

# Homeward Bound: Managing the Winter Break Transition

Transcript

## **Originally Aired on Friday, December 4, 2015 at Noon**

Good afternoon everybody and happy Black and Gold Friday. Welcome to our last Parent and Family Webinar of 2015. My name is Danielle Martinez and I work in Academic Support and Retention and will be your moderator for today's webinar. We are excited about our session today, **Homeward Bound: Managing the Winter Break Transition**, as we wind down the fall semester and your students get ready to head into winter break. We are very fortunate to have **Maureen Schafer, Senior Associate Director at the Academic Advising Center** as our guest today. Some of you may remember her from our previous FERPA and Student Privacy Webinar, or seeing her with your student during new student orientation over the summer. Just a few reminders before we begin. Each webinar is recorded and then posted on the Academic Support and Retention website, so it can be accessed at a later date. Or viewed by individuals who are not able to attend the live webinar today. Therefore, during the presentation, your mic functions will be muted. Later on, we will have a question and answer portion, so feel free to type your questions in the box on the side. And we will also be returning in February of 2016 with a webinar on paying for year 2, financial aid, and important days in the verification process. But without further ado, I'll turn it over to Maureen to talk about your student's transition over to winter break.

## **Program**

### **Homeward Bound: Managing the Winter Break Transition**

**Maureen:** Well thank you very much! I'm really happy to be with you today and glad some of you are able to join us to talk about what happens when your student comes home after their first semester of college. Some of you may have a reference point for this if you experienced it yourself, or if you have older children who have been through this previously. But I'm sure that some of you may be experiencing this for the first time, and are probably here to get some information and suggestions on what might lie ahead.

During our time together today, we are going to talk about a few different aspects of the student's transition home. First we'll address what it's like for them to transition back into being part of their family. We will then talk about what is involved in looking back on the fall semester and how things work with grades. I'll offer some tips on how you can help your student plan for spring, as well as making the most of their time on winter break. And of course at the end we can address any questions that you may have that I didn't answer during the presentation.

So let's start by talking about their transition about being a member back in the family living at home. If your student came home for Thanksgiving, you likely got a taste of what it's like to have them home for a little while. You certainly have both gotten used to not living under the same roof for 16 weeks and it might take a little bit of time to get used to that again.

So some suggestions for moving forward with this transition, include first of all, understanding where they are coming from. Sixteen weeks ago they experienced a new found freedom and being able to plan their own day, including going to bed when they want to, getting up on their own. They are used to following their own schedule as well as living with other people who share similar schedules. Most often staying up late, taking naps during the day, and sometimes doing things that ours, that to most adults would seem odd. I'm sure you may be like me, and the thought of going out at 10:30 seems a little crazy now but it's pretty normal for them. Instead of waiting for misunderstandings and issues to occur, it's helpful to set some expectations for their time at home. It's okay to acknowledge with them, that while

they're on break, you still have to go to work every day. And if have younger siblings, they will still be in school part of the time, and it is important to talk about what is okay, and what is not okay so they know from the beginning. Open communication can be so important to ensure that there is no misunderstandings. It can also be good to have a conversation early on about their goals or expectations for break as well as your goals for them. Winter break can get a little long for some students if they're not working. I'll talk a little bit later about some suggestions of what they can do during winter break, but before we do that, let's talk a little bit about the state of mind they might be in when you first see them when they come home.

Some students had a great fall semester. They transitioned well, they prepared for finals, and they're feeling pretty good about things. And I'm sure you have a sense of that already. Other students may have had a rough transition. They may have had a bumpy adjustment to college level academics and they have finished finals feeling not so great. But either way, it's all normal, and we want to help to prepare you to help them over winter break.

I would say, perhaps the biggest question from parents might be is, "How can I help?" Because really, no matter how their semester went, I think that you can engage them in important conversation over winter break to help them make sense of their experience.

So let's talk first about if their semester went well. You might ask them some questions about why they think it went well. Some questions to ask you see here on the screen. What did you do well in the fall semester? How did you keep up with your classes? What will you do again in the spring? What might you change for spring? And how did you get involved at Iowa? Those are just some questions that can prompt the conversation. I have found that students that have done well often don't think about the behaviors that have contributed to them doing well. Your questions will help them to process their experience a little more and encourage them to continue with the same behaviors in spring. It's also a nice chance to congratulate them on doing well. No matter how old we get, it's always nice to get some positive encouragement from your parents.

Unfortunately, not everyone has a smooth transition to college. Some students will come home a bit discouraged. Helping these students process their experience can be extremely beneficial to them. And I have again, some suggestions for questions. Just as with students who did well, I would say, for students who's semester didn't go well, you can ask them, What did go well? It's a nice way to focus a little on the positive and acknowledge that they did do some things well. What did you do that worked? Another good question to help them realize that their behavior has a direct correlation to how things go. Certainly they can point to few things this fall that did work. It can be a good reminder for them to focus on these behaviors and continue them in the spring. Sometimes we find that students did some things well, they just didn't do them enough to have a significant impact on their grades. Spring can be a great fresh start for them to work a little bit more on these behaviors. My favorite question is, if you had September to do over again, what would you do differently? This question acknowledges that they have 16 weeks of experience under their belt and they likely know what they need to do next time. September is a crucial month in the fall, unfortunately they don't realize it when they are going through it. But it's early enough that students aren't feeling the pressure of exams or papers quite yet, but what we find is that students often regret not working harder in September to set themselves up for success in October and November. The same thing will happen in spring. So asking them what do they want to make sure they do in February to set them up for success in March and April, can be a great way to go about it. Another question that I really like is, what do you think it would have taken to get an A or a B in your classes? This question allows them to think about their behaviors again and how they compare to other students in their classes. What do A students do? Chances are they know someone who did get a better grade and they may have a sense for how that student studies. If not, suggesting that they think about this can be helpful. It can even be a good starting point for a conversation with a professor or a TA in the spring. When they go to office hours, I always encourage students to ask professors, what do students who get an A in your class typically do to set themselves up for success? It's through this

process that students realize that students who gets A's and B's typically put in a lot of time studying, they always go to class, they typically read before class and they review the material on a regular basis, not just before the test. These are all scales that can be learned and practiced in the spring semester. Another question that I like to ask is about their experiences outside of class. If the semester didn't go well, perhaps it went well academically, but maybe it was the out of class experiences that weren't positive, and to help them kind of get a sense of what they want to change in spring can be helpful. And going back to the grade issue, sometimes if grades didn't go the way they wanted, this can be an indication that maybe their major isn't a good fit. Advisors have many conversations with students late in the fall semester and early in the spring semester, where they start to question whether or not this is a major that is the right fit for them. That's a very normal process to go through and we never want students to feel bad about that, but this is what college is about, and we want to be having these conversations early, so that if they want to make some changes to their major or career plans that we have those conversations right now.

I wanted to share a phrase that a colleague of mine at the Advising Center introduced to me. It's a saying from Soren Kierkegaard, "Life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward." I have found that this phrase is so meaningful to our work with students. The reason we like to ask students questions and the reason we encourage you to ask them questions, is to prompt them to process their experience. They can do this best if they are looking backwards and can see things a little bit more clearly.

So moving forward, let's talk a little bit about grades. When your student arrives home sometime during the week of December 14<sup>th</sup>, they will likely not know their grades yet. The deadline for professors to submit final grades is not until December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Students will be able to see their final grade report on our Iowa Student Information System (ISIS), sometime during the day on December 24<sup>th</sup>. They shouldn't panic if they don't see it early in the day. Our registrar has told us that grades will be processed all day on the 24<sup>th</sup>, so it might not show up until later in the day on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

Now I want to show you a screenshot here of what students see when they are logged into their ISIS account related to grades. Under their student records menu, you can see that they have a couple of different options. On December 24<sup>th</sup>, they'll be looking at their completed grades. But prior to the 24<sup>th</sup> students can click on Grades in Progress. What this means is when professors submit final grades, the grades show up in their Grades in Progress right away. And students might start seeing these as early as sometime during finals week. This is simply a listing of the grades that have been reported. But students don't see their overall grade point average or any of the other information that is on their final grade report on this Grades in Progress screen. They have to wait for final grades to see that information. But if they are really curious about a grade, they can be checking that in the days leading up to the 24<sup>th</sup>.

I did want to mention a few things can be noted on transcripts depending on how students grades turn out in the fall. Now grading policies do vary by college. What I'm sharing with you now is something that shows up for students who are on the Dean's List in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. At the end of their grade report, it will say on Dean's List. That is if a student earns a 3.5 or higher on 12 or more graded University of Iowa hours. This is a great thing. Everyone loves to see this. If your student is in another college, perhaps if they were a direct admit to Engineering, Nursing, or Business, they will need to check with their college about grading policies in their college.

On the other end of the spectrum is academic probation. Again, this one varies by college. In the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, they require that students have a 1.85 or above to be in good standing if they have 29 or fewer hours. Students who have earned 30 or more hours perhaps students who have some transfer credit coming in, need to be at a 2.0 or better to be in good standing. Anything below 2.0 for them is academic probation. Often times these two notifications, either Dean's List or Academic Probation, may not show up on their grade report on the 24<sup>th</sup>, so if your student would think that they could possibly be in either of these categories, I would suggest that they check their grade report again the week of December 28<sup>th</sup> for those notations to appear. Academic Probation in most colleges means that

the student has a semester to raise their grade into good standing, and if they don't, then they would be up for dismissal from their college. We of course don't want this to happen to students but sometimes it does, and when it does, we really want to provide students with support so they can get back on track in the spring.

So I want to mention some things that we offer to support struggling students in the spring semester. They are definitely going to receive some outreach from us over winter break. If they are in the category of students who have grade point average, let's say below a 2.2, students who are in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences who are on academic probation will be invited to a spring success meeting that will be held in the first two days of the spring semester. We offer 9 of these over the course of two days and at these meetings we talk with students about what probation is, how they can get off of probation, ways that they can set themselves up for success with their spring schedule, and the various resources available on campus to help support them. They'll get a letter mailed to their home address, and an email to let them know about attending one of these meetings. We also offer a course called the College Success Seminar for first-year students who have a GPA below 2.2 for the fall semester. This elective course focuses on getting back on track academically, and will cover organization, time management, goal setting and study skills among other topics. Eligible students will get a letter sent to their home address telling them about the class and how to enroll. Students who are advised at the Academic Advising Center may also hear from their academic advisor over winter break. Please encourage your student to read their university email so they don't miss any important messages over break. Sometimes our outreach is to encourage them to take advantage of opportunities like the college success seminar, and other times, we're offering advice for their spring schedule. For example, if a student earned a low grade such as a D or F in a class, in a subject where they are taking the next class in the spring, we might recommend that they retake the first level. This is called a second grade only option, and allows them to take the course again and have the second grade calculated into their GPA and have the first one taken out. The first grade always show up on their transcript but it can make a substantial difference in their GPA to take the lower grade out of their GPA calculation. Advisors will also talk to students about other resources on campus that students can utilize in the spring.

So let's talk a little bit about setting themselves up for success in spring with their spring schedule. I thought I would put a picture of flowers on there to encourage all of us that someday we will see this again. The choices that they make for their spring schedules can be so important in predicting how this spring semester will go for them. As you might know, most students register for classes before Thanksgiving break. They may have gotten the schedule they want, they may be perfectly happy right now, or they may still be in the process of making some changes. ISIS, again the Iowa Student Information System is where students register and make changes to their schedules. It's not uncommon for students to continue checking ISIS over winter break and make small tweaks to their schedules. ISIS is continually changing due to students changing their schedule and sometimes departments will add seats in classes where there is high demand. I always tell students to keep checking and if there is a good chance that if they are not happy today, that by the time school starts, they will be happier with their schedule. If they change their mind on what classes they'll take, we always recommend that they check in with their advisor. Advisors and students talk about their spring schedule prior to their November registration date. So that may have been earlier in the semester when things were going a little bit differently than they are today. And so it is always a good idea if a student is going to change the plan that they made with their academic advisor, that they check in with their advisor, even dropping them an email over winter break, saying you know, I now have decided on a different class, do you have any thoughts on this? That way we can ensure that students are getting the best advice for the classes that they take in the spring.

So moving on from grades, I want to talk a little bit about how your students can make the most of their winter break in relation to their long term academic and career goals. Some students work over break and that can certainly help the time go by faster, but many students tell us that four weeks is a long time and they can get a little bored. If they have some time over break, they might consider doing some things related to their major and career plans. They might be

exploring a number of things right now. It's pretty common for students who came in with declared majors to have learned a lot about themselves in the fall, and maybe they're now more definite about their major, or maybe they might be considering other options. Students who are open majors may still be in the midst of their exploration and winter break really offers a nice opportunity to do some exploring or even getting some experience. There are plenty of things that they can do to explore through university websites. In particular, the ones that I have on the screen here. The General Catalog is the best place to give them a sense of everything that university offers. The Advising Center and Career Center websites will help them with ideas for the exploration process. And the link for the majors, minors, and certificates is through the college of liberal arts and sciences. Now that they have a semester under their belt, it might be nice to revisit this, to make sure that they are in the right major, and think about things that they can do with their elective hours, such as looking at minors and certificates. I talked with a student yesterday who told me that she just changed her major this fall and she's now in a major that she didn't even know that the University of Iowa had. And so I'm continually reminded that there is so much to offer here, that students really do need to revisit this process just to be sure that they know what all of the options are at the university and to make sure that they're not going to regret anything later by not choosing a major that might be a better fit for them. Students can also gain some real world experience over break by doing a job shadow, or volunteering or even getting some work experience. Job Shadows can be arranged by contacting a place of employment they might be interested in. This certainly can be easier if they know someone there but that doesn't have to be the case. Job Shadows really vary in the amount of time. Sometimes students do them ranging from a number of hours to a full day or two. Either way, it's easy for them to see the environment that they might consider working in after college. Volunteering can also be a great way for them to get some exposure to something related to their major or career interests. Students interested in education are often students that we talk to about getting some volunteering experience in a school over winter break. Or students interested in healthcare, may volunteer at a hospital or medical clinic. Certainly your community might offer some other options for volunteering, but again it can be a great experience for students to get some real world exposure to the field of work that they might go into later. And if your student works over winter break, no matter what that job is, it can give them some opportunity to think about adults do long term. Do they like what they are doing? What aspect of their job might be able to help them? What skills are they building in the part time job that they have? So all of these things can help contribute to that conversation about long term major and career plans.

And I also encourage students to ask the adults around them, anybody that they encounter over winter break about their work and their education and training. On the screen here you see some questions that I think can be great for students to ask. Where do you work? What do you do? What do you enjoy most about your work? How did you get there? What kind of training do you have? Most young people are not used to asking adults about their jobs, but they can learn so much by doing that. If you encourage them to ask relatives, neighbors, friend's parents about their experiences, it can really go a long way to contributing to their developmental process of figuring out what they want to do. And most importantly, what I think they learn through this process is they realize that many people got to where they are by going a number of varied routes, and that for most adults, our past has not a linear path from, "here was my major and then I graduate and then I worked in this job." For most people, we've learned a lot about ourselves over our adult lives through various experiences- education, work; and so it's good for students to get a variety of responses about where people have come from and how they have landed where they are.

So next I want to transition into talking about their goals for the spring semester. Closer to the end of their break, it can be good to talk with students about their goals for the spring. Typically these will come from your discussions of how the fall went. Certainly processing their fall semester helps to give them a sense for what they want to accomplish in spring. But I find that it can be helpful for parents to have a really intentional conversation with students about what they are going to do about when they come back in the spring semester. The reason that is so important is that it helps students to move from kind of this abstract thought to some specific goals and plans. As I was preparing for today, the example

that I thought about from my own life is, you know moving into the holidays, I know that I should probably watch what I eat, I should probably continue exercising. I know that on kind of this larger abstract level, but I don't yet really have any plans for how I'm going to put that into place, which means that it is less likely that it is going to happen. Once I sit down and actually write out some goals for myself, there is a much higher chance that I am going to be better in the next month for how I approach my exercise and eating. It is the same thing for your students. If you can talk right now about the goals that they have for spring and put those things into actionable steps, it's much more likely that they are going to make some changes. So going back to what we talked about before, what will you do differently in the spring semester, and talking them through what does that look like on a week to week basis. How will you get involved at the University of Iowa in the spring? Some students got really involved in the fall, and we're not worried about them, but it's not uncommon for us to find some students who didn't get involved at all their first semester and really want to in the spring. But it feels kind of overwhelming to think about the 400+ student organizations we have and deciding what they want to do. The link that I have here on the slide is for the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership. This is a great place for students to start if they haven't been to this website before because they can learn about all of the amazing opportunities we have at the University of Iowa for students to get engaged on campus and even develop some of the leadership skills we know are going to be so important to them later on after they graduate from the university. There is a link from this website to a program called OrgSync where students can look at all of the various student organizations that we offer. And as I said, that can be a very overwhelming process of just thinking, "They have all of these groups, what do I want to do?" But this program organizes them into different categories, so students can think about, "Do I want an organization that is related to my major? Or maybe do I want to look into an organization that does volunteer work in the community?" But it is a good starting point, and I think when they are home over winter break and they are not thinking about their classes, it's a great time for them to start making plans, and then when they get back to campus, they can start looking at those organizations and finding out when are they meeting for the first time in the spring? And what plans will they make for going to one of these meetings and starting to get involved? I think your conversation about spring will likely include what resources they will use on campus in the spring. If some of their goals for spring include doing some things differently, that might include, "I'm going to start going to professors' office hours in the spring," and you can talk through that process. Or if some of the changes they want to make include moving towards exploring majors and careers a little bit more. Certainly talking about the resources available to them and making plans for using them early in the semester can be helpful. It's amazing once to spring semester starts how fast the semester can go, and before they know it, it's going to April and students are going to registering for their fall classes. And a student who still needs to spend some time exploring majors and careers might feel overwhelmed in April if they don't do some of this work early on. So I often encourage students to make some plans and small goals, so maybe in the end of January to make an appointment with the career center, maybe take one of the career assessments, figure out what the career center offers to students early on in their experience here because they are definitely available to students here for all four years, not just at the end. But make a plan then to maybe have a conversation with their advisor early on. Advisors often give students what we call advising homework, things they can do on their own. That can kind of move this process along, so that by the time they register for classes in the spring, they might feel better about their long term plans. But all of this, the questions that you'll ask, the goals that you will ask them about for spring, will help them to start thinking about how they will continue to make the most of their first year. Because what we don't want is for the first year to zip by, and have them say, "Gosh, I wish I would have gotten more involved" or "I wish I would have done this or that." We want them to really come back and be ready in the spring to take advantage of the things that are available to them and make the most of their outside of class experiences as well. So I know that there are lots of things that you'll be talking about in the coming weeks with your student and likely there are some things that I haven't mentioned. So I think we want to move into some question and answer time.

**Danielle:** Yeah, so thanks so much Maureen, and as she said, we will move into the Question and Answer portion of our webinar, and please remember that we have lots of folks attending today, so we are unable to answer about specifics of your student's experience, but can provide information that might be helpful in guiding your student. As a reminder, if you have a question, type it into the question box on the side, and then we will read the question out loud so all the participants can hear, and Maureen can answer. If you are unable to type your question, you can use the mic function, and just let us know so we can unmute you. If you are unable to get your question answered during the webinar, we will follow up with you via email to make sure that we answer your question.

So our first question is: How do students or parents resolve the conflicts that occur when the student must now commit to house rules again, such as things like curfews or chores or other things?

**Maureen:** Wouldn't it be great if I knew the exact answer to that? I think this is a great question, and something that as you are anticipating your student coming home, it's really good to think about. My personal opinion here is that we go back to setting up those expectations and just communicating things from the very beginning, because lots of things that I have heard about over the years where they are issues when students go home, go back to everyone not talking so that a student might go out, they come home at one o'clock in the morning and they are in the kitchen making a snack and the parents are waking up going "we have to work tomorrow!" but they didn't talk about it in advance. So setting some ground rules from the very beginning so that everybody understands and is on the same page can be really helpful. My own personal opinion as a parent is that it's my house, so I can set my own rules, you can set your own rules but treating your student and acknowledging the fact that they have had some independence can be helpful in helping them to understand where you are coming from but also that you have a household to run for the four weeks that they are home and so these are why we need to have these rules in place. But I don't think that there is one set answer for everyone.

**Danielle:** Where can their student find out about some more non-party or alcohol free social activities that happen in the spring?

**Maureen:** I think that is a great question, I really do, and I would be curious if your student were wondering that, it would be a great conversation about what they have done, what they have looked at so far. I think that for those of us at the university, and I think that Danielle can answer this too, I think that there are a variety of options for this. There is a website called "After Class" that I often refer students to, and it has a day by day things going on throughout the semester on campus and in fact, one of the classes that I teach, we require that students look at this calendar and participate in some campus activities, and students who get in the habit of checking After Class, the website, all the time, are often really surprised at how many things are constantly going on, on our campus that can give them ideas. I think the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership website that I referred to before can be really helpful too, and even just being in our Iowa Memorial Union, where the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership is, can be helpful to put them in the right place to be seeing advertisements to be seeing posters, to see electronic signs that talk about things that are going on on a regular basis. Danielle, is there anything else you would like to add?

**Danielle:** Yeah, also I would say, if the student lives on campus, engaging in sort of their living learning community activities, so the programming that they do there, even tonight, we have a Casino night going on on campus and it starts at 9 p.m. and goes until 1 in the morning. And that is hosted from a wide variety of folks from Student Health and Wellness to our Center for Student Involvement and Leadership, our Women's Resource and Action Center, and so lots of things happen on campus, and so the After Class website is definitely the first place I would go to, and the second place I would go to is sort of the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership has a calendar that they sort of maintain, and the Campus Activities Board does lots of evening movies, and getting engaged in clubs and organizations,

they often will host things on the weekends, whether that is in the fall, I know that they do trips, apple picking, in the spring, they sometimes do things on the river, so those could be options for your student too.

**Danielle:** It looks like our next question is around some uncertainty around off-campus living. And so this transition of a first-year student trying to make the decision around living on campus or off campus, and then about making deposits and finding roommates, and not knowing much about Iowa City and where to go, and where to look and what resources are available.

I'll go ahead and answer that because we deal with that one a lot in our office and so there is an off campus housing website and programs through the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership, and so if you go to the uiowa.edu website and just type in off-campus housing, it comes right up, and there are subleases that are on there, and so if your student is going to stay here over the summer, students can post, they can find roommates. It has a great resource, our student legal counsel or student legal services also does an off-campus housing fair, they will start doing them in early spring to talk a little bit about what does it mean to sign a lease, what does it mean to have a co-signer. If your student wants to reapply through the housing website, we always encourage them to go to the Housing and Dining Website for the application dates because those will be coming up pretty shortly.

There is a question about application for the residence halls for next fall, I'm going to have to look up those dates, I don't know them off of the top of my head.

SO there is a student who continues to struggle with homesickness, and that when they come home for winter, not wanting to go back. And we actually see that quite a bit and get a lot of phone calls. Maureen, how would you coach that family?

**Maureen:** Yeah, you know if this was somebody I knew, I mean my first thought that comes to my mind is that this is still very normal. When I talk to student groups late in the fall semester, and I bring up homesickness, I always talk to them about how there is this facade that everybody looks like they are completely happy and that they feel 100 percent at home here and everything's great, but that you really don't know what is really going on. And I almost feel sorry for students in this day in age with social media because they have an added layer than we didn't have when we were growing up in terms of the facade that everybody is completely happy. So number one, I would say to share with this student that the process of transitioning to college is not over, it's been 16 weeks and so that transition continues in the spring. I would ask that student questions about what they've done to make the University of Iowa feel more like home this fall, because sometimes it goes back to that campus engagement idea of they didn't feel their place to get involved or to make some connections on campus and so setting some goals for spring can be important. How can you get involved? For some students, getting a job on campus might be a great connection for them to connect them with other students and employees of the university. For other students, it might be joining a student organization. I don't think that this is out of the ordinary, I do think it is something that people don't tend to talk about, but it is okay to still be homesick and the big question for that student is, is this something that we can work through? Is this something that with some effort, you can make this place feel like home? Or do you feel like a change is really necessary? And there are people on campus who can talk with a student like that. In addition to your conversations at home over winter break, but for that student, having more of a set plan for their goals for spring can be very important. Because I can imagine, it can be very hard for someone to say, I don't want to go back to this place. But there is hope.

**Danielle:** So I want to recircle back to the question about the reapplication for the residence halls, so we did some digging and we found that reapplication begins in late January. We don't have the exact date, but all students who live on campus will receive an email in their uiowa email account for the information about reapplication and this will have the specific date and time of when they can reapply. Priority is based on semester hours, which means that returning students have more of the first pick of where they want to live before new students come to the institution.

There is a question about helping a student overcome relying so much on social media and getting involved in campus activities. I'm going to help the person who asked the question to help us clarify. Is the student on social media too much and so they are not getting involved in activities? Or that they have to be on social media to get involved? Or could you help us clarify what you mean?

**Maureen:** And while you do that, I think I'll go back to one of the previous questions which was a follow-up from what I talked about with the homesickness. For students who want to take advantage of the University Counseling Service in the spring semester, most definitely, this is an option for them. We, in many of our offices, are often talking with students about the fact that we have the University Counseling Service available as a support for them. Scheduling an appointment earlier in the spring semester is better. As the semester goes on, they tend to get busier, so that might be a great goal to schedule an appointment in the spring to start that support system right away, I think that is a great idea.

**Danielle:** Okay, so we got some clarity. Social media with old friends, so taking away that incentive for them to get involved on campus because they are still so connected with their past that they haven't really engaged in the present.

**Maureen:** That is a great question. I think there are going to be books and articles about this in years to come. I imagine there are PhD students studying this right now. Again, going back to just how different it was when we were in college. You're right, social media allows them to stay connected and feel very connected to people at home without even leaving their room. And so if that were my student, I think I would want to have conversations over the winter break about acknowledging this balance of staying connected with people from your past, but also making the most of your time at the university, and to ask them about what ways are they engaging with people here. Sometimes when we start to talk about major and career planning, that leads us to think about the job search that students are going to go through in a few years, and it leads us to think about the resume and what are you going to have on your resume when you graduate, and that can help you loop back around to, "what are you doing at the University of Iowa that you could put on a resume right now?" And just starting that conversation, because then, a first-year student who hasn't really been involved at the University of Iowa can kind of say, oh I haven't really done anything yet that I could probably put on a resume. And then talking about, that is why we want you to get involved at the university. Of course we know that because we want them to be engaged and be happy here, but the other piece, and the tangible piece that the student can look at is, "wow, in three and a half years, I'm going to be writing a resume and competing with other people for jobs, what do I want to have on there, and that can be the incentive to help them move towards setting some goals for getting involved in the spring. What would you say Danielle?"

**Danielle:** I think that one of the things that we talk about with students in our office, is sort of broadening your network, and so social media is great to stay connected with folks but it also only takes you so far. There are times during the day when we might just need to process something verbally, or we might want to engage with somebody about what is going on in our class, and things like that. And so without a network of support here at the University, it's really hard. And when you leave here, it's sort of hard, what network did you build while you were here, to add to your social media network that you have had previously to here. So I think about networks and sort of systems of support and sometimes that can help reframe things for students.

We are going to take one last question, and so we are looking at a student who had not had a part time job, should their family encourage them to look at a part time job? And how should they do this without sounding pushy? And also if finances are tight, and looking at if a student can finance their own education.

**Maureen:** I think Danielle has some great data to share with you about student jobs, because often times students enter the university and say, "no, I'm not going to work, I'm just going to focus on academics," and sometimes there is this idea that working is bad. We actually have data from some of our own students about the impact that working has on their college experience. I'll let Danielle share that.

**Danielle:** So we find that students who work anywhere part-time jobs from 1-20 hours a week, tend to do better academically, they have a higher GPA than students who don't work at all, and then student who might work over 20 hours, so they might be overextending themselves, but student who work at all tend to do better than students who don't work. And we see that because they are building time management skills, they are probably developing that network of support with peers at their jobs or supervisors, especially if it is on campus, they might be getting to know faculty or staff around the campus, or other campus resources, so we highly recommend that students work, and so sometimes we talk a little bit about the benefits with working as not to sound pushy around saying you need to get a job around finances. Because we know that financial need is very real for most people, higher education is expensive, and so we want folks to really be in a place where they can really look at the affordability of Iowa for them. So really setting up some time to see what jobs would be a good fit for your student, so not just casting a net for anything and everything, but talking about what might be meaningful experiences to them and what transferable skills do they want to look at. So I think that if a student is in a communication major or public relations, something as simple as being a barista or a waiter or anything like that. Learning to talk with people from different backgrounds and to use those skills and to market themselves in the future. That can really be beneficial for students to use our Pomerantz Career Center and we have a system on campus called Hire-a-Hawk, where students can log in, they can create a resume, they can meet with somebody, and get their resume approved and then they have access to this University of Iowa job board, which all University of Iowa job postings are available as well as many of our community members and alumni post jobs there as well, so it's a really great resource.

**Maureen:** And I wanted to add something too, that our student employment office that falls under the financial aid office at the University of Iowa has this great program and it is a class that students can enroll in, who have jobs on campus, and the class helps them to think about the experience as they are getting as a student employee, and the skills that they are developing will transition into skills that they can use in their job search beyond graduation, and it's a newly created program and has just been really well-received in the recent past. And I think it's great because sometimes students think, let's say for example, we have students at the advising center who answer the phone at our front desk, and greet visitors when they come in, a student might think that they just have this little job where all they do is sit at a front desk, well we can talk with them, saying you are working autonomously, you're developing communication skills, you have to have problem solving skills to be answering a phone and be dealing with people in person. A student who has a job on campus and who takes this class as well, can really have some help from a caring adult to kind of think about the skills that they are kind of developing. The program is called STEP, Students to Employed Professionals. So if students are interested in that, you can tell your student that you heard about it, Students to Employed Professionals, it helps them to be more strategic in helping them to think about the skills they are learning through a job. So I definitely know that is a conversation that a lot of people have, and I know that as a parent myself, I will have that in the back of my mind, about the balance between academics and working. There is no doubt that if the hours are reasonable that it can really benefit their education and not take away from it.

**Danielle:** That is all the time that we have for today, we want to thank you all for joining us, but especially thank you to Maureen for taking time out of her day to present to us. All the webinars will be posted online at [uc.uiowa.edu/family-resources](http://uc.uiowa.edu/family-resources). If we were unable to get to your question during the webinar, we will follow up with you via email to answer your question. And additional questions can be sent to [uc-retention@uiowa.edu](mailto:uc-retention@uiowa.edu) for response from a University of Iowa staff member. Please join us back in the New Year for Paying for Year 2: Financial Aid Important Dates and Verification Process on Friday, February 5, 2016 from noon to 1 p.m. hosted by Academic Support and Retention and Student Financial Aid. Thank you so much and we hope you have a great rest of your Friday, and best of luck to our Hawkeyes in the big game tomorrow. On Iowa, Go Hawks.