

Making the Most of Parent/Family Weekend

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hen visiting campus, it's not just about crab puffs at receptions and shaking hands. This is a real opportunity to connect with your student and

his/her campus! Here are a few tips to help make the most of your visit:

- **Attend Classes.** Some schools offer the chance to sit in on portions of popular classes. See what your student is experiencing in the classroom so you can "talk academics" throughout the remainder of the year.
- **Listen to Your Student.** Listen as he tells you about the rugby intramurals team he joined or the bio lab he's really enjoying. Listen as she tells you about a group she'd like to join or how much she has connected with her RA. This is your time together to communicate face-to-face. Try to talk less and listen more—you just may pick up on some subtleties that don't come through long-distance via IM and phone calls.
- **Try New Things.** There will likely be quite a slate of activities available during the weekend. Try some of these new things with your student, from service projects to a cappella concerts. He/she may find a new hobby, interest or direction as a result!
- **Meet & Mingle.** Attend receptions, talk with other parents, and meet administrators and faculty. These folks are at your disposal during the weekend. Plus, you'll get a better feel for



what campus life is about and who is available to your student.

- **Participate on Campus.** It might be tempting to head off campus away from the hub-bub yet participating on campus is how you and your student will likely feel most connected.
- **Ooh and Aah Instead of Huffing and Puffing.** Try to be upbeat and positive throughout the weekend. Comment on how good the dining hall food is instead of making negative remarks. Compliment what your student has done to make her room look homey, how pretty the campus grounds look, and more. Your student will be seeing campus through your eyes this weekend!
- **Connect with the Campus Parent Organization.** If your school has a parent group, go to a meeting and look into getting involved. It's a great way to meet other parents and to participate in the life of the campus.
- **Put Yourself in Visitor Mode.** You're on your student's turf this weekend. Let him take the lead and show you his place with pride. And have a wonderful visit!

More Tips

- It may be time for your student to switch from summer clothes to fall/winter ones. If you're driving in for Parent/Family Weekend, bring a load with you and take the no longer needed clothes home. It'll save your student some valuable space!
- Get to know your student's friends during the weekend. You may even want to suggest ahead of time that a group of their friends and families all go out for dinner one night (with everyone paying their own way).
- Ask someone to take a family photo of you during the weekend. Send it to your student via email or regular mail once you get home as a happy memento.
- Check out campus facilities while you're visiting. If the pool is open, why not go for a swim? Roam around the student union, visit nature nooks on campus and soak it all in.
- Hide a note under your student's pillow or tucked into his computer keyboard (just don't open drawers or other items that are private!) so that he'll find it once you've gone home. It'll help the good feelings associated with your visit linger on.