There's a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- ▲ Feelings of happiness/restlessness from break
- ▲ Resolve to do better academically
- ▲ Renewed interest in classes
- ▲ New leadership skills starting to emerge
- ▲ Unwanted weight gain
- ▲ Cold weather blues
- ▲ Not many social activities scheduled
- ▲ Possible roommate changes
- ▲ Wedding plans for those who got engaged over break
- ▲ Anxiety and uncertainty for those who just arrived at a new school

Setting Goals in a New Year

Call them resolutions or call them goals—either way, they're things we'd like to accomplish in the next few months. It's important that students head into a new year with some goals in hand. Perhaps they have to do with:

- **Academics**—Now that grades are out, what does he plan to do about the upcoming semester academically?
- **Involvement**—Is there a club or organization she's interested in joining? If so, this could be the time!
- **Relationships**—How will he meet new people while staying connected to old friends?
- **Wellness**—What good things will she do for her health in the new year? And how will she do them?
- **Career Exploration**—What types of internships will he apply for? How will he get his resume in shape?



These are just a few of the categories your student may be considering. You can let her know that successful goals often include the following traits:

1. **They're Achievable.** Set goals that are realistic within the context of your life. Too often the reason any of us fail is that we set unachievable goals.
2. **They're Measurable.** Use quantifiable words in your goal lingo rather than fluffing them up with concepts that are too general.
3. **They're Short.** Keep your goals to short paragraphs. That way, they're easier to commit to memory and always keep in mind.
4. **They're Positive.** State goals in a positive manner that makes them appealing. It's a good way to motivate yourself mentally.
5. **They Begin and End.** Determine when you will start working on each goal and when it should be achieved. This will help you focus...and succeed!

By discussing goal setting, you're helping your student create a guide for himself. Here's to 2011 and a fresh start!



Caffeinated Alcoholic Energy Drinks: The Four Loko Effect

Four Loko, the caffeinated alcoholic energy drink, came crashing into campus consciousness last fall when nine Central Washington University students were hospitalized after drinking it at an off-campus party. They initially were thought to have ingested drinks spiked with a “date rape drug.”

Some students mixed the drink—which contains 6 percent or 12 percent alcohol per 23.5-ounce can, depending on state regulations—with additional alcohol. Others had blood alcohol levels ranging from .12 to .35 percent, according to CWU President James L. Gaudino.

Consuming More Than Usual

Officials say the caffeine in Four Loko may delay the effects of alcohol consumption, which can lead someone to consume more than they normally would. As a result, the malt liquor beverage is often referred to as “blackout in a can.” The drink comes in fruit flavors and sells for approximately \$2.50 per can.

Bans Both On and Off Campus

Peter Mercer, the president of Ramapo College in New Jersey, banned alcoholic energy drinks last fall after 23 students were hospitalized with alcohol intoxication over the course of several weeks. Mercer told Inside Higher Ed that students



described the effects to him as being like three beers, a can of Red Bull, and a large espresso times three or four.

The Michigan Liquor Control Commission banned Four Loko and 54 other similar drinks last November. Washington, Utah, Oklahoma and New York have also banned Four Loko with other states following suit.

The FDA is currently investigating whether mixing alcohol and caffeine into one beverage is safe for consumption. And campuses from Harvard to the University of Rhode Island are warning students about the dangers of Four Loko, advising them to steer clear of the drink.

“A Red-Flag Behavior”

Researcher Kathleen E. Miller at the Research Institute on Addictions at the State University of New York at Buffalo has found that students who drink energy drinks, with or without alcohol, are more likely to engage in risky behavior like drug use, binge drinking or smoking. Imbibing energy drinks “isn’t necessarily a gateway behavior, but it is what you might call a red-flag behavior,” she told Inside Higher Ed.

Consider talking with your student about the dangers of Four Loko and similar drinks. Many students just don’t realize the heightened safety issues associated with them.

Sources: MSNBC.com, 10/25/10; Inside Higher Ed, 10/24/10; Yahoo News, 11/5/10; Los Angeles Times, 11/5/10; Nowpublic.com, 11/16/10

Four Loko Facts

Contains 6% or 12% alcohol per 23.5-ounce can, depending on state regulations

Often called “blackout in a can”

Sells for approximately \$2.50 per can

Keeping Yourself & Your Student Healthy

Researchers continue to uncover new information regarding germs. In fact, they now know that cold viruses are more tenacious than previously thought—some of these nasty viruses can live on hard surfaces for at least 18 hours. Remind your student that washing his hands frequently remains his best line of defense against catching and spreading cold and flu viruses. There are also some additional tips you can share with him for keeping sickness at bay this year:

- ▲ Flick switches with the side of your hand or wrist. This will make you less likely to pick up or pass along germs on your hands.
- ▲ Don’t borrow others’ cell phones. You’ll avoid coming in contact with a host of germs this way.
- ▲ Try not to touch your eyes or nose. These are the places where cold germs enter your body.
- ▲ Bring your own pen. Sharing pens is a prime way to pass germs.
- ▲ Wipe surfaces often. Use a soapy sponge to wipe up surfaces you touch frequently.
- ▲ Sneeze into your elbow. When kids today are taught to “cover their mouth,” this is how it’s done. When tissues aren’t available, sneezing (or coughing) into your elbow keeps germs off your hands.
- ▲ Toss all of your used tissues promptly—yourself. Don’t ask others to do so for you, as it puts them at risk.
- ▲ Exercise, eat well and get enough sleep. All of these things help boost your immune system—and your ability to successfully fight off viruses.

Source: cdc.gov

Summer Possibilities Abound

Many students will be talking with advisors, professors and peers throughout the semester about how to get the most out of their summer break. Some will choose to take classes, while others will choose to get academic credit through an internship or to volunteer through a specific organization. If your student is interested in spending his summer in an academic-related internship, job or volunteer position, there are plenty of resources available to make this happen!

The process for deciding what to do can be overwhelming for stu-

dents. Sometimes, they end up so overwhelmed with the possibilities that they procrastinate. Oftentimes, this results in missed deadlines and opportunities. Encourage your student to start the decision process early.

The first stop your student can make is in the campus career development office. Typically, the office will have access to internship listings in every academic field. The staff can also offer students guidance on what types of experiences will help them gain the best professional experience and where to go to get more information.

If your student is interested in doing some research on his own, the Internet is invaluable! Here are some websites your student can use to begin gathering ideas and contacts:

Idealist.org: Action without Borders

www.idealist.org/

Idealist.org features jobs, internships and volunteer opportunities in 165 countries, primarily in the non-profit sector. In addition to offering internship and job listings, Idealist features information and advice for careers in the non-profit sector.

Intern Web

www.internweb.com

Intern Web is a free service that lists internships in a variety of fields and for college students at all levels.

GreenBiz: Environmental Jobs

www.greenbiz.com

This website offers a database of jobs and internships in the environmental field for all levels of professional and educational experience.

Hill Zoo

www.hillzoo.com

This website lists a variety of internships and jobs available on Capitol Hill and around Washington, D.C., as well as resources for finding housing or part-time jobs. Students who want to work in Congress should contact their Senator or Representative directly, as most of them have internship programs.

Students should also consider opportunities that may be available on campus during the summer too. Talking with their resident assistant or academic advisor would be a good place to start.

Save the Words

Word—*n.* a unit of language, consisting of one or more spoken sounds or their written representation, that functions as a principal carrier of meaning.

Did you know that each year hundreds of words are dropped from the English language, never to be used again? In fact, 90 percent of what we communicate today is done so in just 7,000 words. It certainly seems that the more we can shorten words and sentences, the happier we are. After all, two primary modes of communication for many of us are emailing quick responses via a Blackberry or texting back and forth via cell phone. But, what is happening to language as a result?

At Savethewords.org, a group of dedicated wordsmiths from Oxford Dictionary have put together a web-

site devoted entirely to saving lost words, such as “pessundate,” “vacivity” and “icasm.” Knowing that words are the cornerstone of language, they believe that the more words we know, the better we can communicate what we mean to say.

When you visit Savethewords.org, you can learn new words, share additional “lost words” for expert verification and addition to the website, adopt a word and get ideas for how to incorporate it into your everyday vocabulary, sign up to receive a word a day in your email, and more.

Savethewords.org also has a Facebook group you can join.

Here’s a word from Savethewords.org to get you started: “lubency.” It’s a noun, which means willingness or pleasure. And used in a sentence, it looks like this: After he told his student about this great website, she checked her email each day with excitement, showing her newfound lubency in enriching her vocabulary in her school work.



Helping Your Student Ask for Help

Countless numbers of people have a tough time asking for help—even the most seasoned professionals. For some reason, asking for help makes many people feel weak or vulnerable. Let's view asking for help in a different light: strength of character. Those who have the courage to ask for help show that they aren't afraid to admit that they don't know everything. Sometimes, especially when they are really struggling, students forget that those who work on campus expect that students don't know everything. So...that means that they also expect that they'll ask for help.

Campus communities are chock full of great folks! More often than not—no matter what the issue at hand—an expert can be found right in front of you who can offer assistance.

That being said, how does one who isn't the most comfortable asking for help go about doing so? Consider sharing these thoughts with your student during the next month.

Remember that even the best leaders have help. Even the president of the United States surrounds himself with the best staff he can. We don't view this as a weakness, do we? If he can ask for help, you most certainly can too.

Recognize your strengths and your limitations. Nobody is perfect. What do you do really well? In what areas

do you typically struggle? Take stock of what you do well and let those around you know. This may help them feel more comfortable asking you for help when they need it. And find out what they do well so you can tap into their strengths too. Remember, no one can go at it alone. Teamwork is where it's at.

Be honest when you are in over your head. There will be times when you can't do everything alone. When this happens, be honest with yourself and others. Nobody can do it all and there will be times when you have to prioritize. When you communicate this to others, they are more likely to be supportive and understanding.

Take stock of the resources on hand. Campus communities are chock full of great folks! More often than not—no matter what the issue at hand—an expert can be found right in front of you who can offer assistance. Why not take advantage of this? You'll meet more people, you'll be offering the best service you can to others and you'll be healthier in the long run. It's a win-win-win for all involved.

Let others know when you've asked for help. Why hide it? When you let others see that you are willing to get help when you need it, you role model healthy behavior. Some folks really do have difficulty reaching out to others and admitting they need assistance. By being honest when you reach out, you are setting a great example for those around you.

Remind your student: When you help yourself, you are in the best position to help others. This simple mantra is a life lesson and as you well know, the earlier learned, the better.

Creative Celebrations!

January and February are packed with creative opportunities for celebrating. Whether you see your student daily or just a few weekends during the semester, you can let her know that you are thinking about her by acknowledging these holidays in simple ways:

January:

- Jan. 3—Drinking Straw Day
- Jan. 8—National English Toffee Day
- Jan. 9—Positively Penguins Day
- Jan. 10—National Clean Off Your Desk Day
- Jan. 13—Rubber Duckie Day
- Jan. 21—National Hugging Day
- Jan. 23—National Pie Day
- Jan. 24—Belly Laugh Day
- Jan. 25—National Speak Up and Succeed Day
- Jan. 29—National Puzzle Day
- Jan. 31—National Inspire Your Heart with Art Day

February:

- Feb. 1—G.I. Joe Day
- Feb. 4—Bubble Gum Day
- Feb. 11—Satisfied Staying Single Day
- Feb. 15—National Gum Drop Day
- Feb. 20—Love Your Pet Day
- Feb. 24—National Chili Day
- Feb. 27—Academy Awards Night

Finding reasons to celebrate can help your student get through the long winter months.