



Student Services Update December 2018

Hello Eagle Families. As we near the end of the fall semester, here are some updates of interest. Enjoy the winter break!

University Closure for Winter Break

As a reminder to families, American University is closed December 22, 2018, through January 1, 2019, for winter break.

Tuition refund Insurance – update for Spring semester

AU has partnered with **GradGuard™ by Allianz Global Assistance**, to make tuition refund insurance available to you and your family. Tuition insurance acts as an extension of the [University's refund policy](#), reimbursing you for your tuition payment, housing and meal fees, and other nonrefundable expenses if you withdraw for a covered reason at any time during the semester. **This is our second semester working with GradGuard, and we have made some changes to the plan to offer the same coverage at a lower rate.**

The fee for the tuition insurance will not be charged to your student account and must be paid directly to Allianz. GradGuard will allow any student to enroll and select the amount of coverage they wish to purchase. Coverage must be purchased by the day before your classes start each semester.

To get a quote or learn more about the tuition insurance, call GradGuard Customer Service at 1-866-724-4384 or visit their website at www.gradguard.com/tuition/american

Financial Aid Update

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is now available for the 2019–2020 year. File your FAFSA today and be sure to use the Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) to expedite the filing of your application.

Spring 2019 Payment Due Date

The spring 2019 payment is due January 6, 2019. Payment is due at the time of registration for students registering after January 5, 2019. If you are expecting any additional payment that does not reflect on your bill, please deduct that amount from the total due and only pay the difference. Examples may be: additional financial aid (except work study), outside scholarships, outside alternative loans, and 529 payments.

Monthly Wellness Tip

Finals Week is underway! This is a good time to try and check in with your student a bit more than usual to see how they are handling the stress and balancing their health and wellness needs still. Remember: a happy body = a happy brain! Here are some tips you could offer your student if you think they are struggling or needing some advice/support:

1. **Get enough sleep.** Pulling all-nighters to study for an exam might seem like a college right-of-passage or something that has minimal consequences if done infrequently. But the research is clear: even getting a few hours of sleep is better than none. Sleep helps students process, store, and retain what they learn through class and studying. Also, sleep deprivation can worsen symptoms of depression and anxiety, which can wreak havoc in an exam setting. If they're cramming for an exam, it's better to set a time limit, do as much as they can within that frame, and then get a few hours of sleep. At least that way they will retain some of what they crammed, as opposed to staying up all night trying to learn everything and remembering nothing.
2. **Eat healthy meals/snacks when they can.** Start the day off right with the most important meal of the day—breakfast. College students will perform better on exams if they aren't distracted by a rumbling belly that is crying to be fed. If they have a final later in the day, they should fuel their minds and bodies with a nutritious lunch or dinner.
3. **Take breaks.** Studying is tedious and draining. Scheduling in small breaks throughout the day will benefit a student by clearing their minds and getting time to take care of essential needs such as eating and using the restroom. Encourage them to get away from their laptops/desks every hour for at least 5-10 minutes to walk around, get some air, or refocus their eyes, and then to schedule in 2–3 longer breaks throughout the day to eat a full meal, chat with friends, go for a run, or take a nap. To ensure a continued and productive study day, limit the longer breaks to 30–60 minutes.
4. **Breathe.** As you probably know, anxiety decreases performance mainly because it interferes with our concentration. Research shows one of the quickest ways to reduce feeling anxious is to change your breathing. Remind students to do this: A few minutes before an exam, tune into your breath and slow it down by breathing deeply. Practicing some deep breathing right before an exam can drastically improve your mental state and have amazing benefits on performance.
5. **Keep things in perspective.** Students may see the outcome of their academic performance as an almost “life or death” situation, when in fact each grade is just a small part of their overall academic performance. Urge them to keep in mind that their future is not determined by their grades for one semester and to a large degree probably isn't going to be determined by their grades at all. Quality of life is enjoying what you're doing in the moment, rather than working really hard and suffering so that someday you might have a happy life. Research finds great benefits in the ability to stay in the present moment.

6. **Utilize campus resources.** Jacobs and Cassell Fitness Centers are great for students to take advantage of so they can let off some steam through exercise. The Health Promotion and Advocacy Center has a relaxation room open for free! Tons of offices have free coffee/tea available. And the Counseling Center has urgent care drop-in hours Mon–Fri from 2–4 p.m.

If all else fails and your student is in need of medical or mental health support after-hours, remember that the Collegiate Assistance Program or "Nurse Advice Line" is free and available 24/7 for all AU students (**1-855-678-8679**). They are staffed with Registered Nurses and Licensed Clinicians who can help students determine if they need to seek medical care, need legal or financial advice, or may need to talk to someone about everyday issues that can be overwhelming.

Crucial Conversations Corner

Some of you have been able to see your student multiple times since dropping them off for move-in. For others, winter break might be the only time your student is able to make it home during the academic year. So how do you re-establish new norms with them? How do you navigate the holidays if this is their first one at home since leaving for college? Here are some things to keep in mind from *CollegeCovered.com*:

1. **Set expectations upfront.** If you expect your student to join in family meals or to clean up after themselves while they're home, make sure they know that. The ride home or soon after they arrive home is a good time to have this conversation. You may be tempted to pick up where you left off—doing your child's laundry and overseeing all meals—but understand that they're fully capable of handling these tasks on their own. If not, it's a great time to teach how to do these things!
2. **Be prepared to compromise.** It's not easy, but it's time to start thinking of your child as an adult. That means that rules around things like curfews or check-ins may need to be relaxed from the high school days. Still, your home is not a residence hall or fraternity house. It's reasonable that they let you know their schedule.
3. **Put family time on the calendar.** Your college student may be focused on catching up with hometown friends, so if you want some quality family time, it can be helpful to schedule it in. Spending uninterrupted time together will give you a chance to reconnect and learn more about them and how they've changed/grown over time. You may find it even more enjoyable to spend time with your child now that they're an adult.
4. **Be there when they need you.** It's good to give your college student space but let them know that you're around when and if they're ready to talk about any issues—either at school or back home. Whether it's about friends or significant others, trouble with schoolwork or concerns about the future, you want your child to feel comfortable confiding in you. You have an important transition to make as well now, after all, from authoritarian parent to adult mentor and dependable sounding block.

For more information about health and wellness services on campus, please feel free to reach out to any of the following offices:

Student Health Center (shc@american.edu)

Counseling Center (counselingcenter@american.edu)
Health Promotion & Advocacy Center (hpac@american.edu)

(Resources: <https://barnard.edu>; <https://www.theodysseyonline.com>; <https://www.collegecovered.com>)

Health Insurance Waiver-Spring 2019

The health insurance waiver for the spring 2019 semester is now available. The deadline to submit a waiver is February 15, 2019. New students or students who were part-time in the fall will need to submit a waiver. Students who submitted waivers in the fall will not need to submit a new waiver.

For more information, please visit <https://www.american.edu/ocl/healthcenter/Health-Insurance-Waiver-Information.cfm>

If you or your student have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact AU Central at aucentral@american.edu.