College Makes “Wise” Decision

What happens when SUNY Plattsburgh dedicates a new program that actively engages in the success of its first-year students? You have a success story!

In fall 2005, 240 first-year students were housed in Whiteface Residence Hall with the creation of the Whiteface Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE). Each floor had 30 students who were linked to a "connection team" consisting of a resident assistant, two resident mentors (returning students), and a faculty mentor. WISE also included special programming, academic support within the hall, and special attention from the Academic Advising Office. Additional support was provided in every aspect of each resident’s campus life as he or she navigated through his or her first year. The results were outstanding and significant.

In the fall of 2004, 87% of the first-year students that lived in Whiteface returned for the spring 2005 semester. When WISE was initiated in fall 2005, the impact was immediate as 95% of first-year students living in Whiteface returned in the spring. “Our overall goal is to improve the quality of undergraduate education at SUNY Plattsburgh. An increase in the retention rates is a by-product of our initiative,” said Peter Luguri, Director of the First-Year Experience. In general, Whiteface residents were more involved in campus activities when compared to all other first-year students.

Due to its success, WISE has been expanded for the fall 2006 semester to include a like number of students in Wilson Hall. The other eight residence halls housing new students will each have a First-Year Advocate (faculty/staff). Two additional advocates will focus their efforts on first-year commuting students. These Advocates will assist students in their transition to college life.

The Challenge of Letting Go

Are you feeling anxious about your student leaving home? Not sure what to expect from your student or from yourself? You need to read Letting Go - A Parents’ Guide to Today’s College Experience (Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger, Harper Paperbacks). This book provides practical information and advice for the process of "letting go." Read about typical and not-so-typical problems and what to expect throughout your student’s college experience.

Welcome to the Campus!

Many of you who attended an Orientation Session this summer met Vice President of Student Affairs, William Laundry. Mr. Laundry will be welcoming students and parents to the campus this fall. “Everyone at the college is excited about the beginning of the new academic year. With the summer behind us it is good to get back to what we do best - providing our students with a wonderful opportunity to get an education. Fall 2006 will be exceptional,” said Laundry.

Join our parent e-mail list serve! If you were unable to attend an orientation session this summer, or attended and forgot to give us your e-mail information card, please contact us at our e-mail address fye@plattsburgh.edu. We plan to send a select number of e-mails updating you on key events and milestones each semester. So, please contact us with your name and e-mail address.
Director’s Message

Wow! Where does the time go? It seems just a few weeks ago Memorial Day weekend ushered in the early days of summer. High school graduation and all its assorted celebrations dominated the month of June. July, with the long Independence Day weekend, went by in a flash. For many of you, time was spent here for an orientation session. Now August is also racing by and it’s almost time to trek back to the North Country. Suffice it to say that reality has set in. The days of summer are growing fewer, and change for your family is in the air.

I understand that bringing someone whom you care deeply about to a college campus and leaving him or her there is not an easy thing to do. It will be a transitional time not only for your student, but for you as well. With that in mind, it is my hope that you can minimize stress and make the most of the great adventure that lies ahead for your student.

Be assured that all of us on the SUNY Plattsburgh campus will do our utmost to ensure that your student is well taken care of and supported. I have worked at Plattsburgh for close to three decades, so I know this to be true.

The First-Year Experience office wants your student to, “Stand Out from the Start.” You can assist us in reaching that goal. When in contact with your student, ask questions about his or her connection to the campus and community. Are they engaged both academically and socially? If the answers to those questions are positive, they are well on their way to a successful year. Please remember that the transition takes longer for some more than others and knowing that you care is important. If you have concerns, let us know.

I enjoyed seeing so many of you at Family Orientation this summer. As I said then, if there is anything that I can do to assist you or your student, please don’t hesitate to contact me. I hope to see you opening weekend.

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