

Parent Resources: Article Archives

Coming Home for the Summer: Advice from a College Student	Graduation
A Student's Career Advice	The Challenge of Confining Conditions
A Parent's Career Advice	Assisting Your Student with the Job Search
When Your Son/Daughter Leaves for College	Navigating Career Fairs
Break from Study; Break for Friends	Summer: Stress or Sizzle?
Christmas can be Hectic: Christmas Break	

Coming Home for the Summer: Advice from a College Student

By: Kay Borst '15 (Resident Assistant and Student Worker at Career and Counseling Services)

By the fourth quad, everyone is itching for summer and some time off from the constant grind of school. Students start seeking summer employment at the local restaurant or shop, remind themselves on especially stressful days that relaxation is soon to come and get ready to face the rents – err – parents.

It can be a difficult transition, moving back home for the summer. By the end of the academic year students – freshmen especially – are finally just figuring out how to be independent only to be thrown back into a dependent living situation. Often students find that all those skills they have just spent the year learning get tossed out the car window on the drive home, and now they are expected to allow someone else to make the decisions.

Having independence is the trademark of being an adult. Being an adult means that you're able to fend for yourself and you can make decisions on your own. Parents are used to this – they've been doing it for years! Students are just starting. The challenge is in balancing the parent/student relationship as adults, not as adult/child. As a parent it is your job to help your student develop the skills that they need in the adult world, and you do that by giving them the freedom to make mistakes and learn along the way.

So, how does this work? Both parents and students need to determine, on their own, their personal boundaries as well as their boundaries for each other. Once that is done, it is imperative to discuss those boundaries and expectations. Without direct communication how will the parent ever know, for sure, what the student needs, and visa-versa? Set aside some time at the beginning of the summer to discuss those expectations and boundaries – it is important!

Some Advice for Parents:

1. **Don't treat your student like a child** – Give them some room to show that they are an adult. When you disagree, allow them to support their position and try to work with them to come to an agreement. Your student is experiencing new things all the time at college; accept their changes and be supportive of their transition into adulthood.
2. **Make them want to be at home** – Your student has different rules that they live by now and a lot of times your old rules will make them feel babied. Your student might push your buttons some, but rather than nagging, focus on addressing issues politely. Set aside time to discuss new rules/guidelines and allow your student to have an input. If your student feels included in the decision, they will be more likely to follow the new rules and even look forward to when they are able to come home for breaks.
3. **Your old curfew has officially expired** – Don't expect your student to be home by 10:30 p.m. anymore. They are used to staying up with friends until well past the early hours of the morning. If you expect them to follow their high school rules you will not only smother their independence and new lifestyle, but also strain your relationship with them. Give them the room to decide how late is "too late," and collaborate with them to create guidelines for letting you know when they'll be home.

Some Advice for Students:

1. **Stop, breathe and think** – Your parents are used to being your parent. That's the role they've played for over 18 years! So, when you feel that your parent is crossing a boundary and treating you like a child, take a moment to relax and reflect. Rather than ranting right away, pause and remember that it is just as difficult for them to adjust to their new role as it is for you. Politely and calmly discuss with them your viewpoint and ask to compromise. If you still feel as though they aren't respecting your boundaries, try to talk it out again. In the adult world communication is the key to successful relationships and sometimes it takes multiple attempts to get right. Door slamming and the silent treatment will not work anymore; your parents will be more likely to respect you if you show them that you are able to respond to your emotions maturely.
2. **It is still their home** – While you are an adult now, it is important to remember that you are still living at your parents' home. Just like when you are on your best behavior at a friend's house, so should you be at your parent's. Your friends have specific rules of the house and your parents do as well – you can't ignore those rules, it will merely create conflict. Being an adult isn't about being defiant; it's about communicating and coming to a mutual agreement. Try to find common ground early in the summer rather than later. Even think about offering to help out with chores, yard work or cooking! By holding your own weight around the house your parents will respect you more because they'll see how much you are maturing into an adult.
3. **Treat your parents how you want to be treated** – It's the one everyone hears about, but it is so important! If you want respect, give your parents respect. Show your parents you're mature; it will give them confidence in you. There will be times you will have conflicts; it is only

normal, but try to think of the big picture and not get caught up in the details of the moment. Your parent might push buttons, and whether it is accidentally or purposefully, that's the time to show how mature you are and talk it out.

A Student's Career Advice

By: Rachel Bartels '13

Why do kids go to college?

If you ask parents of a student, the answer is usually something along the lines of "to get an education and find a job (and move out of my house)."

When asking a student why he or she is going to college, you are bound to get a laundry list of reasons, and it is doubtful "learning job related skills" will crack the top five. Even if you were to cite the "getting a job" logic to a student, he or she would probably give a vague "I have four years to work on that..."

As an Aquinas senior on my victory lap, I can tell you those four years, or in my case five, fly by. College is packed with opportunities to learn job related skills, but those activities never sound as fun as the volleyball tournament taking place in the Regina bowl or the movie marathon happening in the St. Joes lounge. However, pushing your student to be a mini-tycoon, attending career fairs, or networking events, as a freshman is not the best approach. Instead, encourage your student to take steps to build a foundation of skills and carve out a path that will eventually lead to his or her desired career.

Freshman and sophomore years for a student are all about discovering strengths, interests, and values. Knowing these fundamental things are crucial in choosing a major. The academic field your student chooses will dictate the direction of his or her college and career path, so finding the best fit is very important.

After choosing a major, students should start obtaining skills for the job search. Being able to write a concise resume, nail an interview, or knowing proper business etiquette are valuable skills to have on hand. To help build these skills, Aquinas College Career and Counseling Services (CCS) offers resume reviews, career counseling sessions with staff members, and Class to Career seminars that help students transition from life in the classroom to life in the office.

When senior year rolls around, the real search begins. CCS also offers numerous events to help upcoming grads look for jobs. Career fairs, employer site visits, alumni networking dinners, and recruiting interviews are great events for seniors that help them cultivate their own contacts and job leads. To make the most out of these opportunities, seniors will need to call on the skills they developed in their sophomore and junior years.

Going to a career fair as a freshman with very little to tell an employer is a waste of time, for both the student and the businessperson. However, meeting a potential business contact at a networking event as a senior without an elevator speech or a working resume is also detrimental. As a parent, encourage your new student to explore different career fields and his or her own skill set. If your student is partway through his or her college journey, developing job related skills is key. Senior parents: it is time for your student to start reaching out towards new people and the next step. Support your student in this long process, and help them to take baby steps starting early on. Finding a great job after graduation doesn't happen overnight, but it does happen. Make sure your student is prepared for it.

A Parent's Career Advice

By: Anna Marie Bartels '80

Another summer gone by, another fall around the corner, and your student is off to school, maybe for the first time or maybe for the last. As you know all too well, college kids need money - money for tuition, books, room and board, and late night snacks. As often as you tell your student that money doesn't grow on trees, it doesn't change the fact that they still need some sort of income. So where should they go to find employment?

Aquinas has many opportunities for your student to earn some money. Even if the job isn't related to their chosen field, employers like seeing that prospective applicants had a variety of working experiences in college. On-campus jobs are especially good for students who don't have access to a car.

For many young adults, college employment may be their first job experience. This may be their first time to write a résumé, or go to an interview and present their skills. Remind your student that skills are not limited to education in classroom. Experiences like being the captain of a sports team or an officer in a school organization demonstrate leadership and organizational skills.

If your student is a junior or a senior, it is time for them to start broadening their horizon beyond the campus. Cultivating and maintaining a network is one of the best ways to find a job after graduation; and as a parent, you can help greatly with this. Reach out to your friends and contacts and keep your ears open for job or internship leads. Know what your student is interested in, their skill set, and set up an introduction if the connection looks promising. Companies are more apt to hire a young person if they come with a recommendation of someone already on their staff.

Don't forget that volunteer organizations are another way for your student to gain experience. While they usually aren't paid, volunteering offers the valuable benefits of experience and contacts. It shows employers that a prospective hire is continuing to hone his or her skills. There are jobs out there. By fully utilizing the resources available to them, especially the Career Services Center on campus, students can find a job - whether it be a few hours a week to help pay for expenses, or the first job in their new career.

Don't forget, "It's Great to be a Saint!"

When Your Son/Daughter Leaves for College

Going to College

This is an exciting day. It's one your student has been planning for a long time. Show your confidence in them by resisting giving them too much advice and too many reminders. They can and they will find their way around the residence hall and campus. In advance of this day, talk about how often they want to be called and when they'll come home next. Encourage them to participate in orientations and other start of school programs.

Don't Decorate Their Room

This is a great opportunity for your student to start to negotiate and work things out with their new roommate. You can assist, but let them decide if they want to loft their beds or not.

Stay in Touch

Schedule phone calls. Many students have cell phones and if you schedule calls you won't interrupt class, library time or the middle of a soccer game. Use e-mail to communicate. College students are busy and are accustomed to Internet communication. Your Saint can answer you any time, day or night at the convenience of their schedule. Remember they like snail mail letters too. It's comforting to receive letters and care packages from home.

No Surprise Visits

Students have lots of activities, even if it's the afternoon nap they have been planning on, so it can be stressful if you make surprise visits. They are adults now. Call before you come to see them.

Homesickness

Your student will likely be homesick at first. Everything is new and different They've said goodbye to familiar friends and surroundings. Nothing is the same. Listen to them, if they feel sad, grumpy and lonely, but remember that these feelings are a normal part of adjustment to college. Suggest they don't come home every weekend so they can start to form new friendships. Even if it's hard, encourage them to finish out the semester. A sense of belongingness should occur when they return in January.

Don't Worry Too Much About "Crisis" or "Disaster" Calls

Often times students call home when they are feeling overwhelmed by tests, papers, or relationship problems. It can seem like everything is falling apart. They don't necessarily tell you when something good is happening. Listen, be supportive, and ask them what they're going to do. Usually they feel a great sense of relief after unloading their troubles and go right back to handling school and friends. If they have roommate problems, ask them if they have talked to their roommate. This is a great chance to learn to communicate assertively with others. You can suggest they drop in at the Career and Counseling Center to talk about their concerns.

Be Interested in Course Selection

To keep communication open, ask about the courses your Saint has registered for. Don't give advice unless your student asks for it. College is a time for discovery and they need your guidance within limits. Even though you are older and wiser, they need to follow their own dreams.

Adventures and Risks

Discuss dating. Talk to your Saint about Facebook, MySpace and how postings on social networking sites and the Internet can follow them for years to come. Have another conversation about drugs and alcohol. Try not to moralize, but discuss your views with them again about these issues.

Coming Home

Your son or daughter will be visiting on weekends and vacations but they have changed and you will need to renegotiate expectations. When they are at school they don't tell you all their plans. What will you expect when they are at home? Think in terms of common courtesy and what you would want any adult who lives in your home to let you know.

When to Contact Counseling Services

- If your son or daughter is not going to classes.
- If they are isolating themselves from peers.
- If they are constantly telling you how overwhelmed they are.
- If there are significant behavior changes, they are secretive, angry, more irritable than usual
- If they continue to complain that they have no friends.

Encourage them to contact [Career and Counseling Services](#). If you are worried, feel free to contact Career and Counseling at (616) 632-2905 and ask to speak to the [Director of Counseling](#).

Break from Study, Break for Friends

Fall Break: The big sigh after eight weeks of study, sports, and socializing. For most college upperclassmen, this is a much welcomed break; an opportunity to rejuvenate before hitting the books again. For the college freshman, Fall Break may seem like a trip back in time where reentering the world they left behind can be awkward, uncomfortable and maybe even daunting. Many freshmen will travel home to visit family and friends during break. Some students find that their hometown friendships have remained the same, and that familiar connectedness is still alive. For others it is evident early on that they have changed and so have their high school friends resulting in a yearning for what use to be. For some of you, you may be surprised to be consulted on these matters. For others of you, it is a reaffirmation of your role with your son or daughter. You have been through this stage of life. It is the stage of figuring out who you are and who your true friends are. Remember what it was like for you to lose touch with good friends. How did you react? What did you do to cope? How did you decide whether a friend was worth keeping or not?

If your child is feeling disconnected from their friends, encourage with them— letters, phone calls, visits. Tell them to share with their friends the news and stories of their lives. Reassure them that their friends care about their recent life events. Before long future travels home will be met with less transition stress and actually be something students are both comfortable with and look forward to. You can offer insight on these matters, or you can just provide a listening ear for your child.

It is natural for your child's relationships to change. Some may end, others may grow. Your relationship with your son or daughter is going to evolve, as well. When they talk to you about feeling as though they have a foot in two different worlds it is an opportunity for you to establish communication with your child as an adult.

While spending time with friends will be important to your child they should also take advantage of this opportunity to catch up on their rest. Your college student has been inundated with papers, quizzes, extra-curricular and co-curricular activities which result in an overwhelming need to kick back a bit and just plain relax. Many students appreciate this week in time to get caught up academically. Encourage your student to strike a balance during this mid-point in the semester and they will most definitely return to campus refreshed and renewed.

At anytime feel free to call [Career and Counseling Services](#) and ask to speak to someone from our [professional staff team](#) about your concerns, questions or for additional information. We are happy to partner with you and your student as they navigate the ins and outs of personal and career development.

Christmas can be hectic. Remember you are a human being, not human doing.

The holiday season, despite all of its chaos, offers many opportunities. Opportunities to spend time with those we love, opportunities to show others we care. Though this time of year is hectic, it does give us time. Three national holidays fall within 40 days: Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. You may have planned on filling every waking moment with events, obligations, and activities, but there are three extra days available that you would otherwise not have. How will you spend your time? How will your college student be spending their time? You have an opportunity to discuss that with your child and you could utilize this time for two things: planning and sharing.

Planning

With the cancelation of the Michigan Promise this year, we at the Counseling Center are speaking to many students who are feeling the burden of financial concerns. Money is tight everywhere and is a stressful topic. To reduce the anxiety, try to have a calm discussion with your child about money. The loss of the Michigan Promise money is a lesson about the ups and downs of the economy and how it can closely affect a person. Help your child understand how their college is paid; whether you are paying for their tuition, loans are part of the plan, a combination, or another scenario. This is an opportunity for a teachable moment. You can help them comprehend how finances work and how to navigate through this process. Come up with a plan together about how to handle sticky situations like this and anticipate how future problems can be dealt with.

Sharing

At the Counseling Center, we find that Aquinas students are hard workers, to the point where they overwhelm themselves with activities and involvement. Give them and yourselves permission to breath during the holidays. Plan some down time. Just because your kids are home with you does not mean you have to jam pack activities. We are human beings, not human doings, though it often seems the opposite. When your child sees you giving yourself the opportunity to relax, it models for them how to care for themselves.

Also, keep in mind that not everyone has a welcoming home for the holidays. If you know that one of your kids' friends does not have people to spend the holiday with, consider inviting them to join in on your family traditions. Think of the students who live far away or may be from another country. Sharing your family is a great gift to give this holiday season.

The Challenge of Confining Conditions

The holidays are finally over. Your student is off to campus. The car is weighed down with gifts, clean laundry and special treats. You may be wondering, "What will happen between now and Spring Break?" This span of time is not that much different from any other in the academic year, but it can be one of the most difficult. Whether your student is a freshman or a "Super Senior" the gray of winter in West Michigan can bring about special challenges for students.

If you live in the Midwest, you may be familiar with the term "cabin fever." It is used to describe a claustrophobic reaction when people (especially groups of people) are shut in to a small space with limited things to do. In this electronic era, we don't think about winter as feeling confining to students. Remember, they haven't live in a world without computers, over 200 channels on television, cell phones, and instant messaging. To a student, these are all normal necessities of life. Symptoms of cabin fever include restlessness, irritability, forgetfulness, excessive sleeping and distrust of others. Encourage your student to seek a new environment from time to time: join a club or organization that will introduce them to different students, explore the surrounding community, or go to an area library to study.

A more severe reaction known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is recognized by both the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association. SAD is triggered by the onset of fall or winter and is characterized by the following:

- Feeling sad or depressed
- Lack of energy, activity and/or enthusiasm
- Difficulty concentrating
- Carbohydrate or sugar cravings (often leading to weight gain)
- Sleep disturbances
- Reduced productivity
- Irritability

It is difficult to be a student and be dealing with these challenging symptoms. During the winter daylight is shorter or nonexistent, therefore less

Light passes through the eyes. This inhibits the release of the very important brain chemical serotonin and increases the release of melatonin. This imbalance creates the depressive symptoms stated above.

So, what can a student do about SAD?

- **Light helps.** Encourage your student to get outside or sit near a window. If symptoms are severe they can consider replacing the light bulb in their study lamp with a full spectrum light bulb. These are available at most retail (i.e. Meijer) and hardware stores. More than light is needed to keep depression from knocking at the door during the winter.
- **Use relaxation techniques to reduce stress.** Simple deep breathing exercises can erase stress. Breathing deeply through the nose, enough to inflate the abdomen, and exhale through the mouth for about eight seconds and repeat three to five times, goes a long way toward stress reduction.
- **Maintain contact with family and friends.** Meaningful relationships are a source of comfort. Encourage them to stop looking at the walls and change the view with people who care for them.
- **Exercise regularly.** 30 minutes of exercise three days a week can be an effective means to combat depressive symptoms.
- **Make an appointment at Career and Counseling Services.** Counseling can be an additional source of support for your student to sort out what is going on.

In the middle of a time that is at best uninspiring and at worst intensely depressing, we have Valentine's Day. Yikes! Your role in your student's life is very important. Even if they are in a romantic relationship, there is something significant about being honored by your parents as a young man or woman.

Lastly, it is during this time that your student is being asked to make some big decisions. Declare a major, choose next semester's classes, decide on what to do for spring break, apply for a study abroad program, graduate school, or that first professional job. These decisions can feel overwhelming. Students often feel as if they are deciding on the course of the rest of their life. That's a lot of pressure. When your student comes to you to talk about these decisions, take a deep breath, listen and help them to sort out the pros and cons of their decision.

The light at the end of the tunnel is - spring **will** come!

Assisting Your Graduate with the Job Search

Graduation is near and the job search for your soon to be graduate is in full swing. The current job market is one of the toughest in years and you may be wondering, "How can I help my graduate land that first job?" Here are some suggestions:

Ask how you can help.

Your student may have ideas about how you can effectively help in their job search. Your managerial skills could be utilized as a mock interviewer, your editing skills could be used to make the final critique on a resume, or your networking skills might uncover a few new job leads. Think about how you can assume a role other than mom or dad to assist with the job search.

While your help will be appreciated, listen to your student and back off when they are feeling too much pressure or need to do things on their own.

Be a listener.

Sometimes the best help you can give is to listen to the frustrations, worries, and anxieties of your student. While your advice might not always be welcome, your student knows they can come to you to vent. A listening ear can be very helpful.

Be open to new ideas.

The idea of graduate school may come up. Your student, who has always wanted to go into teaching, may start thinking about sales. Be open to these new ideas and provide positive suggestions where appropriate. However, don't encourage graduate school just because you feel there may be no job prospects.

Help the job search move from online only.

While it is uncomfortable to visit an employer they don't know, it is important to help your student realize the necessity of it. Employers are inundated with hundreds of online applications. If your student can help them put a face with their name, they can get a leg up on the competition. While your student should make face-to-face contacts, they need to know when to quit and not become pushy in their job search.

Reassure your graduate that this bad job market is temporary.

The market ebbs and flows with the economy and it won't stay down forever. Reassuring your student that things will turn around and sharing your experience with the job market can be helpful.

Set achievable goals.

Help your student break down the search process into achievable goals. Encourage them to be organized and save several versions of cover letters, resumes, and thank you notes as well as a spreadsheet of contacts.

Give an early graduation present.

A new suit, briefcase, or portfolio can assist your student in their job search and getting it early will allow them to use it in the whole search, not just after graduation. Talk to your student about what will help the most in their search.

Encourage volunteer or part-time positions.

While you did not spend money on tuition for your student to graduate, it may help in the long run. Sometimes all it takes is getting a foot in the door and volunteers or temps are a great way for a company to test the fit of an employee with minimal investment. Paid temporary jobs can also be beneficial, so encourage your student to think outside the box with regard to positions they will accept.

Remind your student how PROUD you are of them.

The bad job market should not be a damper on the success of earning a college degree. Remind your student how proud you are of their achievement through a phone call or card. They may be discouraged about the job search and should know you are proud and supportive.

Refer your student to Career Services at Aquinas.

Career Services, located in the Lower Donnelly Center, has many resources for grads and students. They can assist with resume and cover letter development, mock interviews, and have many job postings. The services offered are free to AQ students and alumni, so make sure your student takes advantage of them!

Navigating Career Fairs

Employer comments and observations made by Career Services Professionals have alerted us to the growing trend of parents attending career fairs with their students.

The reason your student went off to college was to prepare them for a career, and for many juniors and seniors the time to get serious about the career search is fast approaching. It can be tempting to assist your student through this process, particularly given our current economy and the amount of money you've invested in school. However, there are helpful ways to assist your student and ways that can be harmful to their future as a professional. The helpful and harmful ways to assist your student through this process are explained below:

Helpful: Buying resume paper for your student's resume, and even proofreading their final copy.

Harmful: Passing out your student's resume for them at the career fair.

Why: If your student is going to perform tasks at their future job effectively, the employer needs to see they can work independently. If they do not hand out their resumes on their own, will they be able to perform daily job duties without assistance?

Helpful: Taking your student's suit to the dry cleaner, or purchasing them a new suit before the event.

Harmful: Adjusting your student's tie at the table of a prospective employer.

Why: Employers want to see that your student is independent and can think for themselves. Your presence at the career fair can undermine your student's abilities to perform independently in a job.

Helpful: Practicing interview questions with your student before the career fair.

Harmful: Answering interview questions for your student at the career fair.

Why: You and your student have invested a lot of time, money, and effort in their education, which has prepared them to think for themselves and answer questions on their own. Answering for your student undermines their preparation and intelligence. Instead, help instill confidence in their interview skills by conducting practice interviews prior to the fair.

Helpful: Going over the list of potential employers attending the career fair to help your student choose the best companies to focus their energy on.

Harmful: Demanding your student speak with certain employers or attending the fair with your student and passing out their resume to particular employers.

Why: Your student has put time and effort into figuring out what they want in a career. They have had your guidance helping them along the way and need to have the opportunity to employ your guidance on their own.

Helpful: Working with your student on how to negotiate salary, benefits, hours, etc.

Harmful: Calling the employer on behalf of your student to demand a certain pay rate or benefits.

Why: If you always handle the difficult conversations for your student they will be unequipped to deal with them when you are not around. Instead, work with them on skills they can develop to effectively handle difficult situations so they are ready to handle anything that comes their way.

Helpful: Making sure your student has a way to get to the career fair, along with money for gas and parking.

Harmful: Walking your student into the career fair.

Why: Your student has been navigating their life at college for the past three years or more. They can effectively attend a career fair and choose appropriate employers to speak with. Instead, help them out by making sure they can afford to get to the career fair and that they have money for parking so they don't get a ticket.

Helpful: Discussing the career fair with your student after the fact: what they felt they did well and how they could improve the next time.

Harmful: Telling your student "You should have done this" or "Why didn't you do that?"

Why: Searching for a career can be scary and overwhelming. Your student will be in need of support and reaffirmation throughout the process, not criticisms.

You and your student have invested a great deal of time, money, and effort into their degree. Give your student the chance to show off their talents, skills, and knowledge but remain in the background as a supporter and encourager throughout the process. Send them to the Career

Services Office in Lower Donnelly for additional support on interviewing, resume building, and how to work a career fair -this service is included in tuition so take advantage of it! And, if you get tempted to accompany them to a career fair or on an interview, remember that many HR reps have yet to hire a recent graduate whose parent accompanied them to an interview or career fair.

Graduation

After years of hard work, both you and your student are about to graduate. It is true that the degree will have your student's name on it, but along the way you put forth long hours of work and sacrificed many things to help your student on their educational quest. In a way, this graduation is not only a time of celebration for your student, but for you as well.

Along with the celebratory feelings that come with graduation, feelings of anxiety may soon follow. This anxiety is not reserved only for students. Often parents share this feeling. "How will my student get a job?" "Has my student begun looking for a job?" "What can I do to help my student prepare for becoming part of the workforce?"

Before asking your student some of these questions, try to recall what it was like for you when you entered the workforce. Your student may be currently experiencing many of those same feelings. It is important to listen to your student during this time. They may already be anxious, and questioning them further could worsen their feelings.

If you are worried about your student entering the workforce, Aquinas offers many different options for students seeking help in the transition:

- Career Development Courses
- Resume Help
- Internship Opportunities
- Mock Interviewing
- Network Building Opportunities
- Career Fairs
- 1 to 1 Career Guidance
- Career Resource Library

A good resource for upperclassman thinking ahead to graduation is a career development course. CD 410 Entering World of Work is geared towards learning the soft skills of the workforce such as: dinner etiquette, email etiquette, proper introduction techniques, and proper business attire. These skills have value and may not have been learned while your student was in the classroom.

For students planning on attending graduate school, but need help with the process, career services offers CD 401 Graduate Work. This course covers selecting a graduate program that fits the student, what the application process entails, and tips on how to prepare for graduate school interviews.

If you or your student has any questions about the services offered by career services, please call (616) 632-2905.

Graduation. Is your student ready to for the next step?

Summer: Stress or Sizzle?

The return home for college students and their parents can be a time of enjoyment and reconnection. It can also be very stressful for everyone involved; the parent, the student and siblings remaining at home. Your student has become used to new freedoms and new adult responsibilities over the last several months. Returning home can be a break from the pressures that these freedoms and responsibilities bring, it can also be the source of power struggles between students and their parents. It is your home and you will want and need to continue to have boundaries for everyone who lives there. Then again, realize that your student has experienced independence and accountability for their decisions over the past several months.

As much as possible, seek to have a conversation where everyone can communicate regarding expectations and responsibilities. Schedule a time early in the summer (before if possible) to discuss some of the following topics:

- **Curfew:** Do they need one or not? If so, what is it?
- **Consequences:** What if your student goes against your wishes or established boundaries? What will happen? They are young adults, but it is still important to be clear about what is "out of bounds."
- **Household Duties** (for both the student and the parent): Will your student be expected to help around the house? Parents, your student are not a guest in your home. They can still be asked to do their share. Also, what are you willing to do for them? Laundry, mending, car maintenance?
- **Privacy:** Letting go and letting your student soar is difficult. Parents *and* students are used to having more privacy when the student is at school. It everyone communicates their needs and then agrees to stick to what is decided it will go better.
- **Overnight guests:** What are the rules overnights within romantic relationships? Are the rules different for friends? What are the rules? What are the sleeping arrangements?
- **Expenses:** What are your student's financial responsibilities over the summer? If they are unable to find a job what are the expectations? Are their earnings solely theirs? Talk about how finances and the current economic situation affects your family and your student's financial situation for the coming academic year.
- **Family obligations:** is your student expected to attend all family functions? What about the family vacation? How does that impact work? What about religious services? Volunteering?
- **Explore changing views:** Students are exposed to a wide variety of ideas, beliefs and world views. Some of these may be very different from yours and how you raised your family. Understand that part of becoming an adult is learning how to weigh out all that you are aware of and form your own ideas and beliefs. Though this is difficult as a parent, it is also difficult for your student to "cross" you.

Above all, enjoy each other. Strive for communication. If the summer ends up stressful, find peace in the knowledge that this is typical development. Communication begins to build the foundation of a strong adult relationship that will remain throughout their lives.